

Proverbs 1Q 2015 Lesson 1

The Call of Wisdom

I received this email this week:

So very much have I been blessed by your ministry and after watching with profound insights of God's love illuminating in a much more tangible way than ever before, I would like to share many of your DVD presentations with family and friends.

I am not a "lifer" Adventist but came to be a seeker of truth as an adult about 15 years ago and was baptized into "the church" from a Lutheran background. Since then I have been acclimated to "SDA" system of worship and thinking to the point of becoming depressed and overwhelmed with obsessive thoughts of not being fit for heaven, scared to the point of anxiety/panic attacks of the judgment and daily trying to figure out what more I should do or not do to become "ready" for the 2nd coming. After saturating myself through the years with "proof Bible texts" to support all the fundamental beliefs and every publication that Ellen White wrote I became a narrow minded, critical and arrogant, yet well liked "Adventist", I taught Sabbath School, a Bible worker, and was elder's wife as well holding other reputable positions in the church. I became so enthralled with reaching that plateau of Christian perfection that I allowed my self to take on a martyr role and continue in an abusive marriage for 20 years because that was considered "unconditional agape" love and God "hates divorce" as my Pastor reminded me. After emotionally breaking down I did divorce and mournfully stopped for about a year attending church for lack of any sympathy or support and abandonment I felt from my brothers and sisters in the Lord. I cried in isolation for God to bring back the joy of my salvation that once reigned in my heart years ago.

After much counseling from the Domestic Violence Center who very much respected my spiritual perspective I began a new journey of discovering a God who loved me for me. I now attend a small SDA church in a different state that truly knows how to love unconditionally each other quirks and all.

A new sister in the Lord gave me your DVD on the God shaped brain and it ignited further study on your website. I still struggle at times with the realization of God's love being so calming and peaceful and restorative that I almost feel guilty for not feeling guilty when I bask in it's freedom. I press on ~~~

*Please send me 3 sets each of all 3 of your "free dvd" seminars.
I am anxious to smile as I share....Thank you!*

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “From Eden...” No doubt wrong choices are responsible for tragedy, but a specific action is described as causing the human mind to become confused – what is it?

The mingling of evil and good – how do we see this happening? How did it happen in Eden?

By suggesting lies about God.

How does it happen today?

- By mixing God’s design law with human imposed law, which results in arguing God is arbitrary.
 - Example – which was written in a blog by proponents of the penal view this week – God makes the laws of nature, which have natural consequences, but God’s moral laws are imposed and have no natural consequences and require God to punish.
- By mixing God’s freedom with coercive practices
 - Example – in Jesus we are free, but if we don’t accept Jesus He will kill us, or we have freedom to choose to obey God or not, but if we choose not to obey He will torture and kill us, and we can never escape it, other than by submitting and obeying
- By mixing two characters into the Godhead,
 - Example - Jesus is the God who loved us so much He died for us, but the Father is the God who is angry and wrathful and requires a legal payment not to kill us
- By mixing forgiveness with legal payment – think about it – if you forgive someone a debt, can you also collect it? And if you collect the debt can you turn around and say, “Now that I have been paid in full, I forgive your debt.”
 - I posted this on a website this week and a theologian said, “God can forgive because he is the one who collected the payment.”
 - This is contradictory and confused and misrepresents God.
- By mixing life and death in the character of God
 - Example – this is done by teaching God is the source of life and also the source of inflicted death

Any other examples? Is it any wonder Christianity is confused? And it is amazing the resistance to eliminating these lies.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “In Proverbs...” What do you think of this use of the word, “judgment”?

I like how it is used here, but can judgment mean something other than discernment, wisdom?

The word can also mean a judicial decision, or the judicial event in which one is judged.

Can you think of a place in Scripture where the word means wisdom or discernment, but penal theologians have taught it means God's judicial act?

How about Daniel 7 and Revelation 14?

These texts are part of the Investigative Judgment (IJ) doctrine, which has God and others, in heaven, reviewing record books, to determine the fate of the people on earth, or so it is commonly taught, because they approach the inspired record with a penal presupposition and misinterpret judgment to mean judicial act, rather than discernment or wisdom. Let's look at the evidence:

From one of the founders, who established the doctrine of the IJ:

The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by Malachi, **are descriptions of the same event**; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25. {FLB 207.4}

There are several texts that refer to the same event – Daniel 8:14, Daniel 7:9-14,21,22, Malachi 3:1-4, and the parable of the 10 virgins in Matthew 25. Each of these passages gives insight into the investigative judgment.

Daniel 8:14 is merely predicting the time this event will begin, no other significant details are given in the 8:14 text.

In Daniel 7 we are given more insight, but what is being described?

“As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened....“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. Daniel 7:9,10,13,14

What did you hear being described?

Those with a legal/penal preconceived idea about what is going on, read this as a court of law, or a judicial proceeding and the books are the books to judge us by. Much is read in that is not in the text.

If we take a more straightforward approach and ask what is being described in the context of the passage another idea emerges.

What is being described is not a judicial proceeding. Instead what is described is a **Royal Court!** It is the Royal Court of the universe which is holding the Coronation of Christ!

Some are uncomfortable with this conclusion and rest their entire position on the Hebrew word "*diyn*," which is translated "court," claiming this Hebrew word refers to a judicial proceeding. I refer them to *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* published in 1980 by Moody Press, which says:

This word, with its derived noun *diyn* is nearly identical in meaning with *šhaphat* {shaw-fat} (q.v.) and its derived noun *mišhpāt* {mish-pawt} (q.v.). It appears only twenty-three times, a fraction of the times *šhaphat* and *mišhpāt* appear. Of the twenty-three appearances, five are in parallel with *šhaphat* (Jer 5:28; 22:16; Prov 31:8; Ps 7:8 [H 9]; 9:8 [H 9]) and twice more it is associated in the text with *mišhpāt* (Ps 72:2; Jer 21:12). Thus nearly a third of its occurrences show how closely the idea of *diyn* was identified or associated with the root *šhaphat*. The verb also occurs in Ugaritic and in parallel with *tp* (the cognate of *šhaphat*) (Fisher, RSP, vol. I, p. 166). Likewise a similar—nearly identical as far as it goes—list of terms is associated with *diyn*, demonstrating the near identity of meaning: with *mēyšhar* {may-shawr} "uprightness," "equity" (Ps 96:10; cf. Ps 75:2); and with *gaša* (Ps 54:1 [H 3]; cf. Ps 72:4). As with *šhaphat* it represents God's government as both among his people (Israel) and among all peoples (Ps 135:14 "people"; Ps 7:8 [H 9] "peoples" cf. Ps 72:2; Ps 9:8 [H 9]). As far as the small number of occurrences allows a test, the range of meanings is exactly the same: to govern, in the whole range of activities of government: legislative, executive, judicial, or otherwise. See the discussion of *šhaphat* and *mišhpāt*. The difference between the terms is simply that *diyn* is poetic, probably also an archaic and more elegant term. Of the twenty-three occurrences, only one is outside the Protestant grouping of poetical and poetical-prophetic literature. The exception is the single passive form—a Niphal participle (II Sam 19:9 [H 10]). The chief theological significance of this word is that apparently like *šhaphat* it embodies the idea of government, in whatever realm, in all its aspects.[1]

Therefore, I believe that the above credible authority on Hebrew supports "*diyn*" as I have rendered it above. Once we recognize that the court seated is the Royal Court of the universe convening for the governmental action of coronating Christ, we can more clearly understand what occurs during the investigative judgment.

Daniel 7:21,22 gives insight:

As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and **pronounced judgment** in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

The above rendering is from the NIV, which many, who assume the legal model, prefer. But does the meaning of the passage change when we read from the King James Version?

Until the Ancient of days came, and **judgment was given** to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Daniel 7:22

Which translation is more accurate? The Hebrew word translated “pronounced” actually means “to give” or “to impart” and thus the KJV would be more accurate in this context.

Why do the saints of God need judgment imparted to them? Because it is another word for wisdom or discernment, why do they need this imparted? The Daniel text tells us the horn warred against the saints and was defeating them. What kind of warfare was going on?

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. **We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God**, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2 Cor 10:3-5

What kind of war? Where is it being fought? This is a war between truth and lies, centering on God’s character, and being fought in our minds! Amazingly, Paul makes the connection to the cleansing of the Temple even closer and shows how the Temple is connected to this war going on in our minds:

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s **temple**, proclaiming himself to be God. 2Thes 2:1-4

Paul is describing the exact same events as Daniel 7 in which evil powers war against the saints and oppose God. In the aftermath of Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, did this man of lawlessness ride into heaven overthrow God, set himself up in God’s temple in heaven, and proclaim himself to be God? No, where did this happen? In the Spirit Temple! In our minds! **Therefore, the cleansing of the temple, as described in the Bible, is the cleansing of our minds from the lies about God**, which wins us back to trust and results in our cleansing from sin.



Daniel is told in vision that an evil power would arise that would lie, distort, misrepresent God, and defile the Spirit Temple by getting humans to accept, worship, and teach a false picture of God. According to our understanding of interpreting prophetic time, it would take 2,300 years before enough truth would be recovered for Christ to empower His people on earth with judgment (discernment) to break free from the lies and be cleansed in their minds and characters.

All of this is confirmed for us by the other text describing the same event as Daniel 8:14, Malachi 3:1-3:

Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will **purify the Levites** and refine them like gold and silver.

What is getting cleansed during the investigative judgment? The Levites. And who are the Levites? The Priesthood of believers (1Pet 2:5,9).

God is cleansing His people from what? 1) the lies about Him which keep us from trusting Him and 2) when we are won back to trust, He cleanses us from sin. God writes His law of love into our hearts. He restores His character of righteousness in us. This is what is happening during the investigative judgment.

How does this happen? By our investigating the truth about God as revealed in Christ, rejecting the lies, and clinging to the truth and trusting God!

But this has been obstructed by accepting the lie that God’s law is functionally like human law, imposed without inherent consequence. Thus the horn wages war and defeats the saints unless the saints obtain wisdom from God, discernment to realize God’s laws are not like human law.

This is the same problem we find in interpreting Rev 14, the message of the first angel – when read through human/worldly law lens we misunderstand the message and take a distorted picture of God to the world – thus we FAIL in doing the work of the three angels. This is why in Revelation 18 the message is to be given again, because it didn’t do its work the first time!

What does it mean “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”? I think it has two applications – one for the infant – and one for the mature.

For those, who just out of slavery are having an orgy around a golden calf and God thunders, which caused fear, but in this fear they stopped their orgy, and then started listening – wisdom began. And what did they hear Moses say – “There is no need to be afraid.”



And for the mature – fear is awe, admiration, adoration, in which we humble ourselves into honest seekers of truth willing to learn and be instructed by our amazing God. This attitude opens the mind for wisdom to grow.

MONDAY

True education – what does it look like? The lesson asks us to read Proverbs 1:8-19:

Listen, my son, to your father's instruction
and do not forsake your mother's teaching.
⁹ They are a garland to grace your head
and a chain to adorn your neck.
¹⁰ My son, if sinful men entice you,
do not give in to them.
¹¹ If they say, "Come along with us;
let's lie in wait for innocent blood,
let's ambush some harmless soul;
¹² let's swallow them alive, like the grave,
and whole, like those who go down to the pit;
¹³ we will get all sorts of valuable things
and fill our houses with plunder;
¹⁴ cast lots with us;
we will all share the loot"—
¹⁵ my son, do not go along with them,
do not set foot on their paths;
¹⁶ for their feet rush into evil,
they are swift to shed blood.
¹⁷ How useless to spread a net
where every bird can see it!
¹⁸ These men lie in wait for their own blood;
they ambush only themselves!
¹⁹ Such are the paths of all who go after ill-gotten gain;
it takes away the life of those who get it.

What did you hear?

Wisdom avoids selfishness – it avoids violating the law of love, it avoids hurting others.

Why is this wise? Because life is built on the law of love and to violate the law of love results in something to the violators – what? The text tells us –

¹⁸ These men lie in wait for their own blood;
they ambush only themselves!



¹⁹ Such are the paths of all who go after ill-gotten gain;
it takes away the life of those who get it.

Wow! Incredible – but Satan has cast a distortion over the minds of many, so many read this as the wicked create a legal ledger of bad deeds, to which God will one day act as executioner and torture and kill them. Not so – sin pays its wage; the wage is death.

The lesson quotes one of the founders of our church as stating, “In His wisdom the Lord has decreed that the family shall be the greatest of all educational agencies. It is in the home that the education of the child is to begin. Here is the first school.” AH 182.

What do you think the primary, the most basic, the most important lesson of all is? What is the lesson that the family is to teach above all others?

Love!

Infants that are not held, caressed, loved, have altered brains with upregulated fear circuitry and subsequent increased problems with anxiety, depression and relationship difficulties later in life.

We are born infected with selfishness and fear. The home is to nurture the child in love, true love, which sets health boundaries, holds the child to account, but always in love, always with the goal to protect and restore, always with forgiveness, never with vengeance.

The family is to teach the child the meaning of selfless service, of caring for someone more than self. The family is to teach the lesson of community, of connecting, of having a purpose larger than self. The family is to teach God’s design for life, of the loving parents sacrificing self for the welfare of their children, but risking being misunderstood to do what is best for their children.

And as the child grows, what is God’s method to achieve this?

Jesus followed the **divine plan** of education. The schools of His time, with their magnifying of things small and their belittling of things great, He did not seek. His education was gained directly from the **Heaven-appointed sources; from useful work, from the study of the Scriptures and of nature, and from the experiences of life--God's lesson books**, full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart. {Ed 77.2}

Consider these lesson books:

- What is learned from useful work?
 - Self-mastery
 - the joy of accomplishment
 - the law of cause and effect



- What is learned from Scripture?
 - The truth about God in the setting of the GC
 - The purpose of man and our place in God's kingdom
 - The rise of evil
 - God's solution to the sin problem in the person of Jesus
 - The ultimate end and how we can participate with God in His plans
- What is learned from nature?
 - How the law of love functions
 - Design law
 - how deviations from the design result in ruin and death
- What is learned from experience?
 - the application of God's principles to life
 - the development of character
 - the establishment of habit
 - the solidification into the truth by experience

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "While sinners..." This is quite a revelation to the difference in how truth and lies operate.

Truth operates in the open, broadcast aloud, lies operate behind the scenes, secretly, not wanting to be exposed to the light of truth. I came across this commentary describing the origin of evil in heaven:

Leaving his place in the immediate presence of God, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. Working with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealing his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God, he endeavored to excite dissatisfaction concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that they imposed an unnecessary restraint. GC 495

And Jesus speaking to the Sanhedrin:

"I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus replied. "I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. Jn 18:20

What do you learn when you find out people go behind the scenes to discredit another person's views, to get speaking engagement canceled, and refuse an open discussion of the difference?

¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not

condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God. Jn 3:16-21

What does this mean? What do you hear?

Why do people in evil or sin not want to come into the light? What obstructs?

Could it be the lies they hold about what it would mean to come into the light?

Could it be fear, fear of reprisal, punishment, recrimination?

Could it be distorted God concepts that present God has having a legal responsibility to punish sin keeps people hiding in the darkness?

If you believed your doctor was going to punish you for not following his directions – your cholesterol is high, and the doctor has recommended a change in diet, but you have continued eating ice cream, cheese, meat, would you go back to the doctor if you believed he would torture and kill you for not obeying him?

This is what happens in the minds of people who accept the legal lies about God. They don't want to go to God thus they created theologies based on the lies to make them feel safe.

This week it was revealed in an online blog that those who hold the penal view of God find security, NOT in trusting God, but in the "legal payment" Jesus made. In their minds, because of the legal payment made to God by Jesus God cannot touch them. Think about it, their entire theology presents God just as Satan alleged, a God who is revengeful, who will use His power to destroy, but who is legally restrained from doing so because Jesus made the proper legal payment.

This view of God stands in stark contrast to the view we present. We present a God who loved us so much He provided the Remedy to our situation we could never provide, and who will only cry if we refuse it, but will not use His power to destroy us. Thus, we like Jesus can say, "into your hands I surrender my spirit."

In our view our security is found in our trust in God – in their view security is found in a legal payment to God to be protected from God.

This is why they so vehemently attack our view because it frightens them to think about going before God without a legal payment.



In the second paragraph, “The reason that people reject wisdom has nothing to do with the wisdom itself and everything to do with the character of those who reject it.”

This is well said – but also in addition to character perhaps ability to comprehend?

Jesus used to say “Let him who has eyes see and ears hear.” Not everyone is able or willing to understand what is written or said.

Read the last paragraph, “Those who reject...” What do you think of the first sentence? Do you believe this is true? How do you hear the meaning of it?

Through imposed law, it is taught the fruit they reap is the inflicted torture and punishment from God.

Through design law, they reap what happens when one persistently chooses to deviate from God’s design, pain, suffering, culminating in eternal destruction.

Why do people come to believe fables? It sounds very much like God giving them over to a strong delusion to believe a lie – why are they given over to a strong delusion? Because they didn’t love the truth, and if one rejects the truth, the only thing left is falsehood and lies.

WEDNESDAY

Read Proverbs 2:1-5:

My son, if you accept my words
and store up my commands within you,
² turning your ear to wisdom
and applying your heart to understanding—
³ indeed, if you call out for insight
and cry aloud for understanding,
⁴ and if you look for it as for silver
and search for it as for hidden treasure,
⁵ then you will understand the fear of the Lord
and find the knowledge of God.

What are the conditions to receive God’s wisdom and the knowledge of the Lord?

- Willingness to be teachable such that one can take in and assimilate the truth
- An application of your mind to contemplate and understand the meaning of the truth
- Reaching your mind out to God to connect to Him for insight and understanding as you contemplate the deep meaning



- Approach God's truth as of greatest value, something you actually desire to know and assimilate
- Then you will come into a true knowledge of God, His methods, principles and kingdom of love

Where can this breakdown and obstruct our growth in wisdom?

- Arrogance, being part of the chosen people, who "have the truth" and thus we don't need to be teachable because we already know it
- Believing the lie that the Bible is not to be thought about, contemplated, or understood deeply, but merely taken as it reads. "The Bible said it, I believe it, that settles it."
- Studying on one's own, or through other human agencies disconnected from the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit
- Valuing the defense of one's own held belief system rather than a humble willingness to move beyond one's current understanding
- Defending traditional and historic beliefs rather than moving forward in unfolding truth

Read Proverbs 2:10-22:

For wisdom will enter your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.
¹¹ Discretion will protect you,
and understanding will guard you.
¹² Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men,
from men whose words are perverse,
¹³ who have left the straight paths
to walk in dark ways,
¹⁴ who delight in doing wrong
and rejoice in the perverseness of evil,
¹⁵ whose paths are crooked
and who are devious in their ways.
¹⁶ Wisdom will save you also from the adulterous woman,
from the wayward woman with her seductive words,
¹⁷ who has left the partner of her youth
and ignored the covenant she made before God.
¹⁸ Surely her house leads down to death
and her paths to the spirits of the dead.
¹⁹ None who go to her return
or attain the paths of life.
²⁰ Thus you will walk in the ways of the good
and keep to the paths of the righteous.
²¹ For the upright will live in the land,
and the blameless will remain in it;



²² but the wicked will be cut off from the land,
and the unfaithful will be torn from it.

What do you hear?

For wisdom will enter your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. [Understanding reality, how it operates,
understanding the truth about God, His character is freeing to the mind and pleasant to the
soul]

¹¹ Discretion will protect you,
and understanding will guard you. [We are protected when we take time to think and don't
act merely on emotion. To reason out from cause to effect, in the knowledge of God's design
for life and health. In doing this our understanding guards us from damaging choices.]

¹² Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men,
from men whose words are perverse, [what are the ways of wicked men? What is the root
of wickedness? It is selfishness, it is about protecting self, survival of self. Wisdom saves us
from mistakenly acting selfishly and notice how choosing selfishness is described because it
deviates from how life is designed to operate]

¹³ who have left the straight paths
to walk in dark ways,

¹⁴ who delight in doing wrong
and rejoice in the perverseness of evil,

¹⁵ whose paths are crooked
and who are devious in their ways.

¹⁶ Wisdom will save you also from the adulterous woman,
from the wayward woman with her seductive words,

¹⁷ who has left the partner of her youth
and ignored the covenant she made before God.

¹⁸ Surely her house leads down to death
and her paths to the spirits of the dead. [why does this lead to death? Because it deviates
from the design of love. It is self-centered and dishonest. It betrays trust and results in
increased fear and insecurity, which causes one to become more self-centered and vicious
cycle down]

¹⁹ None who go to her return
or attain the paths of life.

²⁰ Thus you will walk in the ways of the good
and keep to the paths of the righteous.

²¹ For the upright will live in the land,
and the blameless will remain in it; [why do the righteous remain in the land when God
returns and makes all things perfect? Because they are also restored to God's design and
prepared to live in the unveiled presence of God's glory]

²² but the wicked will be cut off from the land,



and the unfaithful will be torn from it. [What happens to the wicked? What does it mean cut off from the land? While will they be cut off? What cuts them off?]

THURSDAY

Read Proverbs 3:7,8:

Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear the Lord and shun evil.
⁸ This will bring health to your body
and nourishment to your bones.

Why? Is it because if you do the right thing, God performs a miracle to give you better health?

Or is it part of how we were designed to operate upon the law of love and deviating from that law results in destruction to our health?

When we deviate from the law of love – by exploiting another, by grudge holding and resentment, we disrupt our brains salience network and activate our fear circuitry. This results in release of inflammatory factors in our body, which cause:

- Insulin resistance
- DM II
- increase risk of heart attack and stroke
- damage brain cells, increasing risk of mood disorders and dementia
- activate osteoclasts causing osteopenia and osteoporosis

But when we live in harmony with God's design we calm the fear circuitry and stop this inflammatory cascade and it is healthy for our body's and bones here and now, and ultimately to eternal life when all things are made new.

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, "The youth..." Is it true that life originates with God and is sustained by being connected to Him?

Then what happens if one disconnects?

Read and discuss questions 1 & 2

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Opportunity to Share:

The General Conference of SDA will have its meeting (which occurs every five years) in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. 50,000-70,000 Adventist from all over the world are expected to attend. This presents an opportunity to share this healing message about God in a most impactful way.

We plan on giving away our DVDs, Dr. Jennings' Book *Could It Be This Simple?* and other materials. This will be an enormous project. If you would like to share in this opportunity, you can do so by making donations to *Come and Reason Ministries* either via Paypal, or check mailed to our address below.

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- Hand out the *The Journal of the Watcher* postcards (email us a mailing address and we will ship them to you at to cost, they come in packs of 100)

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Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

Jan 10, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven, formerly Elmshaven, SDA church.

Jan 24, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Monterey Peninsula SDA Church

February 21, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be presenting the God and Your Brain Seminar at Shilo Inn. 3223 Bret Clodfelter Way, The Dalles, Oregon. For more info and to register for this free conference contact Joyce Browne at 541-300-0111.

March 13-14, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in NYC at the Advent Hope Outreach Health Event.

March 27-28, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the University of Tennessee Health Science, Psychiatry and Family Medicine Conference in Memphis, TN.

April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support a charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered Charity. So, you can select us, and whenever you shop in their [smile.amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile) site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN.**

Proverbs 1Q 2015 Lesson 2

From Ears To Feet

I received this email this week from a physician in California:

Dr. Jennings, I can't begin to tell you what a blessing the God and Your Brain DVD's have been to my patients. I am continually getting great reports from them and several have said they have never heard anything like this before. It has opened up new avenues of thought, and now they notice the imposed law ideation when they listen to sermons in the church or on TV.

The [Bible Study] lessons have continued to "feed us" as we listen to these weekly. The Journal of the Watcher is truly inspired and I have been telling my patients and church members about how this points out so clearly the Law is indeed a Law of Love. I especially like how this exposes sin as selfishness and self-preservation, the opposite of God's character and His desire for us to be like Him. I would like to have the cards for promoting this app and I am out of the God and the Your Brain again. Do you have any new materials? I don't know how you would possibly have time!

We are praying for this message to be spread far and wide, but also to get the message back into the church.

And this was posted on our Facebook page this week:

Dr. J and the Come and Reason Class, after reading the blogs from the Compass Magazine, I felt compelled to write and let you all know I am praying for your ministry and your outreach. I am also praying for those who need to live more fully in the love of Jesus Christ. This past summer, my sister sent me a link to Come and Reason lesson studies and I've been "going" to church ever since, sometimes twice a day! All of my life I have lived in FEAR of God and His wrath, BUT I took comfort in the love of Jesus. It was as if Jesus was shielding me with His body from God's anger towards me - much like an abused mom will shield her children from an abusive father. So I grew up in a very contradictory, conflicted Adventist home, where Sabbath Sundown (Friday night) was the beginning of our own controversial showdown and by (Saturday) sundown we all felt a massive relief that it was all over.... Needless to say, I went down the destructive path of tribulations and ego, but through it all, I always felt I had Jesus by my side. Finally, the Biblical contradictions and what was going on in my daily life got to be too much and I said ENOUGH! The only truth I was going to follow was how Jesus lived His life, here on Earth- love one another as I have loved you. It was a message that gave the early Christians heart and soul - what they needed to face Rome's arena. I decided I wanted to have in my life the message those early Christians had in their hearts when they faced their mortal death. Plus, I knew there was more to God than what I learned from my past, for Christ said, if you know me, you know the Father. So I am ever so grateful when I opened the door to Come and Reason! I am uplifted by the comments made in class, too. When the one lady said it was really hard for her to "rethink" or "re-understand" how she saw God, I thought - ME, TOO! Most lessons, I listen to over and over again, read the notes, look up the texts, go for a walk with God, and then listen to the lesson again. It is very hard to break down those contradicting walls of viewpoints where God says I so loved the world that I gave my only begotten Son, to where it is preached from our pulpits how BAD, BAD, BAD we all are and how God can't wait to get rid of BAD, BAD, BAD people..... I must say it has been very hard to scrape the mark of the beast from my forehead and hand.....and I might have some deep scars from it, but I rejoice in the love and freedom I now have in my heart, mind, and soul. Thank you so much Come and Reason class for opening up such a HUGE door for me.... rather a whole new world for me and I actually look forward to church now! I have passed on this message and link to my friends and family. They are also reaping the benefits of this message of true love. Even my mother has found comfort in the Come and Reason classes. I would love for her to fully embrace the fact that she is a part of the Kingdom of Heaven



instead of hoping for it, "if only she was good enough"..... That just really breaks my heart. Thank you Come and Reason class for being part of my journey and thank you for being a part of my family.

SABBATH

Read bottom paragraph, "It's not enough..." So, how do we choose the right and not the wrong? What is necessary before we choose?

Differentiating the right from the wrong – how do we get the ability to do that?

We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. ¹² In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴ **But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.**

So, the mature have the ability to distinguish the difference between good and evil – but how did they get this ability? By constant use of something – what? Constantly using solid food, - what is this solid food they are using?

Well, maybe we can figure that out by understanding what milk is – milk is for the infants, and as infants we are not yet acquainted with righteousness – so what is infant formula? Or said another way, what is the religious formula that infants like?

Heb 6:1,2:

Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, ² instruction about cleansing rites [baptism], the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

What do you hear is infant formula?

1. Do's and don'ts, the commandments, behavioral religion, keeping track of deeds and sins – any examples of this type of infant formula theology?
 - a. Notice, it isn't that this isn't part of the journey – it is just the starting point, the infant stage, we can't grow up if we aren't first born as babies in the world – and likewise we can't grow up to be mature Christians if we are first reborn as babes in Christ.
 - b. There is a healthy level of repentance from acts that lead to death, when we realize the truth of God's design for life, His character of love, and surrender ourselves in trust to Jesus. This is David praying, search me and see the wicked way in me, create in me a clean heart oh God!



- c. However, at this stage we come to conviction of our sinful selves, and it is typically very childlike; we feel guilty and ashamed of the bad things we have done, and live in fear of punishment and rejection. At this stage we are vulnerable to have our understanding of God distorted and because we feel bad about ourselves, we accept the lie that God is mad at us; because we punish ourselves in our own minds, we believe the lie that God wants to punish us; because we want to do something to “make up” for our badness, we believe the lie that God needs something done to Him to make up for our badness. Thus we fall victim to the false legal theology and gratefully accept Jesus’ payment for our sins and for being our substitute. We are thankful to know that the Father won’t punish us because Jesus took our punishment. We experience great relief and peace but are still unacquainted with righteousness because we believe lies about God and our own sin condition.
 - d. But it is so wonderful to be free from the terrible torment of guilt, fear and shame in which we lived before coming to repentance from our acts that lead to death, that many stay here as babies in their experience with God and develop an entire theology based on baby formula, mixed with their childlike view of God’s law, distorted to be like imposed human law – this is penal substitution theology.
 - e. I have patients, who have had homes in which parents were loving and nurturing and shouldered so many of life’s responsibilities and the children lived in such fear of making mistakes that they didn’t want to grow up and preferred to be cared for and stay childlike in their functioning. Some Christians are so afraid of making mistakes they don’t want to grow up so they stay childlike in their belief system and functioning.
2. Faith in God – how is this infant formula?
- a. Because faith, or trust, is the also a starting point, it is in faith that we confess, repent from acts that lead to death, but our faith is to grow beyond that of its infant form.
 - b. But sadly many don’t grow past this level, life is all about repenting from acts and having faith that Jesus has paid the penalty. They stay infants, unacquainted with righteousness claiming faith in the legal payment made to protect us from God, but not living in a daily faith relationship with God who sent His Son to provide what was necessary to restore us to righteousness.
 - i. Infant faith – Rahab lies in faith & Gideon and the fleece
 - ii. Mature faith – the three worthies in Daniel, the centurion who said just command my servant be well and it will be so & Paul going to his death in Rome – having faith in God not to be miraculously delivered
3. Instructions about baptism – how is this infant stuff?
- a. Again, it is a starting point, it is the beginning of the new life in Christ, it is the mere change in heart attitude toward God, it is not the experience of victory over self, the crucifying of the flesh, the establishment of mature character, the growth in wisdom and understanding – it is merely a basic understanding that God can be trusted, surrendering of self to Him and a choice to commit one’s life to Him.
 - b. And many infants, will request rebaptism, because they think it is somehow meritorious to salvation



4. Laying on of hands
 - a. Another elementary or starting point, after trust, repentance and surrendering self, and publicly committing self to start your life anew as a newborn babe in Christ through baptism, then the laying on of hands to impart the Holy Spirit to nurture, enlighten, and help your grow – but this is again a starting point.
5. Resurrection of the dead
 - a. This is one of the basic teachings, that helps us overcome our fears and survival-of-the-fittest instincts of self-preservation. When we first come to Christ we generally come focused on self, fear of punishment, fear of dying, fear of facing our record of sin or others knowing our sins, and thus, as babes we are given the promise of resurrection to calm our fears. Just as when an angel appeared to prophets and they were afraid, the first thing said was something to reassure “don’t be afraid you are highly esteemed.” So, too, in our infancy, we must be reassured of the resurrection and that death will not be victorious – God says “Don’t be afraid, I have overcome death.”
6. Eternal judgment
 - a. Another basic teaching for the infants, who come all self focused, fearful of getting punished, relieved to experience God’s grace and forgiveness, reassured of the resurrection, yet, like children consumed with self, wanting to be sure everything is “fair” and those who haven’t repented get what is due them. So, God gives them a basic teaching, there will be a final judgment, you can stop worrying, stop keeping score, stop holding resentments, forgiven and trust me, I settle up accounts in the end.
 - b. But we are to mature past this level, to grow up to understand judgment is actually the accurate diagnosis of the condition of each character. The infants are not acquainted with righteousness because they stay focused on repentance from acts that lead to death, and thus falsely teach that unrepentant acts must be punished, and promote a human imposed law construct of courtrooms, judicial proceedings and imposed punishments. The mature, have grown and realize that sin damages the sinner and those who refuse the infusion of Christ via the Holy Spirit will be diagnosed as terminal and let go to reap what they have chosen.

Notice that the mature develop by practice the ability to discern good from evil. But the immature, do not develop the ability to think for themselves, instead they surrender their thinking to others, theologians, pastors, parents and trust others to do their thinking for them.

Listen to this quotation from one of the founders of our church:

“If we mistake the wisdom of man for the wisdom of God we are led astray by the foolishness of man's wisdom...”

One of the most common ways this happens is the exchanging of God’s design law for human imposed law, teaching that God’s law requires God to impose punishments. If you read the Compass Magazine blog and dialogue you saw this very clearly.



“Here is the great danger of many in -- **They have not an experience for themselves...**

What are the three threads of evidence? Scripture, Science and Experience – and without bringing the knowledge Scripture and science into personal experience it is useless. This is another reason penal theologies fail – they look at sin and its solution as something happening in a courtroom in heaven, rather than experiential in the believer. As a psychiatrist, working with people, I realized true religion is transformational in the believer; it actually heals, restores, and results in peace of mind and victory over selfishness. Penal views fail as they focus on legal pardon, not transformation, and thus are not loved based but fear based in their primary motivation]

“They have not been in the habit of prayerfully considering for themselves, with unprejudiced, unbiased judgment, questions and subjects that are new and that are ever liable to arise. They wait to see what others will think. If these dissent, that is all that is needed to convince them that the subject under consideration is of no account whatever. Although this class is large, it does not change the fact that they are **inexperienced,,,**

Haven’t done it for themselves, i.e. no experience, in any subject matter this is a problem. If study swimming from a book, but never swim, no experience and will drown unless a lifeguard pulls you out, so if one isn’t experienced with thinking for themselves what happens

“and weak-minded through long yielding to the enemy, and will always be **as sickly as babes, walking by others' light, living on others' experience, feeling as others feel, and acting as others act.** They act as though they had not an individuality. **Their identity is submerged in others;** they are merely shadows of those whom they think [are] right. Unless these become sensible of their wavering character and correct it, **they will all fail of everlasting life; they will be unable to cope with the perils of the last days.** They will possess no stamina to resist the devil, for **they do not know that it is he. Someone must be at their side to inform them whether a foe or a friend is approaching.”** {2T 129.2}

She is simply saying, if they read about swimming, but never swim, they will be unable to cope when the ship goes down and they need to swim on their own – they won’t be able to and will drown. This is what penal substitution theology does to people. It indoctrinates them into a thoughtless system of rules teaching them to believe without thought.

Consider this out of the book education:

“Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator-- individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of **true education** to develop this power, **to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought.** Instead of confining their study to that which men have said or written, let students be directed **to the**



sources of truth, to the vast fields opened for research in nature and revelation. Let them contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny, and the mind will expand and strengthen. Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act, men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions.” {Ed 17.2}

What does a reflector do? It reflects the light of another – but a reflector as no light of its own to give! Jesus said:

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” Mat 5:14-16

We cannot be lights in the world if we do not think for ourselves, if we do not develop the ability to reason, to weigh evidences, to integrate divergent threads.

I am concerned that some educators in our institutions are more concerned with indoctrinating into “right” theology, than teaching students how to think and reason and weigh evidences for themselves.

Come and Reason Ministries is NOT here to teach you WHAT to think, but to teach you HOW to think, how to reason, how to weigh the evidences, so you can develop the ability to discern the right from the wrong in any circumstances and you can be the masters of destiny!

So, what is necessary to be able to choose the right from the wrong? The ability to discern the right from the wrong. And what is necessary to do that? Practicing thinking for yourself, weighing the evidences God has provided, not allowing others to do your thinking for you – and experiencing for yourself the truth in your life. Using the divine plan of education which is the integration of Scripture, Science and Experience.

I came across this article this week in my reading and it was so powerful and made such a distinction between mature and immature I wanted to share it with you:

“There are two classes of educators in the world. One class are those whom God makes channels of light, and the other class are those whom Satan uses as his agents, who are wise to do evil...

What do you think this author will say next as the distinguishing issue separating those who are channels of light from God and those who are Satan’s agents? Do you think it will be the 10 Commandments, which day one worships upon or the judgment?



“One class contemplates the character of God, and increases in the knowledge of Jesus, whom God hath sent into the world. This class becomes wholly given up to those things which bring heavenly enlightenment, heavenly wisdom, to the uplifting of the soul. Every capability of their nature is submitted to God, and their thoughts are brought into captivity to Christ. The other class is in league with the prince of darkness, who is ever on the alert that he may find an opportunity to teach others the knowledge of evil...

What do those who God makes channels of light focus upon? The truth of God’s character as revealed in Jesus! And what is the knowledge of evil? Lies about God’s character, the mixing of evil with good – we went through examples of that last week, like mixing God’s design law with human imposed law, or God as the source of life and inflicted death.

“If place is made for him, he will not be slow to press his way into heart and mind...” {CE 70.2}

“Is it the Lord's purpose that false principles, false reasoning, and the sophistries of Satan should be kept before the mind of our youth and children? Shall pagan and infidel sentiments be presented to our students as valuable additions to their store of knowledge?...

What is the essence of paganism? That God must be paid, appeased, or some legal blood payment made.

“The works of the most intellectual skeptic are works of a mind prostituted to the service of the enemy, and shall those who claim to be reformers, who seek to lead the children and youth in the right way, in the path cast up, imagine that God will be pleased with having them present to the **youth that which will misrepresent his character, placing him in a false light before the young? -- God forbid.**”

“The greatness and power with which the Creator endowed Lucifer he has perverted; and yet, **when it suits his purpose, he can impart to men sentiments that are enchanting...**

This is quite profound, because there is error that some who profess to promote the truth of God’s character fall into. Some look into the OT and suggest every time the Bible teaches God used power to put people into the grave, it was actually Satan. They teach Satan has lost all control and can only act out to destroy when unrestrained. Not so, Satan can act as an angel of light and even perform miracles of healing if it suits his purposes. In the OT, God did act in some very specific circumstances to put people into the grave – but it is an error to ever view this as punishment for sin. Every act was an act of mercy and love, a therapeutic intervention to keep open the channel for the Messiah! Each of those persons will live again.

“Everything in nature comes from God; yet **Satan can inspire his agents with thoughts that appear elevating and noble.** Did he not come to Christ with quotations of Scripture when he designed to overthrow him with his specious temptations? **This is the way in which**



he comes to man, as an angel of light disguising his temptations under an appearance of goodness, and making men believe him to be the friend rather than the enemy of humanity. It is in this way that he has deceived and seduced the race,--beguiling them with subtle temptations, bewildering them with specious deceptions...

What belief would you suggest is the most predominant belief today that beguiles humanity into Satan's camp? It is the lie about God's law being imposed, and thus God, in order to be just must inflict punishment. This lie taints all other beliefs, from the atonement, to how we understand the stories in the Bible, right on through to the final end of sin and sinner. Notice, the description this author gives of Satan's distortions that beguile humanity.

"Satan has ascribed to God all the evils to which flesh is heir...

What evils does the flesh have? We are petty, jealous and demand vengeance. Thus, Satan represents God as an angry revengeful deity, who won't forgive without payment, and must kill His own Son to vent His wrath.

"He has represented him as a God who delights in the sufferings of his creatures, who is revengeful and implacable. It was **Satan who originated the doctrine of eternal torment** as a punishment for sin, because in this way he could lead men into infidelity and rebellion, distract souls, and **dethrone the human reason...**

Why does the doctrine of eternal torment dethrone human reason? Because it is antithetical, it is contradictory, it is unreasonable – why? Because it contradicts the teaching that God is love – so on the one hand we teach God is love, and we know love can only exist in an atmosphere of freedom, but then this doctrine teaches, if you don't love God He will torture you for all eternity. Or, we teach God is all knowing, and knows the future, but somehow He still gave man immortality in Eden, and when human beings sinned they were destined to suffer for all eternity if they didn't repent. God hates it but, His hands are tied having already given them immortality – thus again we dethrone human reason by suggesting an all-wise, all-knowing God couldn't figure out the future, or He did know but still gave them immortality, thus contradicting the idea He is truly good and love! Is the doctrine of eternal torment the only doctrine that dethrones human reason? No! The doctrine of Penal Substitution does as well, because it requires one to believe contradictory things, like God is love, but God will kill you if you don't accept the payment of Jesus. This contradicts the law of liberty, and there are many more such contradictions.

"Heaven, looking down, and seeing the delusions into which men were led, knew that a divine Instructor must come to earth. Men in ignorance and moral darkness must have light, spiritual light; for the world knew not God, and he must be revealed to their understanding...

What is the primary issue that men didn't know that they needed to know? The truth about God!



“Truth looked down from heaven and saw not the reflection of her image; for dense clouds of moral darkness and gloom enveloped the world, and **the Lord Jesus alone was able to roll back the clouds; for he was the light of the world...**

What is moral darkness? The darkness that impairs our ability to tell what is good and evil.

“By his presence he could dissipate the gloomy shadow that Satan had cast between man and God. Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. **Through the accumulated misrepresentations of the enemy, many were so deceived that they worshiped a false god, clothed with the attributes of the satanic character...**

What does this look like? Is this still happening today? Yes, this is why Malachi prophesied before the coming of the Lord Elijah would have to come again to call people back from the worship of a false god to worship of the God of love!

“**The Teacher** from heaven, no less a personage than the **Son of God, came to earth to reveal the character of the Father to men**, that they might worship him in spirit and in truth...

What was the issue that Christ came to reveal? Why?

“Christ revealed to men the fact that the **strictest adherence to ceremony and form would not save them**; for the kingdom of God was spiritual in its nature...

Whoa! A legal religion will not work! No amount of right behavior will save us. No legal claim works, for it is spiritual not legal in its nature. It must be experienced in the heart/mind/character of the believer!

“Christ came to the world to sow it with truth...

Where is truth sown? In inanimate material, or into hearts and minds?

“He held the keys to all the treasures of wisdom, and was able to open doors to science, and to reveal undiscovered stores of knowledge, were it essential to salvation. **He presented to men that which was exactly contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to the character of God...**

And what did Christ reveal? Are we still teaching things about God that are exactly contrary to what Christ revealed about the character of God?

“and sought to impress upon men the **paternal love of the Father**, who "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life..." [John 3:16.] He taught them honesty, forbearance, mercy, and



compassion, enjoining upon them to love not only those who loved them, but those who hated them, who treated them spitefully. **In this he was revealing to them the character of the Father**, who is long-suffering, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and full of goodness and truth...

What was revealed about the Father? Does legal penalty theologies teach this about God? No, it teaches God cannot and will not forgive without a legal payment. That our security is not in a trust relationship with God, but in a legal payment made to God to protect us from God. God cannot pour out His Spirit upon us until we disabuse ourselves of this lie about Him!

Those who accepted his teaching were under the guardian care of angels, who were commissioned to strengthen, to enlighten, that the truth might renew and sanctify the soul...

What does the truth do? It renews and sanctifies the soul. And where is the truth to be applied? To God or into the minds and hearts of sinners? And what is a metaphor for the truth? The blood of Jesus! Thus Jesus taught we are to drink His blood. But the legal view has the blood, i.e. the truth, being applied to God! This again cheats the sinner from partaking what Christ has provided.

“Christ declares the mission he had in coming to the earth...

What do you think that mission was? The lie of the legal view is to do something to God legally to restrain God's wrath from killing us. Notice what this author says.

“He says in his last public prayer, "O righteous Father, the world has not known you: but **I have known you**, and these have known that you have sent me. And **I have declared unto them your name**, and will declare it; that the love wherewith you have loved me may be in them, and I in them." [John 17:25, 26.] ...

What was His mission? To reveal the Father – for what purpose? So the lies may be dispelled and we can actually know God for ourselves *so that* His love may be restored in us!

“When Moses asked the Lord to show him his glory, the Lord said, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee." [Exodus 33:19.] "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty. . . . And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped." [Exodus 34:6-8.] ...

Why does God not clear the guilty? Because those who refuse Him remain in their terminal condition and cannot be cleared. Reality is what reality is – we are either reconciled to God and healed to be like Him, love restored in us, or we remain selfish. God CANNOT heal a mind, transform a character, against the free will of that person. Thus He **cannot clear the conscience, clear the heart, clear the mind, clear the character** of the guilty, those who distrust Him. The



legal view would have you misunderstand this and think God cannot clear the legal record of the guilty who haven't accepted the legal payment. This lie diverts the mind away from what God is actually trying to do – heal His children, to clear their minds, hearts and characters of sin. Thus the legal view causes people to rest secure in a false system that leaves them in the bondage of sin, while they claim healing. It is diabolical and it has infected our church and holds millions captive!

“When we are able to comprehend the character of God as did Moses, we too shall make haste to bow in adoration and praise. Jesus contemplated nothing less than "that the love wherewith Thou hast love me" [John 17:26.] should be in the hearts of his children, that they might impart the knowledge of God to others.

O what an assurance is this, that the love of God may abide in the hearts of all who believe in him!...

What is necessary for this love to abide in our hearts? Rejecting the lies and returning to the truth such that we trust Him!

“O what salvation is provided; for he is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him. In wonder we exclaim, How can these things be? But **Jesus will be satisfied with nothing less than this...**

Why will nothing less that this satisfy Jesus and God? Because this is the basis for life. Just as a parent whose child was dying from cancer would be satisfied with nothing less than complete healing of their child, so too God is only satisfied with the complete healing and restoration of His children.]

“Those who are partakers of his sufferings here, of his humiliation, enduring for his name's sake, are to have the love of God bestowed upon them as it was upon the Son. One who knows, has said, "The Father himself loveth you." [John 16:27.] **One who has had an experimental knowledge** of the length, and breadth, and height, and depth of that love, has declared unto us this amazing fact. **This love is ours through faith in the Son of God**, therefore a connection with Christ means everything to us. **We are to be one with him as he is one with the Father**, and then we are beloved by the infinite God as members of the body of Christ, as branches of the living Vine...

What does it mean, if we accept Christ by faith, THEN we are beloved of the infinite God? Doesn't God love us before? Yes He does, “For God so loved the world...” This is talking, not about God's love for us, but our ability to be-loved by the Father. We cannot be-loved, i.e. have the love of God flow into and through us UNTIL we are connected to Christ. The Father's love is obstructed from us until we are united in a trust relationship with Jesus, then we are branches on the Vine.

“We are to be attached to the parent stock, and to receive nourishment from the Vine. Christ is our glorified Head, and the divine love flowing from the heart of God, rests in Christ, and



is communicated to those who have been united to him. **This divine love entering the soul inspires** it with gratitude, **frees it** from its spiritual feebleness, from pride, vanity, and selfishness, and from all that would deform the Christian character..." {CE pp 73 - 75}

"To save the transgressor of God's law, Christ, the one equal with the Father, came to live heaven before men, that they might learn to know what it is to have heaven in the heart..."

What did Christ come to do to save us? Reveal the Father so that God's law of love can be restored into the HEARTS of those who trust Him. It is not a legal payment made in heavenly courts!]

"He illustrated what man must be to be worthy of the precious boon of the life that measures with the life of God. {CE 76.2}

The life of Christ was a life charged with a divine message of the love of God, and he longed intensely to impart this love to others in rich measure. Compassion beamed from his countenance, and his conduct was characterized by grace, humility, truth, and love. **Every member of his church militant must manifest the same qualities, if he would join the church triumphant...**

Why? What is the church militant – it is the church at war – what kind of war? A war over the knowledge of God, thus in order to triumph, we must come back to the truth about God as revealed in Jesus, trust Him such that we open our hearts to Him and experience His love reproduced in us!

"The love of Christ is so broad, so full of glory, that in comparison to it, everything that men esteem as great, dwindles into insignificance. When we obtain a view of it, we exclaim, O the depth of the riches of the love that God bestowed upon men in the gift of his only begotten Son!

When we seek for appropriate language in which to **describe the love** of God, we find words too tame, too weak, too far beneath the theme, and we lay down our pen and say, "No, it cannot be described." We can only do as did the beloved disciple, and say, "Behold, what **manner of love** the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." [1 John 3:1.] In attempting any description of **this love**, we feel that we are as infants lisping their first words. Silently we may adore; for silence in this matter is the only eloquence. This **love** is past all language to describe. **It is the mystery of God in the flesh**, God in Christ, and divinity in humanity. Christ bowed down in unparalleled humility, that in his exaltation to the throne of God, he might also exalt those who believe in him, to a seat with him upon his throne. **All who look upon Jesus in faith that the wounds and bruises that sin has made will be healed in him, shall be made whole.**

The themes of redemption are momentous themes, and **only those who are spiritually minded can discern their depth and significance...**



What does it mean to be spiritually minded? To think through the lens of Jesus Christ enlightened by the Holy Spirit. To reject the views of the world, including worldly imposed law constructs]

“It is our **safety, our life, our joy**, to dwell upon the truths of the plan of salvation.” {CER pp 76-77}

What does it mean our safety, life and joy to dwell these truths? Because by beholding we are changed, we are set free and transformed.

“Faith and prayer are necessary in order that we may behold the deep things of God. **Our minds are so bound about with narrow ideas, that we catch but limited views of the experience it is our privilege to have.** How little do we comprehend what is meant by the prayer of the apostle, when he says, "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, **being rooted and grounded in love**, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to **know the love of Christ**, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. [Ephesians 3:16-21.]" -- Review and Herald, Nov. 17, 1891.

Do you see how the truth about God's character of love is obscured by teaching God's law is imposed and God is the source of inflicted pain and suffering? It undermines love. The doctrine of penal substitution is part of the reason why our church has stumbled in finishing the work of taking the final message to the world. It misrepresents God because it mixes truth and error.

We must reject it and come back to worship Him who made the heavens, earth, sea and all that in them is! We must worship the Designer!

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “The act of...” Does the Bible put the seat of wisdom in the ears instead of the brain? NO! The ears are metaphor to teach what? To teach that wisdom is not in hearing the words, but in understanding the words, which is in the brain/mind.

Thus Jesus said over and over again, “Whoever has ears let him hear.” Which means, whoever has a mind open to comprehend and understand the truth, let him understand.

The lesson states the first act of wisdom is to listen – but what does this mean?



It means, not to hear what is being said, but to comprehend, to understand, which is not with the ears, but with the mind – haven't you heard people say:

- Do you hear what I am saying?
- Are you listening?
- Do you hear me?

Are these words about the actual hearing or about understanding? Likewise, when it comes to wisdom from God it starts with a mind open to think, to reason, to contemplate, to comprehend, to understand, to investigate, to search for the truth.

From the book *Christ's Object Lessons*:

Merely to hear or to read the word is not enough. He who desires to be profited by the Scriptures must meditate upon the truth that has been presented to him. By earnest attention and prayerful thought **he must learn the meaning** of the words of truth, and drink deep of the spirit of the holy oracles. {COL 59.5}

Infants don't do this – infants take the reading of the word at face value – The Bible said it, I believe it that settles it. Those who defend the legal position take this infant approach to reading the Scripture, think concretely, insist on using symbolic language without searching for the meaning of the metaphor. In recent online discussions with those who hold the legal view, they consistently went back to the metaphor of blood, and the blood being offered to the Father. They refused to interpret the meaning of the blood, or to think through Jesus' words about how we must drink His blood.

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read Proverbs 5, which is about being wise and not listening to the alluring temptations of the adulteress.

Read second paragraph, "The first danger..." I like where the lesson is leading that the first danger lies with ourselves, but I would go more basic than merely looking at our words and suggest the first danger lies with our hearts, our minds, our motives, our beliefs, our fears, our insecurities, our pride etc. It is from the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks... so our words will reflect the heart – our first danger is the quality of our heart.

We must have new hearts and right motives. This is another problem with legal/penal theologies, they place the focus on legal pardon and forgiveness, claiming the legal work of Christ in heaven to get your legal salvation, but cheat people to a great degree from the victorious life in Christ. They claim they teach about sanctification, but in the legal model, sanctification is very much bent toward a will power works system of rules to restrict bad behavior.



There is no power in that theology, it traps people in a false security of believing they are saved, while they continue to destroy their souls with sinful living, even if that living is religious in nature, like the Pharisees in Christ's day.

The message of Jesus is, "I love you and worked out a perfect human life, that you could not work out for yourselves. If you get to know me, and stop being afraid of me, and open your heart in trust, I will send the Spirit who will GIVE you a new heart and right spirit. You won't have to work to change yourself, because you can't change yourself. You will instead have my character, my law of love, written into your heart, mind, character. You will be renewed in mind to be like me. Your thoughts will be brought into unity with mine and you will find peace and joy for your soul."

This is the Gospel – that God is not like Satan says, that Jesus came to reveal the Father to us, to win us to trust, and develop a perfect humanity to provide us as a free gift if we will surrender to Him and allow His Spirit to live in our hearts.

But self doesn't want to surrender, so self deceives and teaches a legal religion in which self survives under the cloak of accepting a legal payment applied in the ledgers of a heavenly court.

Now, back to the power of words – because while it is true that words reveal what is in the heart, they also have power to react upon the mind to reinforce thoughts. This is out of the book *The Desire of Ages*:

Closely connected with Christ's warning in regard to the sin against the Holy Spirit is a warning against idle and evil words. The words are an indication of that which is in the heart. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." **But the words are more than an indication of character; they have power to react on the character.** Men are influenced by their own words. **Often under a momentary impulse, prompted by Satan, they give utterance to jealousy or evil surmising, expressing that which they do not really believe; but the expression reacts on the thoughts. They are deceived by their words, and come to believe that true which was spoken at Satan's instigation.** Having once expressed an opinion or decision, **they are often too proud to retract it, and try to prove themselves in the right, until they come to believe that they are.** It is dangerous to utter a word of doubt, dangerous to question and criticize divine light. **The habit of careless and irreverent criticism reacts upon the character,** in fostering irreverence and unbelief. Many a man indulging this habit has gone on unconscious of danger, until he was ready to criticize and reject the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." {DA 323.1}

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Someone once said..." Why? Why do we need protection from our friends?



Because the closer we are to someone, the more we trust them, the greater their influence, the easier their ideas can influence us, the more quickly we are to accept what they say without investigation, without examination, without thinking it through for ourselves. Because we find them trustworthy we are more easily swayed, so if a friend is deceived they have more power to deceive us. Examples:

- Lucifer in heaven – one of the reasons he was so successful in deceiving 1/3 of the angels is because they trusted him
- Adam and Eve –
- Samson and Delilah –

Thus, we must always think for ourselves and evaluate for ourselves the evidence, not accusing someone of lying, but realizing a person could sincerely believe a lie and not realize they themselves have been tricked or deceived.

Read second paragraph, “While the torah...” What is justice? Doing what is right or just – and in God’s universe what determines what is right or just? God’s law – which is what? The law of love – so how do we apply it this context?

We consider what action is designed to be most beneficial to the other person – in their eternal best interest.

Thus 2Thes 3:10 “The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.”

How is this an act of love?

So balancing the two – when do we loan and when do we not?

Read last paragraph, “No matter...” Why is this so important? What are the potential problems if we fail to do this?

Never set a boundary you are not willing to enforce – why?

Don’t commit to things you cannot fulfill – why?

Because it undermines your integrity – it teaches people that you don’t keep your word, that you cannot be relied upon, you cannot be trusted and within your own mind it undermines confidence, produces guilt, shame, fear, insecurity, doubt.

Why then would people make promises they cant keep?

- Fear of rejection
- Wanting to be liked



- Good intentions, but not actually considering the costs
- Wanting to, but not having the ability to, so agreeing because they want to show their support, but failing because they don't have the ability

WEDNESDAY

What lessons can we learn from the ant?

1. To communicate
 - a. Some ants leave chemical signals to lead their coworkers to the food sources
 - b. other ants have teacher ants that when they find food go back and lead by instructing and showing the way to the food
2. To nurture and protect the next generation
3. To ignore little distractions and stay on mission
4. To work together as a team for the larger purpose
5. That we are not alone
6. To share what we have with others
 - a. whether knowledge or resources or energy or ability
 - b. this is the law of love in action giving for the benefit of others
7. That success requires the ability to adapt and change to our surroundings
8. That success only comes through application and work
9. If obstacles occur, don't give up
10. If an obstacle is too big for you, then get help
11. Prepare for the future by making wise decisions today

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, "If you indulge..." Discuss BDNF and ProBDNF and neuroplasticity

Read bottom paragraph, "Meanwhile..." Sin does harm both the one sinned against and the sinner, what is the difference in the type of harm each experience?

The one sinned against can be harmed:

- physically
- emotionally
- relationally
- financially
- occupationally
- and tempted to do evil in response, but, they are not harmed spiritually unless they choose to harbor resentment, bitterness, anger, unforgiveness and malice in the heart

The one who sins damages:



- character
- reason
- conscience
- integrity
- reputation
- relationships
- health

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions 2,3



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Opportunity to Share:

The General Conference of SDA will have its meeting (which occurs every five years) in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. 50,000-70,000 Adventist from all over the world are expected to attend. This presents an opportunity to share this healing message about God in a most impactful way.

We plan on giving away our DVDs, Dr. Jennings' Book *Could It Be This Simple?* and other materials. This will be an enormous project. If you would like to share in this opportunity, you can do so by making donations to *Come and Reason Ministries* either via Paypal, or check mailed to our address below.

New Mailing Address: PLEASE UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS BOOK:

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Come and Reason Ministries FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

Jan 10, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven, formerly Elmshaven, SDA church.

Jan 24, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Monterey Peninsula SDA Church

February 21, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be presenting the God and Your Brain Seminar at Shilo Inn. 3223 Bret Clodfelter Way, The Dalles, Oregon. For more info and to register for this free conference contact Joyce Browne at 541-300-0111.

March 13-14, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in NYC at the Advent Hope Outreach Health Event.

March 27-28, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the University of Tennessee Health Science, Psychiatry and Family Medicine Conference in Memphis, TN.

April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.



April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May 17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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Proverbs 1Q 2015 Lesson 3

A Matter of Life and Death

SABBATH

Read memory verse: “For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life.” (Prov 6:23 NKJV)

What does it mean? Why is the commandment a lamp and the law a light?

I checked the SDA Bible commentary on this passage and this is what it said:

Those who regard the law as an arbitrary forbidding of desirable pleasures have an entirely perverted idea. The law is a lamp to enlighten the mind and show the way of happiness, peace, and eternal life¹

Do you agree that those who present God’s law as arbitrary have a perverted idea of the law?

So, how is the law a light? Only when understood as Design Law, as the protocols upon which life operates, then it enlightens our mind to God’s character, how the universe operates, how life and health and relationships actually work.

When we infect the idea of God’s law with human law, imposed law, then we darken the mind. This battle between God’s design law of love and imposed rules that require external enforcement is at the root of the controversy between Christ and Satan and the oscillation between enlightenment and darkness.

- Prior to sin in heaven no concept of law and all beings lived in an enlightened state
 - Satan alleged God’s law is imposed rules and God an arbitrary dictator and 1/3 of the angels became darkened
- God created earth, built upon Design law, the law of love built right into the fabric of reality. Adam and Eve lived in a free and enlightened state. God warned them that to deviate from the design would take them out of harmony from how life is constructed and they would die.
 - Satan alleged God simply made up rules arbitrarily is trying to keep them from full happiness and development by restricting their choices. That they really wouldn’t die if they ate the fruit, implying it would require God to kill. Something many theologians today teach.

¹ Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1977). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 3, p. 967). Review and Herald Publishing Association.



- God worked through His friends in human history to teach the truth about His kingdom. Israel was given a beautiful theater and script to act out the problem of sin, how deviation from the design destroys, yet how God would send a savior to restore us to unity.
 - Satan infected their mind with distortions about God's law and had them view it as imposed rules to keep on pain of inflicted death. Thus, they fell into darkness of mind and hardness of heart.
- Jesus came and was the light of the world to reveal the truth about God's character and methods of love.
 - Satan twisted everything Christ did and opposed Christ through the religious institution that had accepted the lie about God's law. They preferred the darkness of a dictator God and imposed punishments to the light of Christ and therefore killed Christ.
- God sent His Holy Spirit poured out upon the church empowering them to lighten the world with His character of love. And the early church loved each other, lived communally, shared to help each other, refused to try and take over the state or fight with the state.
 - Satan countered by infecting the church with imposed law constructs when Constantine converted, teaching that God's law is like human law, imposed requiring God to be paid a legal penalty by the death of His Son. And the world fell into an age of Darkness – the Dark Ages. Why? Because they rejected the truth about God and His design law, accepting Satan's lie about God and God's law.
- Then the Reformation began, when people began looking to Scripture and began throwing off some of the imposed law ideas. The most distorted and extreme of these ideas. And what happened? The renaissance the world moved out of darkness into an age of enlightenment. And this was fueled by science, which began working on design law.
 - Satan responded by contrasting design law found in science and nature with the arbitrariness of law taught in religion and infected humanity with the idea of atheism. And the world began fracturing into divergent forms of darkness.
- God continued to bless the Reformation, bringing more and more light, leading us back to an integrative evidence based approach, where we harmonize all three threads, Scripture, Science, and Experience – through the lens of design law.
 - Satan has countered by working to reject the integrative approach for sola scriptura, rejecting design law for imposed law, and continued promotion of arbitrary God constructs – thus paralyzing the church and preventing the final message to prepare the world for Christ's return.

I received this email this week:

Dear Dr. Jennings and the team at Come and Reason Ministries,

Thank you for your message of God's Natural Law of Love and the message of true healing which Jesus accomplished and offers to me. My husband and I have experienced significant healing in our happiness and how we see others in just a short year after learning that the



imposed law system is not from God. We are eager to learn to treat others with the same love, other centered, as God has shown to us through your messages, and to keep giving Him glory (telling others of His character of love and life and giving and freedom).

It is beyond me how any church leader, pastor or theologian could not want to believe the natural law construct. It offers the most realistic explanation of forgiveness and righteousness by faith I have ever heard, and I doubt that anybody could make this stuff up...it is just so NOT like the way we usually think. The punishment by a Roman dictator explanation is the perfect one for us to make up...my sinful nature naturally wants to be controlling or to be controlled to make me feel better about my survival and my guilt. How sick is that? Anyway, I am really praying that this message spreads. Now that God has given me the chance to see the truth about Him, I have started to read E. G. White's book, The Desire of Ages, and it makes sense! Finally. She was an amazing friend of God.

I am a substitute teacher for an adult Sabbath School class at our church. One Sabbath after class, our young adult Sabbath school leader came up to me and said, "I am hearing a lot of Tim Jennings from you today." His wife held up the printed notes from your class as I held up mine. We were both excited and surprised. I am very happy that at least two families in our church are not only benefiting from your ministry and message of truth, but that we are teachers and can keep urging our fellow believers to think and to gain from these truths, too. We are happy to be making a contribution to your ministry today on the internet, in hopes that God will multiply it for His use, especially as you prepare for the GC session this July in San Antonio, Texas.

Please send us four copies of each of your DVD seminars. We are eager to share them with family, church members and people in the community. We have a huge Baptist Church here in Tyler, Texas. It is my secret hope that God will see fit to have them bring you to speak to them. I would like to give copies of your seminars to their pastoral staff.

Thoughts?

Read first two paragraphs, "Two brothers..." What is this story a good example of and what is it a poor example of?

This is a good example of childish thinking – how children reason. They are concerned with whether mommy will be mad. They are not concerned about living in harmony with how life is designed, only with mommy's response to their behavior. This is childish thinking and because they understand their mommy loves them they rightly concluded mommy wouldn't kill them if they ate some of the cake, so they eat the cake.

However, this is a bad example to teach what the problem is with eating the cake without permission. This makes it appear legal, imposed, threat of punishment. But the real problem is the breakdown of love and trust in the hearts and characters of the boys. Their actions would incite in



them fear and insecurity, guilt and shame, and result in activating stress circuits, survival modes of trying to protect self, likely blaming each other when mother came home, trying to make excuses to justify. In other words, they changed themselves. It was an unavoidable, natural result of deviating from the law of love.

I suspect there are people who when reading this example will think like children in its application to God and Eden, but will conclude God doesn't love as much as that mother, and He will use power to kill, except for Jesus who steps in and offers Himself so the Father won't kill us.

Such concepts are, like the SDA Bible commentary said, "perversion" of the truth about God and His law. First, Jesus was the member of the Godhead who created Adam and Eve. Jesus was the member of the Godhead who told them of the danger in eating the fruit. And the Father, Son and Holy Spirit all three love us so much they would NOT kill Adam and Eve for eating of the fruit.

No, but what they did do is warn Adam and Eve of what would happen to them if they deviated from how life is designed to operate, how they would be changed and that change would separate them from the source of life and cause them to die.

The last paragraph states, "In the end, our ultimate destiny, our eternal destiny (and what could be more important than that?), rests upon the choices that we make here, now."

I believe it is true that our destiny, our eternal destiny rests upon the choices we make here and now – but, what of the parenthetical question – what could be more important than that?

Does that idea tend to direct us toward a selfish, childish, salvation? Is there nothing more important than I get saved?

Did Moses think this when God sounded angry with the people? No, Moses thought God's reputation and even the people were more important than self – why? Because Moses loved God and others, parents, how many of you would sacrifice your life for your child – is there anything more important than your destiny?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "As we saw..." Generally, in the Bible the heart refers to the mind, whereas the bowels refer to the emotions.

Then spake the woman whose the living child *was* unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, *but* divide *it*. 1Kings 3:26 KJV



The real mother, her heart full of love for her son, said to the king, “Please, Your Majesty, don’t kill the child! Give it to her!”

But the other woman said, “Don’t give it to either of us; go ahead and cut it in two.” 1Kings 3:26 GNT

So, what does it mean to have the law written in the heart?

It is the same as the seal of God – it is being so settled into the truth both intellectually and spiritually that one cannot be moved – and what does that mean?

The truth is the truth about God, His character and Design for love i.e. His law of love.

Intellectually would mean our ability to understand and appreciate love, how it functions, God as the source of love and life and what actions are inconsistent with this, so that we cannot be deceived by presentations of God that are contrary to His character of love.

Spiritually means we love it, not only do we understand it, but as the primary motivator in our lives this is what we love, long for, desire to be like and nothing could displace this from our heart’s affection and longing.

MONDAY

Read the bottom paragraph, “Since the Fall...” How is it true that our hope for eternal life cannot be found in the law?

- When we view the law as a system of rules to be observed or obeyed, then our healing cannot come from the law
- When we view God’s law as imposed and salvation a legal right, and we get it by claiming the blood of Jesus to protect us from God, and that justification is a legal notation in record books in heaven, where God declares us righteous even though we are not – I question whether this can result in salvation

How is it not true? In other words, how can our hope be found in the law?

- When we view the law as Design law, the law of love, an expression of the divine character, then the more we understand and experience it the more we are won to trust in the God who is love, (in other words our distrusting hearts are reset to a state of trust in God, this is setting us right or justification) in that trust we open our hearts and the Spirit comes in and writes the law on our hearts and minds (this is sanctification). Thus we become like Christ in character by the power of God restoring the law of love in us!

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “When a religious person...” Examples of using religion to justify iniquity?



- All acts of selfishness done in God's name
 - Corban
 - Racism, castism
 - Inequality of the sexes, using religion to suggest that just because of genetics one person has a higher station in God's cause than another
 - The perversion of marriage with women being held in some form of subjugation in their own homes by authoritarian dictator husbands
 - Refusing to help another because it is Sabbath
- Retribution and vengeance done in God's name
 - Burning people at the stake
 - Taliban killing people who convert to Christianity
 - Seeking to expel people from Christian fellowship for holding different views on matters
- **Nothing more dangerous in the world than someone on a mission for God, who doesn't actually know God!**
- others?

Read the last paragraph, "The law is..." What do you think of, "Only the imperative of the law and the duty of obedience will help us resist her alluring words..."

Does the law help us resist? Or does the law point out danger, error, sin, but the power to resist comes from Christ?

And if we view the law through the Roman lens does it provide power, or undermine power to resist? It undermines it. Imposed law constructs create self-centered hard-hearted Christians that look like Pharisees. Those with will power over sensual sin, diet, drugs, alcohol, sex, and thus don't stumble with these issues in life, will often end up arrogant, proud, judgmental, critical, and without grace or compassion. They, under the guise of religion, abuse people struggling with temptation, because they focus on the law and the legal solution to it.

We must come back to the truth of God's law, that it is design law, the law of love and understanding when we are deviant we go to our Creator and ask Him to heal and restore and give power to live victoriously!

When we realize the design law is God's law, then when someone tempts us we see it like them tempting us to join do drugs – while the experience might be "pleasurable" we understand it is actually damaging to us and them. We are not mad at them, we have compassion and concern, for them and have no desire to join them in their self destruction. All sin is like this!

Does the lesson sound like it is focusing on performance, behavior, rather than heart motive?



What is really at issue – the behavior or the motive? What is the problem if one make sin about the behavior merely?

People will falsely judge others, but worse, people will commit sin by keeping the rules. Why didn't the Levite and Priest help the man beaten beside the road in Jesus' parable? Because they were keeping to their rules to not become unclean – keeping the law caused them so sin, because they viewed the law as rules, rather than design law of love.

Would it be sin for a person who understood that sexual behavior outside of marriage is wrong, to knowingly, willfully, choose to over and over again go to a person knowing that going to them would result in a sexual act between the two?

Years ago I had a patient, who told me her father used to molest her and her little sister. Father had a particular pattern of coming home from work, before mother got home, and molesting the girls. Typically, he would violate only one on any given day. As the time for him to come home approached my patient's little sister would begin hyperventilating, panicking, crying, become terrified and hide under the bed. My patient hated to see her sister like this, so my patient began purposely presenting herself to her father, knowing exactly what would transpire, in order to protect her little sister. Was it sinful for my patient to do this? Or, was it an incredible act of self-sacrifice to protect another?

Sin is violation of love – it is selfishness – one way selfishness can express itself is through sexual indulgence to *gratify self* – persons who cheat to gratify self. Many Christians, who do not think, who take a legal approach to Christianity, view the Commandment as a rule of behavior and thus determine adultery is about the act, about behavior.

However, a mature Christian realizes it isn't the act, it is the motive of the heart. Thus, in the case of my patient, even though she knowingly chose to take an action which repeatedly resulted in a sexual act, it was NOT an act of selfishness or self-gratification on her part, it was an act of self-sacrifice, and therefore was an act of love, totally in harmony with God's character and nature.

Was sexual relations between David and Bathsheba sin? When did sexual relations between David and Bathsheba no longer constitute sin? Why?

WEDNESDAY

Read first two paragraph, "Right after his warning..." Can we agree that desperation does not justify sin? Absolutely, the question is what is sin?

The lesson wants us to focus merely on behavior and not think – so lets try that approach.



The Commandment says not to work on Sabbath, so on Sabbath you see a person beside the road who has been beaten. You are a nurse or doctor or EMT, but off duty, because it is the Sabbath and you don't work on Sabbath. If you are a thoughtless rule keeper you don't help the person because you must obey the law – but if you understand the law is the law of love, then you are compelled to love others, especially on Sabbath and you gladly work to save them.

The issue is NOT the behavior, but the motive – are you acting for self or selflessly loving others – the person who keeps the Sabbath and doesn't help the person is acting selfishly, more concerned about their legal condition with God than loving another person.

Any other examples?

What about you are in Afghanistan today as an aide worker helping people. The Taliban kidnaps an American journalist and is threatening to behead him. An opportunity presents for you to rescue him, but the only way to do so is to steal one of the Taliban trucks and sabotage the others by cutting their tires so they can't follow. What do you do? Is it sin to steal?

Even if a person believes that stealing the truck to save the journalist is sin, and would condemn themselves to hell if they did, but they choose to do it anyway, is that sin or a supreme act of self sacrifice and love? “Greater love has no man than to give his life for a friend.”

This week someone emailed me a link to the *Record* an SDA publication in the Pacific Union. It had the following article. I have included the link in the notes:

Date line changed in Samoa

Apia, Samoa

On Thursday, December 29, at midnight, Samoa skipped forward a day to Saturday, December 31, in order to align its calendar with Australia, New Zealand and Asia. In so doing, the government eliminated an entire Friday from the weekly cycle. The change resulted in Saturday being renamed Sunday, and Sunday being renamed Monday.

In line with biblical precepts on the subject, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Samoa continues to observe the biblical Sabbath on the seventh day of the weekly cycle, irrespective of the change of name to Sunday... Similar changes to the IDL have already taken place with Samoa's near neighbours, Kiribati and Tonga. Consistency has been the hallmark of the Churches position in dealing with government inspired changes in the recording of time.

http://record.adventistconnect.org/site_data/88/assets/0034/6941/RECORD_2_lowrez.pdf

So, in three countries SDA churches have had splits some now meet on Sunday each week other on Saturday – thoughts?

What would you do? What is the right response?

Do you see this is only a problem for those with an imposed law construct. Understanding design law, and that the Sabbath was designed by God as a day of rest in Eden, then one doesn't have a problem at all, why?

Are those people in Australia and New Zealand and Asia, who observe the Sabbath, actually breaking the Sabbath and worshipping on Friday?

Then, if those persons in Samoa and Tonga etc. worship at the same time as the people of Australia and New Zealand, how is it some other day?

The Sabbath that Jesus kept 2000 years ago in Jerusalem, is the same weekly day that the Jews in Jerusalem keep today. The earth rotates on its axis and thus, no matter where we are in the world, we can observe the same day as they do in Jerusalem. The only question is, do we start and end that day before or after they do in Jerusalem?

The governments of the world determine the international date line, this is not established in God's word. Since the governments chose to realign their day, they didn't switch to a different day, they only moved the Sabbath to begin and end at a different time in relationship to Jerusalem, either before or after, but the same day. Moving the worship to Sunday in those countries means they are actually worshipping on a different day than Jerusalem.

Is God looking on the behavior of those SDAs now worshipping on Sunday, or those worshipping on Saturday, or the heart motive of each?

What about the rest of Christianity whose hearts are right with God, but worship on Sunday?

What about killing another person, is it always sin to do so?

- Killing others – could a person make a decision based on love to end the life of another?
 - The flight in PA in 2001 when the passengers realized they had been hijacked and the hijackers were intent on using the plane they were in to kill others. The passengers chose to assault the hijackers, kill if necessary to stop them. Right or wrong? Could their actions have been an expression of love?
 - More than 20 years ago here in Chattanooga, a man walked into the ICU at one of the hospitals and shot his wife in the head. They had been married more than 40 years and had had a massive stroke and was on a ventilator. She had told him she never wanted to be kept alive like this. The doctors wouldn't remove her from the ventilator. This was in the days before advanced directives, so he shot her. Was it an act of love or selfishness?
 - I remember watching a western when I was a kid. The movie depicted two close friends who were cowboys. One of them was captured by Apache and was staked out



and being tortured. The friend was on a ridge above watching the thousands of Indians torture his friend. He shot his friend through the heart giving him a quick death. Was it an act of selfishness or love?

- What about man who walks in and a crazed person on crack is threatening his family? What if it was his son?
 - If you knew your wife was in saving relationship with Jesus – what would be her eternal destiny if she died?
 - If believed your son hadn't yet accepted Christ and was crazed on drugs threatening to kill your wife, what would be his eternal destiny if you shot and killed him to save your wife?
 - If you love them both, and want to spend eternity with both, what action do you take and why? Who needs time to come to repentance? Does this give any insight as to why God sometimes doesn't act to stop crimes?
 - Does it give insight as to why we are not to judge another?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "Most people don't think..." What does it mean the wages of sin is death? Why?

What did God mean when He told Adam in the day you eat you will die?

If we teach that God must kill, which is not what the Bible teaches, what are the consequences for believing this? Here are the lies:

- Good and evil exist eternally in God's character as He is the source of both life and death
- Nothing wrong with sin, something wrong with God, if He would leave us alone and not kill us we could live forever in sin
- Sin is a legal problem requiring a legal solution, which results in false security and people continuing in their terminal condition but believing they are saved
- Makes God out to be a dictator and undermines trust

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Opportunity to Share:

The General Conference of SDA will have its meeting (which occurs every five years) in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. 50,000-70,000 Adventist from all over the world are expected to attend. This presents an opportunity to share this healing message about God in a most impactful way.

We plan on giving away our DVDs, Dr. Jennings' Book *Could It Be This Simple?* and other materials. This will be an enormous project. If you would like to share in this opportunity, you can do so by making donations to *Come and Reason Ministries* either via Paypal, or check mailed to our address below.

New Mailing Address: PLEASE UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS BOOK:

Come and Reason Ministries
PO Box 28266
Chattanooga, TN 37424

The Journal of the Watcher:

The Journal of the Watcher is an illustrated eBook available

For ANDROID devices in the Google Play Store
For APPLE iOS and MacOS in the iBooks store
For APPLE iOS devices in the iTunes App Store

Each has slightly different controls and features.

We are also having it rendered as a secure iTunes VIDEO for all those who don't have mobile devices or Apple computers. We will let you know when it is available in iTunes (however, it will lack any interactive capabilities and simply be a linear, sequential "slide show" that follows the narrated sound track).

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Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages



our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

Jan 10, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven, formerly Elmshaven, SDA church.

Jan 24, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Monterey Peninsula SDA Church

February 21, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be presenting the God and Your Brain Seminar at Shilo Inn. 3223 Bret Clodfelter Way, The Dalles, Oregon. For more info and to register for this free conference contact Joyce Browne at 541-300-0111.

March 13-14, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in NYC at the Advent Hope Outreach Health Event.

March 27-28, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the University of Tennessee Health Science, Psychiatry and Family Medicine Conference in Memphis, TN.

April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May 17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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1st Quarter 2015 Proverbs Lesson 4

Divine Wisdom

Memory Text: “The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old”
Proverbs 8:22 NKJV

- Is there any other kind of wisdom
- Wisdom is “Fullness of knowledge and its application”
- Knowledge and practice for good / right
- Knowledge of evil and its practice for lies and distortion

When Adam and Eve rebelled:

they did receive knowledge of Good & Evil

- Was that wisdom?
- Was it given to them?
- Who gave it to them?

Wisdom

One of the definitions of wisdom is “the accumulated knowledge of the ages.” Just because knowledge is accumulated, does not mean it is good.

Time

does not sanctify error

Just because a belief is held for a long period of time, does not mean it is truth

Popularity

In this day and age, opinion polls are considered extremely important: Just because something is held to be true by a large number of people, does not mean it is true or good.

Sincerity

Just because a person is sincere does not mean what they believe is correct.

- A person sincerely driving on the wrong side of the road is not likely to safely arrive at their destination.
- A person sincerely going in the wrong direction will not arrive on time, at the right place or with the right outcome.
- Sincerely operating on the wrong extremity will result in the right outcome.

It may be important to differentiate Wisdom from Righteousness. Righteousness: the right thing to do. It is right because it leads to the right outcome, it is consistent with how something was designed.

You can't make something “right” by declaring it to be so.

- You can only make a judgement based on what something is.



- The quality of that judgement is based on
- Who is making the judgement and are they competent to do so.
- How accurate is the benchmark or mechanism for measurement.

I personally do not believe that even God can make something so by declaring it to be so unless that declaration implies Action of Creation.

SABBATH

Read Sabbath Afternoon's lesson from the lesson guide

Thinking about Wisdom and Divine Wisdom

- Did the Pharisees have truth?
- Did they have wisdom?
- Did they have understanding?
- How are we as current day Christians different?

Paint by numbers vs art

- Both are visual depictions of reality
- From a distance they may even seem similar
- What is the difference?
- How do you see Divine Wisdom?
- Is it artistry or paint by numbers?

When we hear statements about God filling us and living His life out through us, what does that look like?

Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.

It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2 Peter 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain. {COL 69.2}

We are to pray for divine enlightenment, but at the same time we should be careful how we receive everything termed new light. We must beware lest, under cover of searching for new truth, Satan shall divert our minds from Christ and the special truths for this time. I have been shown that it is the device of the enemy to lead minds to dwell upon some obscure or unimportant point, something that is not fully revealed or is not essential to our salvation. This is made the absorbing theme, the "present truth," when all their investigations and suppositions only serve to make matters more obscure than before, and to confuse the minds of some who



ought to be seeking for oneness through sanctification of the truth.—Preach the Word, p. 4 (1891).{CW 49.2}

It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help we are to form our opinions for ourselves as we are to answer for ourselves before God.

The truths most plainly revealed in the Bible have been involved in doubt and darkness by learned men, who, with a pretense of great wisdom, teach that the Scriptures have a mystical, a secret, spiritual meaning not apparent in the language employed. These men are false teachers. It was to such a class that Jesus declared: "Ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God." Mark 12:24. The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed. Christ has given the promise: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." John 7:17. If men would but take the Bible as it reads, if there were no false teachers to mislead and confuse their minds, a work would be accomplished that would make angels glad and that would bring into the fold of Christ thousands upon thousands who are now wandering in error....{DD 38.4}

SUNDAY

Wisdom Cries Out

Wisdom and Folly are described in anthropomorphic terms.

In the second paragraph: "However one understands these metaphors, what is clear is that wisdom is to be communicated, it is heard by all who will listen.

Can this be done? Can wisdom be communicated?

"Be still and know that I am God"

Paul's discussion with the church based in the center of Greek hedonism has something for us to consider:

1 Corinthians 1:17-25 GNB (17) Christ did not send me to baptize. He sent me to tell the Good News, and to tell it without using the language of human wisdom, in order to make sure that Christ's death on the cross is not robbed of its power. (18) For the message about Christ's death on the cross is nonsense to those who are being lost; but for us who are being saved it is God's power. (19) The scripture says, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and set aside the understanding of the scholars." (20) So then, where does that leave the wise? or the scholars? or the skillful debaters of this world? God has shown that this world's wisdom is foolishness! (21) For God in his wisdom made it impossible for people to know him by means of their own wisdom. Instead, by means of the so-called "foolish" message we preach, God decided to save



those who believe. (22) Jews want miracles for proof, and Greeks look for wisdom. (23) As for us, we proclaim the crucified Christ, a message that is offensive to the Jews and nonsense to the Gentiles; (24) but for those whom God has called, both Jews and Gentiles, this message is Christ, who is the power of God and the wisdom of God. (25) For what seems to be God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and what seems to be God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

MONDAY

Wisdom and Creation

There is a discussion about how Wisdom was in the beginning with God. Third paragraph:

“Yet, the word “beginning” in Proverbs 8:22 is used somewhat differently from the way it is used in Genesis 1. In Genesis 1:1, the word is related to the Creation itself, while in Proverbs 8:22, the word is related to God Himself, to His way (derek), which means His nature. **Thus, wisdom is part of the very nature of God Himself.**”

How do we know that?

Read last paragraph: “So, wisdom does not originate in us, . . .”

TUESDAY

Rejoicing in Creation

Read Proverbs 8:30-31 GNB “I was beside him like an architect, I was his daily source of joy, always happy in his presence -- (31) happy with the world and pleased with the human race.”

Wisdom is happy in God’s presence and pleased with the human race. When do we find God dancing?

Luke 15:7 – 10 There is a party in heaven when a lost one is saved.

WEDNESDAY

Wisdom’s Appeal

Read the second, third and fourth paragraphs. Why do you have to keep working at obtaining the wisdom of God? Why can’t you “coast?”

Read the highlighted paragraph at the bottom of the page. It says, “Happiness can be an elusive thing: the more we strive for it, the harder it seems for us to attain it.”

The United States Declaration of Independence says:



“When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. . .”

Is this wrong? How do we pursue Happiness? Is there a system or method that works better than others? Then why are people so unhappy?

Consider 1 Timothy 6:6 GW translation says “A godly life brings huge profits to people who are content with what they have.”

That is not what you will hear from any advertisement on TV / Radio / Personal Media

THURSDAY

Lesson: Either/Or

We now have a portrayal of Wisdom and Folly the Thursday’s lesson compares the two.

Read the middle three paragraphs. Have you heard wisdom and folly calling out in the streets? Who has a louder voice? How can you tell who is calling?

Can you trust your conscience to be accurate? Why or why not?

Why is Folly incorrect or a poor choice? It is not how we are made? It doesn’t obey the “rules” upon which life is constructed. It doesn’t make sense when true discernment is used to “judge” it.

Proverbs 1Q 2015 Lesson 5

The Blessings of the Righteous

SABBATH

Read memory text: “Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but violence covers the mouth of the wicked.” (Prov 10:6 NKJV)

What does this mean?

- Why are blessings upon the righteous?
 - righteous means those who are right – but in what way?
 - right in heart with God, right in their heart motives of love, restored to at-one-ment with God
 - Why is there blessing in this?
 - Because God is the source of life and health and happiness – BECAUSE all creation is designed to exist and operate only in harmony with Him. Atonement with Him means coming back into unity with how life is built to operate and there is blessing.
- Why upon their heads?
 - Because the head is symbolic of the mind, it is where we think, feel, worship, exist – thus it is in our heads that we choose to surrender to Christ, to open our being to the healing power of the Holy Spirit and in our heads/minds where we are renewed to be like Christ.
 - In the New Testament the word for soul is psyche, it is our individuality our personhood, which is what is renewed to be like Christ here and now. We don’t get new biology until the second coming, we get a new heart and right spirit now!
 - The greatest blessing is to have a character like Jesus and a mind at peace!
- Why does violence cover the wicked?
 - What happens when a person steps off a speeding train?
 - What happens when someone smokes, does illegal drugs etc?
 - What happens to the heart, mind, character of rapist?
 - Activities that deviate from design destroy, i.e. are violent
- What does it mean it covers their mouth?
 - What comes out of the mouth of the wicked?
 - Lies, falsehood, deceit, self-promotion
 - and what do lies do? They break the circle of love and trust, they break the design and result in death, violence.

Read first paragraph “As the title...” What are the implication for our theology that the word which is translated *righteous* is the same word translated *justice*? Not only is it the same Hebrew word translated this way, but in the Greek it is the same, one word translated to two in English – what is the potential problem for us?



That it allows an entire way of thinking that was never intended by God or the inspired writers – specifically, the entire penal/legal way of thinking.

Righteousness is a condition of being right, right in heart, mind, character motive with God. Justice is the same word – so what does it mean?

It is the process of doing what is right in harmony with God and his methods of love!

The *just* are those who do the *right* thing, and the right thing is defined by God's law of love, which is God's design for how the universe operates, not a code of imposed rules.

The book of Proverbs is the instruction on what is *right*. In other words, on how things actually work, on the way things are designed to function.

It is not a book of imposed rules or laws. Look at the wisdom of the Proverbs, it is all about cause and effect, about how deviation from God's design results in harm, but harmony with God's design is life!

There is no place for imposed legal penal law constructs in God's government. These ideas are part of sin, are part of a fallen world. And translating the one word into two, is one factor, amongst many, that has allowed a false legal theology to overtake much of Christianity.

THURSDAY

What is the reward of the righteous?

Being restored to God's original design to live as God originally intended!

The second paragraph states, "though we are sinners, by faith we can be 'justified freely, by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.'"

What does this mean?

What does it mean to be justified?

Do you understand this from level four and below or level five and above?

Level four and below, it is a legal fiction, created in the minds of legal thinking theologians, that doesn't actually exist in reality. It can be a helpful metaphor for the immature but it is not the reality of the universe.

It is presented something like this: justification is the legal declaration of one to be righteous in God's accounting books, even though one has not yet been made righteous. This legal righteousness is allowed because Jesus is righteous and His achievements are legally credited to your account in heaven, if you accept Him.

They make it much too complicated, confusing, and convoluted. This legal concept introduces dangerous conflicts. For instance, it has God declaring righteous people who are not. This happens because, in the legal model, justify means something different than what the Bible teaches.

When you justify the margins on your Word document what are you doing? Setting them in line, putting them right. This is justification, taking what is out of harmony with God and putting it in harmony, setting sinners right with God.

Now, this setting right of the human species was done singularly by Jesus Christ, in His life, death and resurrection, He cured the sin condition of this species.

Setting right an individual, is when a person whose natural heart condition is against God, at enmity toward God, distrusting of God, and changing that heart condition to one that genuinely trusts God.

Thus, the heart against God as been *set right, put right or justified* when it is changed from distrust to trust. This is when God counts or recognizes or declares someone righteous or justified.

Thus in Romans chapter 4, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

From my paraphrase: "Abraham trusted God, and his trust was recognized as righteousness, because the distrust caused through Satan's lies had been removed, and through trust he was endowed with a new heart, right motives and Christlike principles."

Which came first, the change in Abraham's heart toward God, or God's recognition that Abraham was righteous?

The Bible metaphor for sin is leprosy – when did the High Priest declare, or account, or reckon someone clean, before or after they were made clean? Christ cleansed the lepers and then told them to go to the priest to be "declared" clean. When was Abraham "accounted" righteous, before or after he trusted God?

thoughts?

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read Proverbs 10:1-7: "A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son brings grief to his mother."



- Isn't this how it always is, when the son does something great dad says "That's my boy," when he messes up dad turns to mom and says, "Look what your son has done now."

² Ill-gotten treasures have no lasting value, but righteousness delivers from death.

- Why? Because ill-gotten is obtained from means outside God's design and results in damage to the soul and eternal loss, What does it profit a man to gain the world and lose his soul?
- righteousness is being set right, put right, or restored to the way God constructed life to operate and thus delivers from death

³ The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.

- Is this speaking of physical food?
- Do righteous people ever starve?
- Did Jesus go hungry in the wilderness?
 - While God does provide the sunshine and the rain it is for both the righteous and the wicked.
 - The people operating at level two would take passages like this and turn them into a Bible promise book and claim them, and then when things happen that don't fit their understanding they lose faith and walk away from God.
 - No one was more righteous than Jesus and He went hungry for physical food, but He never went hungry for spiritual food.
 - "Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. (John 4:21-24)"
- What does it mean to thwart the cravings of the wicked? What do the wicked crave? How are those cravings thwarted?
 - By God's divine weapons – truth thwarts lies, freedom thwarts coercion, and love thwarts selfishness. God's goal is to thwart the wicked by replacing lies, fear and selfishness with truth love and freedom in the hearts of the wicked.

⁴ Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth.

- What does this mean?
- Is it always true?
- If you see someone in poverty does that always mean they are lazy?
- It is a general principle that no effort in doesn't generally result in positive results out
- Or is this not talking about physical wealth at all, but spiritual wealth, is it true that laziness will result in poverty of soul, but diligence to do the Lord's will results in wealth of character?



⁵ He who gathers crops in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.

- What is this verse about?
- Is it about farming?
- Or is it about fulfilling one's duties?

⁶ Blessings crown the head of the righteous, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked

- Why?

⁷ The name of the righteous is used in blessings, but the name of the wicked will rot.

- What does this mean?
- What is the significance of the name?
- It is a reflection of the character
- Thus, the character of the righteous will be a blessing – to whom?
 - To themselves, others and to God think 3 angels, to give glory to God by revealing Him in their character
- The character of the wicked rots, which means what?
 - It decays, corrodes, is destroyed by its own condition

MONDAY

The lesson speaks about how important the mouth is, how powerful, why?

The mouth communicates ideas; it is a distribution point of concepts, beliefs, thoughts, which can infect the minds of others.

Consider a virus infecting your computer – false ideas can infect the mind and corrupt one's peace, break relationships, turn people, if the person hasn't, in a relationship with the God of heaven, developed the ability to think and reason for themselves.

Consider how many young people are convinced to join various violent extremist groups. Why? How does this happen? By using the mouth, to speak words, to convey falsehood which infect the vulnerable minds of others ultimately destroying. Proverbs 10:11 states:

“The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life,
but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.”

What does it mean? How is the mouth of the righteous a fountain of life?

John 8:32 – you will know the truth and the truth will set you free – free from what?

To what do we need to be freed?

- Lies about God
- Fear and selfishness (carnal nature)

How does truth do this? What truth? The truth about God as revealed in Christ destroys the lies and wins us to trust, in trust we open the heart and experience God's love and trust and fear and selfishness are overcome.

How does the mouth of the righteous connect with this? Because the mouth of the righteous shares the truth about God, His methods, principles, and lead people out of the lies back to the source of life.

How does the mouth of the wicked conceal violence?

- By lying – how, what lies?
- Blame, displacement, externalization, distortion
- By lying about sin – sin isn't harmful, sin doesn't destroy, God is harmful, God destroys, God must punish sin. These lies conceal the true destructiveness of sin and trap people in cycles of violence

Read last paragraph, "Remember too..." What does this mean?

Does sustaining everything by his powerful word mean by his powerful speech? Or does word in this context represent something more than just speech, such as God's authority?

By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. Heb 11:3

Does God's command have to be verbal, spoken?

There is a certain deliverance theology in which people take passages like this concretely and teach it is the words spoken are somehow powerful and if one speaks the right words they gain power or mastery over something or get what they name. It is a deception, there is no magic in the right words one says, it is in the truth, the meaning, the understanding, which heals the mind and restores one to the source of all truth. And it is God's ability, His authority by which He created.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about truthfulness versus lying. Read first paragraph, "Philosopher Sissela Bok..." What is lying?

- telling falsehood
- partial truth but not all the truth?
- body language intending to deceive?
- withholding information with the intent to deceive?
- telling something false while thinking it is true?
- telling a falsehood to advantage self?

Read second paragraph, “Ellen G. White wrote:...” Lying is an abomination – what constitutes lying? Does it require purposeful intent? Is it a lie if one innocently gets their facts wrong? Any Bible examples?

- Abraham – told Pharaoh that Sarah was his sister – was this a lie?
- Rahab – stated the spies were not hidden in her place – was this a lie?
- Which was the more blatant falsehood?
- Who was chastised by God?
- What makes the difference?

The lesson quote states “dissembling to suit one’s own selfish plans...”

- Abraham lied to protect self, based on fear, distrusting God to protect him
- Rahab lied to protect others, aligning herself with God and trust Him

Where do we find her in Hebrews? Why is she in the hall of faith? Did it take faith, belief in the true God to hide the spies and side with them and lie to the guards? Did God condemn her for her lie? Did God commend her for lying? Did He commend her for her faith? What did Rahab know about God and His kingdom? Very little, but she did choose to side herself with God and put herself in harms way to be on His side. In other words the lies were not designed to protect herself, they actually put her in danger for the sake of God and others. Perhaps, had she had more time to grow in God’s ways she would have said something else, but this is an example of faith.

Consider the issue of lying in light of the commandments and the seven levels of development – first is there a commandment that says, “Thou shall not lie”?

It actually says, “Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”

Is there a difference? What difference?

All the commandments are expressions of love: take no action that is harmful, against love toward God and man. Thus, breaking the commandment is making false statements that are against someone, which is not simply against their person or reputation, but providing them with false information that could injure them.

Those operating at level four and below approach the commandments, including this one, from a self-centered point of view.



- How do I keep this so I don't break the rules,
- so no sin is recorded in my record books,
- so I don't get in legal trouble with God,
- so I won't do anything wrong,
- so God can't punish me.
- It is not through the lens that loves others, glorifies God and fulfills His purpose.

Consider this Bible story from 1 Kings 22:

For three years there was no war between Aram and Israel. ² But in the third year Jehoshaphat king of Judah went down to see the king of Israel. ³ The king of Israel had said to his officials, "Don't you know that Ramoth Gilead belongs to us and yet we are doing nothing to retake it from the king of Aram?"

⁴ So he asked Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to fight against Ramoth Gilead?"

Jehoshaphat replied to the king of Israel, "I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses." ⁵ But Jehoshaphat also said to the king of Israel, "First seek the counsel of the Lord."

⁶ So the king of Israel brought together the prophets—about four hundred men—and asked them, "Shall I go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?"

"Go," they answered, "for the Lord will give it into the king's hand."

was this lying bearing false witness or if they believed what they said is it not a lie?

⁷ But Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there not a prophet of the Lord here whom we can inquire of?"

Why did Jehoshaphat ask for a prophet of the Lord, didn't he already ask for one? Then was it an attempt to deceive him when they brought the 400? Would that be a violation of the commandment?

⁸ The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man through whom we can inquire of the Lord, but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad. He is Micaiah son of Imlah."

"The king should not say that," Jehoshaphat replied.

⁹ So the king of Israel called one of his officials and said, "Bring Micaiah son of Imlah at once."

¹⁰ Dressed in their royal robes, the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah were sitting on their thrones at the threshing floor by the entrance of the gate of Samaria, with all the prophets prophesying before them. ¹¹ Now Zedekiah son of Kenaanah had made iron horns and he declared, "This is what the Lord says: 'With these you will gore the Arameans until they are destroyed.'"

¹² All the other prophets were prophesying the same thing. "Attack Ramoth Gilead and be victorious," they said, "for the Lord will give it into the king's hand."

were these men lying, bearing false witness?

¹³ The messenger who had gone to summon Micaiah said to him, “Look, as one man the other prophets are predicting success for the king. Let your word agree with theirs, and speak favorably.”

Is he encouraging Micaiah to lie?

¹⁴ But Micaiah said, “As surely as the Lord lives, I can tell him only what the Lord tells me.”

Does this mean what Micaiah says later is from the Lord?

¹⁵ When he arrived, the king asked him, “Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?”

“Attack and be victorious,” he answered, “for the Lord will give it into the king’s hand.”

¹⁶ The king said to him, “How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?”

was Micaiah’s initial answer a lie? Was Micaiah lying to Ahab or telling the truth? Then why did Ahab respond by saying he had to get Micaiah to swear to tell the truth? Didn’t Micaiah just agree with the other 400? Do you think Micaiah’s tone said something that made it clear his words were sarcastic, mocking or not to be taken seriously and Ahab knew it? Why would he do this? Could it be to draw contrast to the flattering false prophecies the 400 had been telling Ahab and what Micaiah was about to tell him? Was this statement factually true? But was it a lie?

¹⁷ Then Micaiah answered, “I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and the Lord said, ‘These people have no master. Let each one go home in peace.’”

¹⁸ The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “Didn’t I tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me, but only bad?”

¹⁹ Micaiah continued, “Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. ²⁰ And the Lord said, ‘Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?’

“One suggested this, and another that. ²¹ Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the Lord and said, ‘I will entice him.’

²² “ ‘By what means?’ the Lord asked.

“ ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,’ he said.

“ ‘You will succeed in enticing him,’ said the Lord. ‘Go and do it.’

²³ “So now the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The Lord has decreed disaster for you.”

Is Micaiah lying? Does the Lord send angels to be lying spirits? So if the Micahiah is not lying, but the Lord doesn’t send lying spirits, what is going on? Micaiah is telling a “story” for the purpose of



communicating a truth, one truth, the answer to the question – should Ahab go to battle, will he be victorious. This question was answered truthfully and accurately, the rest of the story was told, not to accurately represent how the falsehood got into the prophecy of the other prophets, but to present the fact that what Ahab was previously told was a lie in the most convincing way to Ahab. To warn him.

²⁴ Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah went up and slapped Micaiah in the face. “Which way did the spirit from the Lord go when he went from me to speak to you?” he asked.

Is Zedekiah lying when he claims to have the spirit of the Lord speak through him?

²⁵ Micaiah replied, “You will find out on the day you go to hide in an inner room.”

²⁶ The king of Israel then ordered, “Take Micaiah and send him back to Amon the ruler of the city and to Joash the king’s son ²⁷ and say, ‘This is what the king says: Put this fellow in prison and give him nothing but bread and water until I return safely.’ ”

²⁸ Micaiah declared, “If you ever return safely, the Lord has not spoken through me.” Then he added, “Mark my words, all you people!”

What does it mean to break the commandment? Did Micaiah break the commandment of God while fulfilling God’s purpose as His prophet? Do we ever think too childish, too concretely, too much focus on self and our behavior and less on motive and mission? “I love Ahab and Israel and want to protect him/them from doing something foolish, so I will tell truthfully that his going to war is a mistake, but will put it in a story setting designed to convince him of its veracity”

With this in mind, what course of action should we take when God’s Law is in conflict with man’s rules, regulations, code of conduct or ethical requirements?

I am a psychiatrist. There are manmade rules, laws, which govern patient confidentiality. In addition, I have given my word and promise to my patient to protect their confidentiality... Imagine your pastor comes to see me as a patient because he is struggling with an addiction. The only time I have ever met your pastor is as my patient. I come and do a seminar in your city, but not at your church, and during one of the breaks you ask me, “Do you know Pastor_____?” What do I say? Do I say,

“I’m sorry, but because medical ethics, rights of patient confidentiality I am not allowed to answer your question”?

“I have much to tell you but you cannot yet bear it?”

“I have never met him outside my office”?

Do I say, yes or no?

If I say yes in a way that allows the idea that he might be my patient, not only do I harm your pastor, what if you were in marriage counseling with your pastor and he was really helping you, but you

now were to discover he was in counseling for some mental health problem, might that undermine your confidence in him and harm you? And might you get less out of his sermons? And might you be tempted to gossip and tell what you know? And might others get harmed in the church with this news?

What is the principle? Love your neighbor which means what? Don't take actions that harm, take actions that protect, heal, restore. Here is another comment from EGW:

The command, "Thou shalt not bear false witness," means very much more than we realize. **False witness** is borne again and again in flippant speech concerning even the workers whom God has sent. **The seeds of envy, of evil thinking and evil speaking, germinate and produce a harvest of their kind, to be garnered by the one who planted the seed.** "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Letter 9, 1892). {1BC 1106.4}

What do you hear is the root of false witness? Envy, evil thinking and speaking. What makes it evil? Selfishness, so speech designed to hurt another is false witness. But did you notice something else quite profound is in this quote?

The harvest is reaped by those who planted the seed – in other words, she is saying those who bear false witness, who speak in envy, reap the results of what they have done. What does this mean? Why do they reap the results?

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {1SM 235.2}

When we act selfishly we change us; when we foster envy, speak evilly, those actions become more deeply rooted in us. This results in greater fear and insecurity. We become more afraid that others will find out what evil we have said, that we will experience reprisal or retaliation, our reputation will be hurt etc. so we become more selfish, seek to protect self more and act more evilly toward others, unless we genuinely repent.

The bottom of the second paragraph pointed this out as well, in different words it said this, "but he finally reaches the place where he can trust no one. Himself a falsifier, he has no confidence in the words of others."

This is reaping the seeds of one's own sin, changing one's own mind, altering the ability to discern truth and error. Psychologically, this is an example of projection, in which one's own defect of character is so intolerable that one projects it out on others and believes everyone else would do to you the same evil you would do to them.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “The integrity...” What does this mean?

What is the source of destruction according to this text? Does destruction come from God? What other evidence from Scripture?

- Wages of sin is death Rom 6:23
- sin when full grown brings forth death Jm 1:15
- Those who sow to the carnal nature from that nature reap destruction Gal 6:8

Have you ever seen this?

- What happens to the person who cheats, not once and repents, but who lives as a cheat?
- What happens to the person who steals, not once or twice and repents, but who lives as a thief?
- What happens to the sensualist?
- What happens to the bigot, sexist, racist?

Do we see, that people who deviate from God’s design of love, are damaged and destroyed over time?

Read second paragraph, “The sense...” What motive is this appealing to? What level of development? Is such a person spiritually mature? What is the difference between this and Christian maturity?

Does this give insight as to why the Scripture teaches those still on milk, immature, are not acquainted with righteousness?

Last paragraph, “On the other...” So what is the difference in these two paragraphs between the wicked and the righteous?

The righteous – according to the lesson, have the ability to look into the future and delay immediate gratification for better long-term payout, whereas the wicked can only think of the right now, immediate reward.

Do the wicked ever make long-term plans, delay immediate gratification for a greater later gratification?

While the generalizations have some truth in them, they miss the point. The issue is about motive, do we love God and others and seek to do His will in helping others, or are we seeking PRIMARILY for self? The wicked seek to gratify and protect self at the expense and exploitation of others,



whether immediate gratification or delayed. Generally, those who are seeking to gratify self lose self control and become more and more indulgent and impulsive, but others do not.

Read second paragraph in FRIDAY's lesson, "The greatest deception..."

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2 in Friday's lesson.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Opportunity to Share:

The General Conference of SDA will have its meeting (which occurs every five years) in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. 50,000-70,000 Adventist from all over the world are expected to attend. This presents an opportunity to share this healing message about God in a most impactful way.

We plan on giving away our DVDs, Dr. Jennings' Book *Could It Be This Simple?* and other materials. This will be an enormous project. If you would like to share in this opportunity, you can do so by making donations to *Come and Reason Ministries* either via Paypal, or check mailed to our address below.

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And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

Jan 24, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Monterey Peninsula SDA Church

February 21, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be presenting the God and Your Brain Seminar at Shilo Inn. 3223 Bret Clodfelter Way, The Dalles, Oregon. For more info for this free conference contact Joyce Browne at 541-300-0111.

March 13-14, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in NYC at the Advent Hope Outreach Health Event.

March 27-28, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the University of Tennessee Health Science, Psychiatry and Family Medicine Conference in Memphis, TN.

April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

April 23, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Faith and Mental Health Board in Goshen Indiana.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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1st Quarter 2015 – Proverbs Lesson 6

What You See Is NOT What You Get

Has anyone here heard of WYSIWYG or know what it means? I first heard the term “What You See Is What You Get” in relation to my line of work in computers. Remember a word processing program called Word Perfect? Dark blue background with white text? It was a powerful program with many publishing options and capabilities...but no matter what document formatting you put in place, nothing changed on the screen...always a blue background with white text. In fact, the only way to even see what sort of formatting had been applied was to “Reveal Codes” (Alt-F3 for the nerds like me), which sort of gave you a look under the covers to see which text was bolded or underlined or formatted differently...and the only way to truly see what your document looked like was to physically print it out. Then, along came Microsoft Word and the age of WYSIWYG editing and programming, where everything on the screen looks exactly the way it will look when it’s printed or rendered. The premise of this week’s lesson is that we very seldom have this level of insight into our environment and our relationships and our situations...and what we see is often not what we get. The lesson says, “We see so little, and what we do see always comes filtered through our own minds – including our own preconceived notions, biases, distortions, dysfunctions. Our eyes, our ears – even all our senses – still only give us a very narrow view of the big picture.

- Think about the limited view of reality we have...right here in this room. There are things out there that we know are real; yet, we can’t sense them or see them in any way. How many radio waves are in the air all around you right now (cell phones, satellite programs, wireless networks)? What about whenever 2 or 3 are gathered in my name, God is there in the midst of them? Do we start to understand how limited our senses are?

Saturday’s memory text from Proverbs 14:12 says, “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” Any thoughts on what this means?

- We tend to have fairly narrow, myopic perspectives...and everything tends to revolve around us. We are very focused on and make judgments based on external behaviors, because we cannot really see other’s heart motives. We are kind of control freaks who don’t like to admit that we are really helpless in our condition, and completely dependent on God for our existence, and in desperate need of a savior...and when I say “we” here, I really mean me. So we careen blindly on with plans that seem so selfishly right...and many times lead us straight into disaster.
- Can you think of any folks in the Bible who likely thought they were doing exactly the right thing but were actually (without intervention) on the path to death?
 - Adam & Eve



- Cain
- Everyone on earth other than Noah's family
- Lot's wife
- Moses (prior to conversion)
- Nadab & Abihu
- Saul
- David (prior to conversion)
- The text's author Solomon

“Solomon's course brought its sure penalty. His separation from God through communication with idolaters was his ruin. As he cast off his allegiance to God, he lost the mastery of himself. ***His moral efficiency was gone.*** His fine sensibilities became blunted, his conscience was seared. He who in his early reign had displayed so much wisdom and sympathy in restoring a helpless babe to its unfortunate mother, fell so low as to consent to the erection of an idol to whom living children were offered as sacrifices. He who in his youth was endowed with discretion and understanding, and who in his strong manhood had been inspired to write, ‘There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death’, in later years departed so far from purity as to countenance licentious, revolting rites connected with the worship of Chemosh and Ashtoreth. He tried – but at what cost! – to unite light with darkness, good with evil, purity with impurity, Christ with Belial. From being one of the greatest kings that ever wielded a scepter, Solomon became a profligate, the tool and slave of others. His character, once noble and manly, became enervated (weakened/debilitated/fatigued) and effeminate. His faith in the living God was supplanted by atheistic doubts. Unbelief marred his happiness, weakened his principles, and degraded his life. The justice and magnanimity of his early reign were changed to despotism and tyranny. Poor, frail human nature! God can do little for men who lose their sense of dependence upon Him. [PK 58.1]

- Judas
- Pilot -
- Peter (prior to conversion)
- Saul/Paul (prior to conversion)
- Ananias & Saphira

Is it related to what Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 13:12? – “We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun



shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us." In the interim, we have to walk by faith and not by sight.

We can be so easily deceived about the external world, and sadly we can be deceived about ourselves...so how do we protect ourselves from these deceptions?

Any Biblical counsel that comes to mind on how we can avoid being deceived?

- Proverbs certainly provides some basic counsel about not leaning on our own understanding – Prov 3:5 says “Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don’t try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God’s voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he’s the one who will keep you on track. Don’t assume that you know it all. Run to God! Run from evil! Your body will glow with health, your very bones will vibrate with life! Honor God with everything you own; give him the first and the best.”
- 2 Cor 5:7 tells us to “Walk by faith and not by sight” or “It’s what we trust in but don’t yet see that keeps us going.”
- Psalm 37:23 – The Lord makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him.
- Prov 16:9 – A man’s mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps and makes them sure.

In what ways might our unique insight into the Great Controversy perspective can help keep us from being so small-minded and self-focused

- reminds us that it is not all about me...God has been accused and his character maligned
- there is a war being waged for hearts and minds and souls
- helps us maintain a something bigger than ourselves viewpoint

Come and Reason practical concepts that can help protect ourselves from self-deception

- Applying natural law principles can help immediately breaks down bias, distortions and subjectiveness. Natural laws are applied in a very rational, objective, unbiased manner...100% consistent, constant, unwavering, unchangeable.
- The 3-pronged Scripture/Science/Experience integrative evidence based approach can provide meaningful perspective while removing distortion and emotion by allowing you to test theories/situations against all 3 zones.
- Learning to think and reason for yourself...learning to seek and love the truth. I spent some years of my life in a situation where I did not really want to know the truth...because I was pretty sure I wouldn’t like the truth if I knew it...so I became quite adept at avoiding and distorting and denying the truth. Which, of course, did not make the truth any less true. As Tim has said, you cannot bend the truth...you can only bend your mind around the truth – like when you hold up a glass lens between your eye and a telephone pole. To you, the pole



looks bent even though it is still perfectly straight. I believe for sure the most important truth to know and the truth that “sets us free” from Satan’s lies...is the truth that God is exactly who Jesus revealed Him to be. But I believe when He said, “you will know the truth and the truth shall set you free” he was talking about all truth...and that this love of truth and pursuit of truth could be liberating in every area of our lives – because that’s how we were made. Has anyone else ever experienced this? When you have come to really know and accept the truth...in a relationship? Maybe in a job/career choice? Which college to attend or major course of study? A medical diagnosis or condition? Please don’t misunderstand that this is easy or not a struggle...but for me, even if the truth is unpleasant, frightening, painful, or even heartbreaking...if I search for the truth, if I am open to it, acknowledge it, accept it, and even embrace it...I find even a painful truth can be liberating and freeing...and puts me in a much better position to be able to handle and meet the situation head-on versus being self-deceived and in denial. Thoughts?

SUNDAY/MONDAY

The Assurance of the Fool & The Fear of the Wise

Fool Speaks Proudly – proud words have resulted in a blow to his lips, an outcome contrasted against the lips of the wise, which are preserved. And, never missing an opportunity to mention it, the quarterly says the “rod” associated with the fool’s lips in Proverbs 14:3, implies the fool’s eventual punishment. Is this really what the text implies?

- The NLT reads, “A fool’s proud talk becomes a rod that beats him, but the words of the wise keep them safe.” The Amplified Bible says, “In the fool’s own mouth is a rod to shame his pride.”
- Luke 6:45 – A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.
- Matthew 12:37 – For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.
- Another, similar proverb found in chapter 17 verse 28 reads, “Even dunces who keep quiet are thought to be wise; as long as they keep their mouths shut, they’re smart.”...which is rumored to be the basis for a familiar quote often attributed to Mark Twain or Abraham Lincoln: “It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool, than to speak and remove all doubt.”

Wise Speak Humbly – The wise restrain their mouths as evidenced by *silent* reflection...they really **listen** thoughtfully, consider opposing ideas, weigh out evidence, and try to learn from others. Is this a struggle for anyone here...to “restrain their mouths”? And in this culture of social media, it is not just our mouths we have to restrain...but maybe our keys on a keyboard.



Fool Mocks Wisdom – a fool appears to seek wisdom, but is skeptical of it and doesn't believe in true wisdom. He will not find it because, in his own mind, there is no wisdom apart from himself. If the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, believing you are wise in and of yourself has to be at the opposite end of that spectrum, and you will start to see this as a theme when describing fool psychology. Most damaging is mocking and misunderstanding the destructive power of sin that often accompanies the imposed law construct...where the fear of punishment and of the punisher far outweighs any fear of sin's damaging effects and the natural law consequences.

Wise Value Learning & Knowledge (& Truth) – Sitting at the feet of a teacher requires a posture of humility and a teachable spirit. It is difficult to be taught or to learn anything if you think you already know it all. The wise are in a constant search for wisdom and knowledge, and enjoy the experience of learning and growing. How is mastering this skill important for eternity?

- God is infinite, we are finite...the gap between us is and will always be...infinite. We will spend all eternity learning and growing and being enlightened by more and more and more truth. If we don't enjoy and value that experience here on earth, then we probably won't like it up there either.

Fool Is Credulous – gullible, naïve, imprudent, unconsidered, uncritical...the quarterly says he has lost the ability to think critically about what he hears, and believes "every word" or everything he reads on the Internet. The lesson also points out some of the paradox and irony of a secular society that laughs at or impugns belief in God or intelligent design or creation...even though some of their beliefs – big bang/evolution, when tested, can appear quite foolish and require even more faith.

Wise Are Cautious – The wise are acutely aware that evil exists, and recognize the destructive power of sin...so they are careful. I would say that the wise understand the nature of God's natural laws and consequences. They do not rely on their own feelings and personal opinions, but practice a more integrated evidence-based approach to discern good from bad, right from wrong, truth from lies.

Fool Is Impulsive – Because fools believe they have the truth within themselves, they react quickly, impulsively without taking time to think. I mean think of the Twitter-sphere culture we have going on right now. Do we see any quick, impulsive, knee-jerk reactions happening today? It is painfully obvious that most took no time to think about comments being made...to the world...into perpetuity. Any thoughts on how this ability to spout off our thoughts to the world at every whim...with a certain degree of anonymity...have further impacted our ability to be "foolish" in this regard?

- Kids not getting into their college of choice
- Not being hired for jobs
- Losing jobs/losing customers/losing sponsors or advertisers



Wise Are Calm – The lesson indicates that faith in God allows the wise to relax, practice self-control, and the fear of God gives them confidence. No argument here...but doesn't it really depend which God you believe in...and which law lens you look through...whether fearing and trusting God makes you calm and gives you peace? Tim has mentioned an analogy he uses with his patients who are struggling with being told to "just trust God" or "turn your life over to God". He tells them to imagine walking at the mall and having a stranger ask for their house keys and saying, "It's OK...you can trust me." Would they feel comfortable giving a stranger the keys to their house...would that make them feel calm and peaceful? If not, then how could they possibly turn the keys to their *life* over to a stranger...it is so important that we get to know God for who he really is and what he is really like. Only then can we be confident putting our trust in him and be filled with his peace that passes all understanding.

Fool Oppresses Others – Fools are intolerant of others, and will oppress and treat them with contempt. These are the tactics of Satan...the characteristics of the beast system – coercion, intolerance, force, oppression. How often are these taken in the name of the church? In the name of God? Any examples?

- Roman church
- Crusades
- Rwanda/Genocide
- Pro-Life
- Isis

Wise Are Compassionate & Sensitive – The quarterly points out the inextricable link between the most important commandments – "Love the Lord your God and your neighbor as yourself." We cannot love God and treat other people poorly...I think that is profound. The greatest expression of our faith is how we deal with others, especially those in need. Agree or disagree?

TUESDAY

The Eyes of the Lord

Tuesday's text is from Proverbs 15:3 and says, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good." The MSG says, "God doesn't miss a thing." The lesson asks, "How does this text make you feel and why? Does how you feel depend on what law lens you look through?"

- Does this text bring to mind the recording angel that used to stand in the front of the church during children's story with a clipboard and pen, poised to write down every possible behavior infraction?
- What have we learned about natural law concepts that lets us know this text is not about a heavenly watchdog or police force?



- His eyes are everywhere because He is omnipotent...omnipresent...and He sees everything, because natural laws have natural consequences. If we have been converted and healed, he sees it...if we have not been converted and remain terminal, he sees it.

The quarterly talks about Solomon's understanding that true wisdom is the ability to correctly discern between good and evil – the right from the wrong, which I think is accurate and well-said. But then, it goes rather predictably into the heavenly recording angel mindset that God sees everything we do, even if no one else does, and that on a human level, knowing this should help us to remember to always do good instead of evil...and to not be fooled into thinking that just because we might seem to get away with doing evil for now, in the long run we never do. Do we believe this is why God desires for us to do what is right...because we know He's watching and He sees everything and He won't let us get away with it?

- This is at the very bottom, most elementary level 1/2 on the moral development scale – punishment/reward. “A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. The service is looked upon by such a one in the light of drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. {TMK 120 (That I May Know Him)}
- “We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. *This is why it is so dangerous to mock sin as fools do!* By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.” {ISM 235}
- No one “gets away” with stepping off the Empire State Building in violation of the law of gravity...no one gets away with tying a plastic bag over their head in violation of the law of respiration...natural law requires no monitoring, no recording, no enforcement...imposed laws are the only kind that require external enforcement. There are no gravity police required.

WEDNESDAY

The Joy of the Lord

Here are the elements of Proverbs 15 that speak specifically to happiness and joy:

- V13: A cheerful heart brings a smile to your face; a sad heart makes it hard to get through the day.



- V14: An intelligent person is always eager to take in more truth; fools feed on fast-food fads and fancies.
- V15: A miserable heart means a miserable life; a cheerful heart fills the day with song.
- V30: A twinkle in the eye means joy in the heart, and good news makes you feel fit as a fiddle.
- Clearly, we are not promised a life without trials...in fact, the opposite is true based on scripture. Matthew 6:34 says “So do not worry about tomorrow; it will have enough worries of its own. There is no need to add to the troubles each day brings,” and in John 16:33, Jesus says, “I’ve told you all this so that trusting me, you will be unshakable and assured, deeply at peace. In this godless world you will continue to experience difficulties. But take heart! I’ve conquered the world.” But we are also advised to have a merry heart, to be content in all circumstances, rejoice in trials...in fact, to count it **all** joy. So it would seem that the key to deep, lasting joy is not in the changing details of our circumstances...but rather in how we respond to them based on our trust in the constant, unchanging goodness of God.
- The quarterly suggests the parallels between verses 13 and 14 indicate that the “merry heart” is the “heart of him who has understanding” – the heart of one who has faith and sees redemption beyond the immediate ordeal. This is why it is so crucial that we know for ourselves, from our own experience, the reality of God and His love. Then, whatever trials come, whatever suffering we face, those with understanding can endure, because they know God’s love **for themselves**.
- This chapter also introduces another important idea that joy comes more from what we give than from what we receive – a good word shared with others will bring joy to the giver. Who here hasn’t experienced the blessing that comes from blessing others – in word or deed or both?
- Another related factor that contributes to our level of happiness and joy...is developing an attitude and a practice of gratitude – keeping a gratitude journal. Many research studies exist related to this subject...I will site only a few of their findings on the results of establishing a regular habit or practice of being grateful:
 - Woods, et al., 2008 – A relative absence of stress and depression
 - Emmons and McCullough, 2003 – Progress towards important personal goals
 - Emmons and McCullough, 2003 – Higher levels of determination and energy
 - Algoe and Haidt, 2009 – Closer relationships and desire to build stronger relationships
 - Emmons and McCullough, 2003 – Increased levels of happiness – by up to 25%!
 - One of the founders of our church agreed and wrote this in a book called “Ministry of Healing” around 100 years before those studies were conducted: “Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and



praise. It is a positive duty to resist melancholy, discontented thoughts and feelings – as much a duty as it is to pray. If we are heaven-bound, how can we go as a band of mourners, groaning and complaining all along the way to our Father's house? Those professed Christians who are constantly complaining, and who seem to think cheerfulness and happiness a sin, have not genuine religion. {MH 251}

THURSDAY

The Sovereignty of God

1st paragraph in the lesson says, “The bible acknowledges the value of human responsibility and freedom. Yet, the Bible also affirms God's control over the course of events.” Thoughts? Does this minimize the incredible importance of freedom? Isn't freedom valued...above all in God's government.

We prepare, we make plans...but the last word still belongs to God. Does it? Our preparations are not worthless, with an attitude of seeking and submission and desire for direction.

- The thing is...God is infinite; therefore, accomplishing God's will can have an infinite number of avenues. What is God's will for me...for all of us? To be healed, to be restored, to be set right with Him. And He has promised that He can use every single thing that happens in our lives to complete that good work in us and perfect our characters. This is what Tim means when he talks about trusting God with outcomes – we are responsible for our own conduct – as students, as parents, as spouses, etc. God has promised to work *all* things for our good (Romans 8)...He has even promised that the work our enemies intend for harm will be used for good (Genesis 50:20), so we do our work, our due diligence and then trust Him with the outcome.
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Proverbs 1Q 2015 Lesson 7

Dealing With Fights

I received these two email recently:

I would like to thank you for changing the way our family now looks at God, the Bible and the plan of salvation especially in the light of the great controversy. I will say that together with the books and discussion materials of Graham Maxwell and your work our spiritual lives have been fundamentally changed. Our children now frequently comment how much clearer the Bible is and how much more sense looking at the law from a design protocol standpoint as compared to the imposed constructs that we grew up with. Understanding things this way has resulted in so much more freedom but without compromising anything since we essentially live the same lives (and follow the same rules) not because we HAVE to but because we WANT to and understand WHY and because it is RIGHT not just because the Bible, someone else, or even God says that we said so. Thank you once again for your ministry.

I want to start out by Praising God for who He is. He is most loving and gracious. I also want to thank God for the message of love and the true picture of God and His character that He uses you to tell the world. I was raised in a SDA home, went to SDA schools through high school. I am 65 years old now but when I was about 35 or so I started to question the God that we were preaching. I started to look into it but was afraid to say too much for I sounded like I was not following the "truth". Every time I would say something some pastor or an elder would stop me, saying that if I do not believe what the church was teaching than I wasn't a true follower of the teaching of the "remnant church".

My curiosity peaked and in the late nineties I wanted to leave the church because I could not stand the God that we were preaching. I did not leave but was not active either. Meanwhile I decided to dig into the Bible, searching for the God that My mind was looking for. In the year 2003 I started to be active again and in the year 2005 I began to teach Sabbath School. I decided that I would start to teach what I've found in my search. Something amazing happened. My class grew but the leaders of the church I went to started to look at me closely and were not wanting me in a leading position. I was determined.

It was studying the lessons of the Glimpses of God that really got to me. I hated that quarterly and threw the whole book away, wrote to the Sabbath School Department at the GC and complained about the trash that we allow to be taught around the world. But something good came out of it. I was still teaching Sabbath School and I needed something to teach. I went searching in the Internet and God be the glory, I found Come And Reason by Dr. Jennings. This has been the best find in my whole life. Now I speak with authority. Not because of Dr. Jennings, but because of the materials I find that support the Bible teaching of the God I love best.

Thank you again and may God be glorified.

May God continue to bless you and your ministry.

SABBATH

What fights are we dealing with?

- Wars between nations?
- Fights between political parties?
- Fights between factions in the church?
- Fights between our children?
- Fights between spouses?
- Fights with coworkers?
- Fights between police officers and citizens?
- Fights between parents and their children?
- Fights between students, or students and teachers or teachers and the school boards....

Is there really a limit on the places where we find fights in this world of sin? Read memory verse,

“Better is a dry morsel with quietness, than a house full of feasting with strife.” Prov 17:1

The text is focusing our attention on the home – which is a good place to start, since the family is the social bedrock of our society. If our families are in conflict, then our society will suffer.

What is the point of the proverb? Here is the GNT:

Better to eat a dry crust of bread with peace of mind than to have a banquet in a house full of trouble.

Isn't the point that mental and relational peace, health, and wellbeing, is worth more than riches or extravagance? Is this limited to food? Do you believe this is true? Well science tells us the following:

- Individuals with major mental health disorders that have a primary biological cause, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, schizoaffective disorder, do much worse if they live in homes with high conflict. This is true even if the mentally ill person is not directly involved in the conflict.
- Divorce is less damaging to children than living in a home with high parental conflict.
 - The research has found that children do the best, i.e. grow up to have less mental health problems, less substance use problems, have greater academic achievement, better sense of personal wellness if they come from homes in which there is a mother and father who get along, operate maturely in love.
 - The next best outcome for children is when they come from single parent home in which there is low conflict.
 - Children did better and grew up with less problems in single parent, low conflict homes, than in homes in with both parents but where there was high levels of argument, fighting and stress.
 - And the worst for children is single parent homes in which there is high conflict

- Such high conflict homes actually alter brain development such that children grow up with upregulated fear circuitry and less developed prefrontal cortex ability to problem solve and calm their fear circuitry. They also have distorted internalizations of events that negatively alter their sense of self, contributing to poor decision-making later in life.
- An 11 years study of 10,000 men and women ages 36-54, found those who had highest family conflict had 2-3 times the risk of dying in middle age as those who did not have family conflict. The cause of the deaths were cancer, heart disease, suicide, liver disease and alcohol abuse.
 - High stress causes inflammatory cascades which increase risk of heart disease, obesity and DMII, also interfere with immune system thus increasing cancer risks, cause glial brain damage contributing to depression and thus increased suicide, and increased use of alcohol contributing to liver disease.
- A 32-year prospective study of over 800 individuals, which identified three measures of childhood adversity, overt physical or sexual abuse, severe neglect, or severe socioeconomic deprivation. They broke the subjects into three groups, those with none of these adverse events, those with one, and those with two or three. Then followed them for 32 years and documented who developed depression, 11% of those with no adverse events developed depression, 20% with 1 adverse event developed depression and 30% of those with two or three adverse events. They also examined who developed DMII, obesity and hypercholesterolemia, and the percentages were the same as those for depression.

Why does the Commandment teach that if we honor our parents we will live long on the earth?

Because our child-parent relationships are our primary relationships and serve as a template upon which other relationships are built. If these primary relationships are conflictual, untrusting, fear ridden, etc. it upregulates fear circuitry, causing difficulty in calming oneself, difficulty in trusting others, difficulty in future relationships, with repeated cycles of conflict, with firing of fear circuits, increased inflammation, which contributes to metabolic illness and early death. Unless, we experience healing through God's grace and love in other healthy relationships later in life.

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read Proverbs 17:9 and 19:11,

Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends. Proverbs 17:9

A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense. Proverbs 19:11

What does this mean and what does it not mean?

What does it mean to cover over an offense? Does it mean to cover up? Was destroying the Watergate tapes covering over an offense? If we destroy evidence in a criminal case are we following Bible principles?

What does cover mean? Consider the following definitions of cover, and ask which apply to Christ and us?

- to hide, conceal –
 - Does Christ hide or conceal our condition from the Father?
- but also to protect –
 - Does Christ protect us? Yes, but from whom? Does He protect us from the Father or from Satan and sin?
- or to serve as a substitute – to cover for them
 - Does Christ act as our substitute, stand in our place for us? How? In a legal action from the heavenly tribunal? No! By taking our condition and curing it, something we could never do!
 - He also stands as Adam's substitute in being the repository of God's character and law, and revealing God's character perfectly.
- to make an excuse or alibi
 - Does Christ make excuses for us? No!
- to intervene to cover their mistake
 - Does Christ cover our mistakes? Yes, how? By healing, restoring, intervening, protecting, giving multiple opportunities to try again.
- to back them up, in card game when playing partners, you can cover someone else's bad card with a higher one of your own
 - While Christ doesn't play cards with us, does He back up our decisions and sometimes "trump" or overrule what we would do, when we trust Him, for our good? Yes!
- Or merely, according to the context, not repeating it, not spreading it, to keep information confidential, to protect a person's reputation
 - Does Christ repeat our sins or failings or most shameful moments, or does He protect our reputations and not repeat it?
 - 1Cor says "love keeps no record of wrongs."

Here is the passage from the GNT:

If you want people to like you, forgive them when they wrong you. Remembering wrongs can break up a friendship.

And from the Message:

Overlook an offense and bond a friendship; fasten on to a slight and—good-bye, friend!

So what does it mean to cover an offense? Could it mean, that you see offenses as symptoms of a person's struggles, weaknesses, character flaws – and if you love them, you don't embarrass them to expose them, you seek to help them heal from what causes them to offend?

If you had a friend who received a steroid injection because of respiratory distress, but had a psychotic reaction from it, which caused them to say vulgar things, what would you do? Would you want to post their struggles on Facebook, or protect them and cover for them and get them to treatment?

What about someone struggling with fear, insecurity and selfishness, which causes them to act out? Do we see people as sick in heart and mind, needed the healing of God's love and truth, and so we seek to protect their reputation and cover for them?

When the Pharisees brought the woman caught in adultery before Jesus, they were Christ's enemies, trying to trap Him. He knew their secret sins. He could have exposed them as hypocrites, but what did He do? He wrote in the sand, no names, just the sins and each person was convicted, and left, but He didn't expose anyone. He protected the reputation of His enemies – Wow!

Read first two paragraphs, "When someone..." How can this idea of covering a sin be misunderstood and cause confusion and misrepresent God?

- When we view things through the imposed law model and present sin as breaking rules, which offends the ruling authority, causing God to be upset, wrathful, angry and needing to vent His wrath, and Jesus as the one who came to assuage or propitiate God's wrath, then we introduce the idea that we need to cover up our sin from God.
- With the imposed law model we distort the metaphor of the robe of righteousness teaching falsely that it is to cover us so God can't see our sinfulness – rather than teaching the truth that we are transformed in heart and mind to be like Christ.
- Likewise the imposed law model causes us to distort the meaning of the blood, instead of realizing it represents Christ's perfect sinless life that we partake, we falsely teach it is applied to our records to cover the records of our sins so the Father won't see it and judge against us
- When we understand design law, that we are out of harmony with God's design and in a terminal condition, and God is like Jesus – perfect love, with a longing to heal. Then we pray like David, "search me and see the wicked way in me... create in me a clean heart oh God." We don't want to cover our defects, we want our defects fully exposed before God, because He is the only one who can heal us from them!

How can we understand this in a healthy way?

- By realizing we don't want to reveal a person's struggles to those who would either be damaged by the knowledge, or use the knowledge to do harm
- Thus, we might, like a doctor, share the knowledge with another health care provider, get a consult, with someone qualified to not only help, but keep confidences. But we would not share this information with those who have no need to know, or who would be harmed by the knowledge.

Read last paragraph, "One does not..." this is well said and this focuses on what the church is supposed to be – family – in which we love each other, and when we see someone else mess up, our heart longs for their wellness, we want to see them overcome and we intervene to assist them, to minimize the pain and suffering in their lives and others.

But, when we forget we are to love each other, and instead get focused on institutional loyalty and correctness, then we believe we have a duty to report the offender, to have the offender disciplined or sanctioned, or removed from office or fired from their job in the institution. And if that doesn't work, then we believe we must spread the report of what we believe is an offense to warn others because we must protect the institution and hold up institutional standards.

Also, helping others in the church family, doesn't mean merely delivering people from their situation, relieving burdens or life problems. It means helping a person develop Christlike character, and the Bible teaches it is struggles, the difficulties, the trials that help us grow and mature.

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to look at Proverbs 18, lets examine some of the texts and unpack what they mean. This is from the Message version:

Loners who care only for themselves spit on the common good.

What is the lesson? These people lack compassion, love, and are self-centered. They want what they want and will undermine the good of others to get it.

² Fools care nothing for thoughtful discourse; all they do is run off at the mouth.

Have you known people like this? They talk and talk, but won't listen and don't seek to understand?

³ When wickedness arrives, shame's not far behind; contempt for life is contemptible.

Is shame after wickedness imposed, inflicted, or the natural result of deviating from God's design? What does shame do? How does it impact a person? What does it do to relationships?

Why is contempt for life contemptible? The attitude, or mindset, that doesn't value life, is to be devalued. We should seek to eliminate attitudes that devalue or fail to cherish life. Why? Who is the source of life? Who is the source of death?

What about all the infatuation in society with death? Is it a sign of corrupt character?

⁴ Many words rush along like rivers in flood, but deep wisdom flows up from artesian springs.

I know some people who talk and talk and move from one subject to another constantly as a way of never dealing with reality. They have hurts, wounds, unresolved issues, and they avoid dealing with them by constantly talking, but never learning.

⁵ It's not right to go easy on the guilty, or come down hard on the innocent.

What does it mean to go easy on the guilty? Why is it not right? If we said, it is not right to easy on the sick, what would we mean? If we went easy on someone who had a broken leg, might we not push them to do PT?

Why is that not right?

⁶ The words of a fool start fights; do him a favor and gag him.

Wow, don't you like this one? Do you think society would be better off if we could do this? Yes, but notice, to whom you are doing a favor, not to society, but to the fool!

⁷ Fools are undone by their big mouths; their souls are crushed by their words.

What does this mean? How does the words of a fool crush their own soul?

Listen to this commentary from the book *The Desire of Ages*:

Closely connected with Christ's warning in regard to the sin against the Holy Spirit is a warning against idle and evil words. The words are an indication of that which is in the heart. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." **But the words are more than an indication of character; they have power to react on the character.** Men are influenced by their own words. Often under a momentary impulse, prompted by Satan, they give utterance to jealousy or evil surmising, expressing that which they do not really believe; **but the expression reacts on the thoughts.** They are deceived by their words, and come to believe that true which was spoken at Satan's instigation. **Having once expressed an opinion or decision, they are often too proud to retract it, and try to prove themselves in the right, until they come to believe that they are.** It is dangerous to utter a word of doubt, dangerous to question and criticize divine light. **The habit of careless and irreverent criticism reacts upon the character,** in fostering irreverence and unbelief. Many a man indulging this habit has gone on unconscious of danger, until he was ready to criticize and reject the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." {DA 323.1}

⁸ Listening to gossip is like eating cheap candy; do you really want junk like that in your belly?

I think this is a great analogy – because it is like cheap candy, it isn't good for us, yet just like cheap candy we eat it anyway.

⁹ Slack habits and sloppy work are as bad as vandalism.

How many times have you been inconvenienced, had to do more work, call in repairmen etc. because someone did sloppy work or didn't do their job right?

Anyone in the healthcare industry who has ever had to deal with Medicare, Medicaid or insurances, knows how frustrating it is to deal with people who don't do their job right. It is like vandalism, it causes damage.

¹⁰ GOD's name is a place of protection—good people can run there and be safe.

What does this mean? God's name, calling out the words, "Jesus saves" or "God help me?" Is this what it

means? Or are we protected in our minds, souls, characters, when we abide in His character, practicing His methods?

¹⁵ Wise men and women are always learning, always listening for fresh insights.

Are we lovers of truth, recognizing we are finite, so there is always more to learn. Do we hunger to expand our understanding and learn more? Or are we fearful of new insights and seek to shut down new light in defense of tradition?

²² Find a good spouse, you find a good life—and even more: the favor of GOD!

This is so true – I can testify to the truth of this one! Any verses you wanted to unpack?

WEDNESDAY

Prov 18:17 The first speech in a court case is always convincing—until the cross-examination starts!

What is the wisdom in this proverb? This is not only true in court; it is true in life. You want to hear both sides of a story.

Sadly, many people who disagree with what we teach do so because they have listened to gossip and the allegations of some, but haven't taken the time to actually investigate for themselves or listen to our side. When people do this, almost always they are persuaded to our way of seeing things. It happened again this week in CA two people came to me and let me know that certain things were being said that I teach that concerned them, but when I explained what I actually teach, the two persons said they agree with our views.

Have any of you ever experienced this?

Read third paragraph, “Only God...” What is being said here? Is it being said that God, not needing a “second opinion,” doesn't need the input, information, testimony, evidence, perspective of others in order for Him to know the truth?

What does this mean then in regard to what we teach regarding the judgment?

Do some versions of Christianity teach God has record books and that He investigates the records to determine guilt and innocence and that He listens to the “second opinion” of Jesus who pleads to the Father in our behalf?

Have you heard Jesus can empathize with us because He suffered in human flesh, and thus He is able to share His perspective with the Father? Would that be God seeking a second opinion?

All of these ideas are false and distorted – The lesson is correct, the Father doesn't need a second opinion – which means He doesn't need to investigate evidence. He doesn't need to hear testimony. He doesn't have to

be pled with – not because He is closed minded, but because He already knows everything in 100% accurate ways. He knows every side of every argument and the secret motives of the heart. And because He is love, He is always on our side seeking to heal and restore! He doesn't have to be convinced by anyone to do so. "If God is for us..." Rom 8:31

What are further implications?

What about the presentation of blood in the OT sanctuary service? How many times have we heard the idea that the blood is being presented to God?

What is the blood symbolic of? The life of Jesus and the truth about God – does the Father need the truth about Himself, that Jesus revealed, presented to Him? Does the Father need the perfect life of Christ given to Him?

Who does? We do, we need the truth to win us to trust, and in trust we need to internalize the character of Christ, i.e. eat His flesh and drink His blood (Jn 6), so that we become partakers of the divine nature, and it is no longer "I that lives but Christ lives in me."

THURSDAY

Read proverbs 19:1 "Better to be poor and honest than a rich person no one can trust."

Read middle paragraph, "The book of Proverbs..." Why is it better? Because if we lie and cheat our recording angels will take note of it, it will be in the heavenly ledger, and it will one day show up in heavenly court and we will be punished? Or, if we lie and cheat we sear our consciences, warp our characters, damage our reasoning ability, destroy the faculties that respond to love and truth and take ourselves so out of harmony with God and His design that we are beyond healing?

Prov 19:3 People ruin their lives by their own stupidity, so why does God always get blamed?

Isn't that a great one? God gets blamed because people don't want to admit to their own folly, or take responsibility for their own actions. They want to make excuses.

And the most "stupid" action people take that ruin their own lives, is when they find themselves in bad situations, they try and fix it themselves. In other words, many people who have sinned, feel guilt and shame and don't simply return to God in humble repentance. People don't accept responsibility for their shortcomings, seeking what they can learn, how they can mature, and instead seek to hide reality from themselves and others. Learning that God is trustworthy is essential in healing!

If you find yourself in a hole – quit digging!

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “True love is not blind...” What do you understand is the relationship between love and justice?

What is justice? What law lens to you understand this word through?

Through imposed law, justice is about inflicting punishment for breaking the rules. This is the theology of penal substitution and those who hold that God’s law is no different than sinful beings, rules imposed.

In the modern media the idea of justice is consistently represented as inflicting punishment, giving payback. In TV crime dramas, when talking with families of victims, law enforcement will say “help us get the person who murdered your sister, she deserves justice.” Justice is presented as catching and punishing perpetrators.

Is this the Bible view of Justice?

But, when we recognize God as Creator and His laws are the protocols reality is constructed to operate upon, then we understand justice involves restoring deviations from the design back to harmony with the design.

Thus, if you see a friend stealing and you want to do justice, you want to see your friend transformed to be honest and trustworthy, you want His mind, heart and character set right, exacting vengeance doesn’t do anything to bring about repentance – in fact, Romans says, “The kindness of God leads us to repentance.”

If you have a friend involved in porn, what does justice demand? If you want to do what is right by your friend, you want to deliver your friend from this destructive behavior, not punish them for it. You want them set right again.

But, when we have an imposed law construct, we believe that broken rules require punishment and thus we seek to inflict pain and suffering and call it justice. Or worse, we teach God is the source of pain, suffering and death inflicted upon the unrepentant.

Read second paragraph, “For example...” Can a person actually be just, be right, do right, if they don’t understand how things are designed to work, what healthy looks like, what is the proper way for things to function?

Justice is doing what is actually in harmony with God’s design.

What does charity have to do with going to court? I don’t see the relationship?

But, if one is charitable in a court setting, what is one seeking for the one on trial? To get them off? Or to see that person transformed in character? So if one were charitable to a drug addict in court, if no other reasonable option exists to give their brain time to heal, one might sentence them to prison to give them opportunity to detox their brain. This would not be punitive, but redemptive.

Likewise, when one understands the nature of sin, and is dealing with someone deemed to be a recidivist criminal, who has no concern for others and blatantly states their desire to continue hurting others, what does love do? Love, wants to protect them from the ongoing damage to their own mind, conscience, soul that such unruly behavior causes, as well as protecting society at large, thus incarceration for some might be the greatest blessing we can provide.

Read last paragraph, “In His act...” Why does he not palliate the sin? Because what does sin do to the sinner?

- Had the woman already been damaged by her conduct?
- Had her esteem been lowered?
- Was she already struggling with fear, insecurity, guilt, shame, self loathing?
- Was her mind being warped by her destructive choices?

Jesus’ refusal to condemn was evidence that He knows sin doesn’t require His condemnation because it destroys. The problem with sin is not that God is angry or mad at us, but that we are damaged by it! Thus, Jesus says to her, “I don’t condemn you. I am here to save you. I know what you were doing, and even if you weren’t caught and thrown before me, you would have gone home ashamed, guilt ridden, fearful, damaged by your own choices, go home and stop damaging yourself, live a better life.”

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the questions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Opportunity to Share:

The General Conference of SDA will have its meeting (which occurs every five years) in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. 50,000-70,000 Adventist from all over the world are expected to attend. This presents an opportunity to share this healing message about God in a most impactful way.

We plan on giving away our DVDs, Dr. Jennings' Book *Could It Be This Simple?* and other materials. This will be an enormous project. If you would like to share in this opportunity, you can do so by making donations to *Come and Reason Ministries* either via Paypal, or check mailed to our address below.

New Mailing Address: PLEASE UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS BOOK:

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PO Box 28266
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Come and Reason Ministries FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

February 21, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be presenting the God and Your Brain Seminar at Shilo Inn. 3223 Bret Clodfelter Way, The Dalles, Oregon. For more info for this free conference contact Joyce Browne at 541-300-0111.

March 13-14, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in NYC at the Advent Hope Outreach Health Event.

March 27-28, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the University of Tennessee Health Science, Psychiatry and Family Medicine Conference in Memphis, TN.

April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

April 23, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Faith and Mental Health Board in Goshen Indiana.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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Proverbs 1Q 2015 Lesson 8 - Words of Wisdom

I received this email this week:

I listen to something of yours almost every day and am greatly blessed by your ministry. I give out 'Watcher' cards at every opportunity, and also DVD sets, books and cards. I wish everyone could have the chance to see our Loving God and learn of His beautiful law of love and design for all life, His plan for healing our sin-sick hearts and minds, for securing the universe against this sin mess ever rising up again for all eternity, the way you and others now present it! It makes so much sense, is so hopeful, motivating, exciting!

Now for my story and prayer request:

Late last night I had a great fright, finding a young man inside my enclosed porch trying to open the back door of my house. I came face to face with him through a window in the door before I realized what was happening. I live alone, and was very frightened! I was not very kind, shouted at him, demanded he leave my house, and when he didn't, I called 911, retreated to the next room, with a locking door. I could still see him through a window in that door. He stood there, face pressed to my glass door, turning the doorknob and trying to get in until the police came, arrested him and took him away. I was asked to write a statement and then call to have an officer come back to pick it up.

I was quite shaken but very thankful things hadn't turned out much worse! He was a 19-year-old kid from out of town, highly intoxicated, thought he was at a buddy's house and was determined to get inside. I felt compassion for him and prayed that I could think of something to do with this opportunity, and not waste it.

After I wrote my statement, I prayed for wisdom, for some way to help this young man, who is about the age of my own nephew. Then I knew what I needed to do. I wrote the following letter, and slipped it inside the plastic cover of my last set of Healing the Mind DVD set.

"To the young man who came to my door tonight -

You gave me a bad fright trying to open my back door late this evening. I realize now you were not here to steal or harm me, but were just very drunk, lost and disoriented. My heart truly goes out to you.

I started thinking maybe it was not chance that brought you here. Maybe the God who created you and loves you guided you to this house because you are losing your way and need someone to care before it's too late.

I'm trying to think of what I would want a kind stranger to do for my son if he were in your place. Then the idea came to give you my favorite DVD set, a series of talks by a very smart and compassionate man who makes it his life work to help people learn to make better choices and live life the way we were designed to live - happy and satisfied, meeting our full potential.

I hope you will take the time to watch them. They may be completely strange, like nothing you would usually watch. But something here might give you answers to life's hard questions, may help you navigate through this difficult time. Please watch them.

I hate to see any young person wasting the precious gift of life, hurting their chance for a good future. You might have wandered into the house of a person with a deadly weapon tonight, and might not be here now. Please realize you are making some choices that could have very dire consequences. Don't throw your future away. You can do anything you choose to do. With God's help, you can make it great!

I don't know your name but I am praying for you.

The officer, when he came back to pick up my written statement last night would not take the letter and DVDs to give to the young man in jail, but he told me how I could accomplish it.

I had some legwork today, signing a request for the police case report at the police station so I could get the young man's address, explaining to them what I wanted to do. The secretary nearly wept, and within 2 hours she had everything typed up and ready for me to pick up. I had his name and address, packaged up the DVDs, and just got home from the post office after mailing them with my letter (no return address!).

The seeds are planted. I'm so thankful I had your material here to share, and now am praying that this young man will be convicted of truth, won to trust in his healing and loving Creator, that his life will be saved for God's kingdom.

Please pray for this young man, Odin is his name.

And could you please send me 5 more sets of Healing The Mind DVDs?

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, "To some degree..." Any thoughts or questions on the relationship between genetics and environment?

Genetics provide the potential and set limits, environment determines the shape, development, and ultimate expression of the biological potential.

Genetics provides the library of information, the instruction manual to make all aspects of our bodies, but environment effects how that library of information is expressed, which books are opened and which are closed.

Read second paragraph, "Unfortunately," God has provided us the Holy Spirit – What does the Holy Spirit do for us and when?

- Works in our hearts before we even know about God or choose God instilling a desire for good, causing enmity between us and Satan
- Enlightens with truth, convicts of right and wrong
- Leaves us free to choose for ourselves
- Provides insight, wisdom, enlightenment
- Provides power to do the right when we choose the right
- Provides new motives and desires
- Transforms the heart/mind as we choose to participate with God in His methods and plans

SUNDAY

"We Are All Equal" Thoughts about the title? How is this title true? How has this title been misunderstood in our society today to cause significant problems?

It is true that we are all of equal moral worth! We are equally loved by God, equally valuable in God's sight and all equally in need of the same solution from God because we all suffer from the same condition.

But, is it true we are all equal in talent, ability, capacity?

How has the idea of moral equality bled over into equality of ability or talent or capacity within our society and what problems does this cause?

First, the idea gets in the minds of people that if someone can do something then so can I – rather than each person having an opportunity for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, there is the idea that everyone should experience the same results or successes. This leads to competition, jealousy, and insecurity self doubt if one doesn't do as well as another.

Second, in our educational system, because we all have equal worth as humans, and deserve equal opportunity, some have made the mistake of thinking all are of equal ability and therefore proscribing a rigid educational pathway, pigeon-holing, everyone down the same track regardless of ability, capacity or talent.

This has resulted in serious damage to individuals and society.

Are all people equally gifted with musical ability? Or athletic ability? What would happen if our society required every person to be competent enough to have a career as a musician? Consider the results of years of musical education on those without musical ability, or athletic training for the non athletes?

In our current educational system, everyone is force-fed the same education regardless of talent, capacity or ability – because everyone is “equal.”

Individuals who are not academically gifted, but perhaps mechanical geniuses, are forced down the same academic pathways, in which they struggle, their egos are damaged, and results in loss of esteem, confidence and in adolescence, where there is a need to find someplace where they are affirmed many drop out, join gangs, and/or rebel against the establishment.

How much better, to identify the talents and skills of individuals and foster their development, tracking people into vocations, putting young people into apprenticeships rather than academics if they are better suited for it? What would happen in our society if young people were given basic reading, writing and math skills, but then educated down pathways that allowed their talents and abilities to be refined and developed?

Read first paragraph, “Unlike the theory...” What does it mean and what does it not mean that “all humans were created by God”?

The lesson refers us to Acts 17:26:

From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.

Does this give any insight? What was the method, as the Bible states, that God used to make all nations?

God made one man – and gave that one man, along with his wife, the ability to procreate beings in their image. And it was through this design, this ability, that all other people came.

What are the implications of this truth? Does this mean God is directly involved with the creation of every individual human being?

When a man rapes a woman and she gets pregnant, is God creating? Or is that man abusing an ability God designed into the human species?

Any implications on this? If God creates us as we are – then is it God's will for some people to be born with congenital defects? And if doctors fix those defects are they going against the divine will? Of course not!

What do you say to the person who asks: "Why did God create my child with schizophrenia? Why did God want us to have a Down's Syndrome baby? Why did God create me with bipolar disorder?"

Does God create defects, disease, imperfection? Does God create beings sinful? And since we are all born in sin, we can be certain that God is not directly creating any of us, but we are all created by God in Adam, as the Scripture says!

Who are the three humans God had a direct hand in creating? Adam, Eve and the incarnation of Christ – and they all started out sinless, Jesus stayed that way, Adam and Eve did not.

Read third paragraph, "Sin is another..." Is it only the "promise" of eternal life that we can have? In other words, when a person exercises faith in Jesus, accepts Him as their Savior – are they only getting future eternal life insurance? The promise of eternal life – or are they getting a very real new life here and now?

- Do they get a new heart and right spirit, here and now?
- Do they get relief of guilt and shame here and now?
- Do they get purity of character here and now?
- Do they get transformed here and now to be like Christ?
- Do they get new desires and lose desire for sin and selfishness, here and now?

I believe, presenting legal salvation, undermines the full life Christ wants us to experience. I believe focusing on future eternal life, undermines the freedom, joy, victory, peace and transformation that is to be ours here and now! Do we get eternal life – absolutely – but that life starts NOW!

"This is life eternal...." John 17:3

Jesus said, "whoever lives by believing in me will never die." John 11:26

Is eternal life something that we have promised to us if we have faith in Jesus, or something we actually

have, possess, here and now?

Read last paragraph, "If man cannot..." How do you balance that with these statements:

- While God was working in Daniel and his companions "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), they were working out their own salvation. Herein is revealed the outworking of the **divine principle of cooperation, without which no true success can be attained. Human effort avails nothing without divine power; and without human endeavor, divine effort is with many of no avail. To make God's grace our own, we must act our part.** His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. {LHU 193.4}
- **There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies--** divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding,** but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . . . Ye are labourers together with God.** {OHC 310.5}

How is salvation wholly of Christ and no work of ours, yet it requires our work of cooperation?

Think design law and it all becomes clear. We are born in a terminal condition, out of harmony from God's design. Christ, and Christ alone, took this condition upon Himself, and by the exercise of His will, cured the condition procuring remedy for humanity. He lived a life in perfect harmony with God and thus developed a perfect human character. This is our Remedy. We cannot do this; we can only choose to partake of what He has developed in our behalf. But the partaking is not the developing.

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus **the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ.** God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Note how the justification happens, according to this passage? It is by becoming partaker of the divine nature, by partaking of Jesus in trust, and receiving through the Holy Spirit a new heart and right spirit, thus we are set right in heart and mind, justified.

This stands in stark contrast to the legal fiction often taught that justification is when God declares us righteous, even though we are not.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Their works...” What does it mean their works follow them? What kind of work? What is our work?

After surrendering in trust to Jesus, after experiencing His indwelling presence, our work is to stay connected with Christ and then be a conduit to share His love and truth to others.

Jesus said, as the Father sent Him so He sends us, to do what? To share the truth that sets minds free and restores people to a trust relationship with God.

And if this is our work, what follows behind such work? People, lives of people being touched, impacted, changed, transformed, renewed as they come to partake of Jesus! We have no power to heal a life, we only have the ability to share the Remedy – Jesus who heals and transforms!

TUESDAY

Read Proverbs 20:17 “Food gained by fraud tastes sweet, but one ends up with a mouth full of gravel.”

What does it mean? Does it apply to food only? Why does it turn to gravel? What would gravel do in the mouth? Damage and destroy; what does fraud, deceit, thievery do to the mind and character?

“Do not say, “I’ll pay you back for this wrong!” Wait for the Lord, and he will avenge you.” Proverbs 20:22

What does this mean? If one is an immature Christian – level 1-4, looking at life through the lens of imposed law, how does one understand this text?

As you know I am going to Australia in a few months, a lot of preparation has been going on there. But, also some opposition. One individual has posted a lengthy attack against what we teach online. In that attack the following is said by the person who opposes what we teach:

“Now to me it seems perfectly rational that a loving God would nevertheless be willing to be fair even if being so was painful to himself. To inflict pain on the man that ordered torture for a humble servant of Jesus seems only just. In fact, it is when the persecutors are already dead that the blood of the martyrs calls out for God to avenge “our blood” in Revelation 6. So painful punishment seems rational to me and irrational to Jennings.

And in another place says this critic says regarding the 10 last plagues:

These plagues are **punitive** rather than corrective. (That is, they occur after the close of human probation.) And the suffering is fair, it is just. God is “holy” who judges the wicked. That is obvious, “manifest”, according to the righteous ones in Rev 15.

This is what happens when one sees God’s law as imposed, rather than design protocols. It seems only right to inflict torture and punishment for breaking the rules. The problem of course, is that those who hold this position, don’t understand reality; they don’t understand the nature of how life is built and what sin does. Sin severs from God’s design and damages and destroys those who participate in it. Those who hold the view God must inflict torture, are operating upon Satan’s view of God’s law.

Listen to an historic SDA view of the 10 last plagues:

I was shown that the **judgments of God would not** come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way; **They place themselves** beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reproves, and points out the only path of safety; then if those who have been the objects of His special care will **follow their own course**, independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, **if they choose** their own way, **then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them.**

It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of. (Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3)

Or here is another historic quote:

God keeps a reckoning with the nations. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice. Those who work evil toward their fellow men, saying, How doth God know? will one day be called upon to **meet long-deferred vengeance**. In this age a more than common contempt is shown to God. Men have reached a point in insolence and disobedience which shows that their **cup of iniquity is almost full**. Many have well-nigh **passed the boundary of mercy**. Soon **God will show that He is indeed the living God**. He will say to the angels, **"No longer combat Satan in his efforts to destroy"**. Let him work out his malignity upon the children of disobedience; for the cup of their iniquity is full. They have advanced from one degree of wickedness to another, adding daily to their lawlessness. **I will no longer interfere to prevent the destroyer from doing his work."** {RH, September 17, 1901 par. 8}

Or from the Bible:

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, **holding back** the four winds of the earth **to prevent** any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. ² Then I saw

another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels **who had been given power to harm** the land and the sea: ³“Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.” Revelation 7:1-3

What are these angels of God doing? Holding back, but what power are they described as having? Power to harm – how? By letting go, letting go of what? So where does the actual destruction originate?

Satan is the destroyer, God is the restorer, Satan is the source of death, God is the source of life. To present it otherwise is to cast God in the robes of Satan!

Another historic view:

The Saviour in His miracles revealed the power that is continually at work in man's behalf, to **sustain and to heal** him. **Through the agencies of nature, God is working**, day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, **to keep us alive, to build up and restore us**. When any part of the body sustains injury, a healing process is at once begun; nature's agencies are set at work to restore soundness. But the power working through these agencies is the power of God. All life-giving power is from Him. When one recovers from disease, it is God who restores him. **Sickness, suffering, and death are work of an antagonistic power. Satan is the destroyer; God is the restorer.** Faith I Live By165

How must Satan rejoice to have so many Christians teach God is the destroyer and source of death?

What is God's Vengeance, according to the Bible?

Therefore the Lord, the Lord Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: “Ah! I will vent my wrath on my foes and avenge myself on my enemies. I will turn my hand against you; I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities. Isa 1:24,25

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “A person's character...” Several questions that come to mind from this paragraph:

- Which is more important – character or religious affiliation?
- Can someone have Christlike character and not be a member of an organized church?
- Can someone have eternal life and not be a member an institutional church?
- What does helping the poor mean? It is giving handout or hand up? What is the difference?
- Do we help more by supplying answers, or giving opportunities to solve problems?
- Do we help more by lifting burdens, or by assisting people in lifting their own burdens?
- Can success be given to a person?
- In Christian worldview, what does a successful life look like?
- Does it look like developing a Christlike character?

- Can Christlike character be given to a person?
- How can we create opportunity for personal development, hope, and atmosphere's for success?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The Hebrew..." Is it true that parents and educators are responsible for their children's future?

What are parents and educators responsible for? For their conduct in parenting and educating! Are parents and educators responsible for outcomes?

The lesson refers us to Proverbs 22:6, "raise a child..." It can be interpreted either two ways, "raise a child in the way he should go" or "raise a child according to his way" and when he is old he will not depart from it.

Which is the more accurate in regard to actual outcome promises? The second! When God raised Lucifer and Adam, there were no mistakes – He did everything perfectly – then if the first were true, God would be responsible for failing to parent Lucifer and Adam correctly, but this is not the case.

It is a proverb, telling us that if we fail to do any job, let the child be in charge of it's rearing, it will grow up self centered, self indulged, narcissistic and will not depart from it.

However, the traditional interpretation can be used to teach a general principle, that good outcomes are enhanced by good investments, but such good investments do not guarantee good outcomes.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: The God-Shaped Church: Preparing People to Meet Jesus Seminar by Dr. Jennings

Please help us fill the church as we will be recording a new DVD set

When: March 21, 2015 2-5:30 p.m.

Where: Hamilton Community Church at 7997 Shallowford Road Chattanooga

Schedule:

2:00-3:00 Growing Up in Christ: The 7 Levels of Moral Decision Making

How do you determine what is right and wrong (moral decision-making)? Do you look to a higher authority – parent, teacher, political leader, pastor, priest, or deity to tell you? Do you look for consensus amongst peers, or perhaps a code of rules or system of established laws? Or do you have another standard? In this lecture we will examine seven levels of moral decision-making identifying a progression from more childlike perspectives to maturity.

3:00-3:15 Break

3:15-4:15 Becoming a Spokesperson for God: Telling the Story of the Cosmic Conflict from Beginning to End

Are you able to present a cohesive story of the conflict between Christ and Satan from the opening of the conflict in heaven? How Satan duped innocent angels, God's response, the spread of sin to planet earth, God's actions in human history and the back and forth battle between Christ and Satan throughout human history, culminating in our present circumstance? In this lecture Dr. Jennings presents a compelling case demonstrating that every action of God's has been redemptive and therapeutic designed to counter some attack of Satan's in order to save and heal humanity.

4:15-4:30 Break

4:30-5:30 Answering Tough Bible Questions

Have you ever struggled with tough Bible questions? Dr. Jennings will provide compelling and convincing answers that make sense and reveal a beautiful and gracious Creator God to the following questions:

- Why curse the ground?
- Why man to rule over woman?
- Why God killed people in the Old Testament
- Why raise the wicked only to torture and kill them again?
- What is the truth about hell?
- What is the seal of God and the Mark of the Beast?
- Homosexuality in a Christian world

Opportunity to Share:

The General Conference of SDA will have its meeting (which occurs every five years) in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. 50,000-70,000 Adventist from all over the world are expected to attend. This presents an opportunity to share this healing message about God in a most impactful way.

We plan on giving away our DVDs, Dr. Jennings' Book *Could It Be This Simple?* and other materials. This will be an enormous project. If you would like to share in this opportunity, you can do so by making donations to *Come and Reason Ministries* either via Paypal, or check mailed to our address below.

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And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

February 21, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be presenting the God and Your Brain Seminar at Shilo Inn. 3223 Bret Clodfelter Way, The Dalles, Oregon. For more info for this free conference contact Joyce Browne at 541-300-0111.

March 13-14, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in NYC at the Advent Hope Outreach Health Event.

March 21, 2015: NEW EVENT: The God-Shaped Church: Preparing People to Meet Jesus Seminar at Hamilton Community Church, Chattanooga, TN.

March 27-28, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the University of Tennessee Health Science, Psychiatry and Family Medicine Conference in Memphis, TN.

April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

April 23, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Faith and Mental Health Board in Goshen Indiana.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May 17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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Proverbs 1Q 2015 Lesson 9

Words of Truth

SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs, “Some of this week’s...” Were the truths not divine revelations until Solomon wrote them? If the same truth were written by an Egyptian philosopher would it be less divinely inspired?

Here is what one founder of the SDA church wrote:

The wise men from the East were **philosophers**. They belonged to a large and influential class that included men of noble birth, and comprised much of the wealth and learning of their nation. Among these were many who imposed on the credulity of the people. Others were upright men who studied the **indications of Providence in nature**, and who were honored for their integrity and wisdom. Of this character were the wise men who came to Jesus.

The light of God is ever shining amid the darkness of heathenism. As these magi studied the starry heavens, and sought to fathom the mystery hidden in their bright paths, **they beheld the glory of the Creator.** Seeking clearer knowledge, **they turned to the Hebrew Scriptures.** In their own land **were treasured prophetic writings that predicted the coming of a divine teacher.** Balaam belonged to the magicians, though at one time a prophet of God; by the Holy Spirit he had foretold the prosperity of Israel and the appearing of the Messiah; and **his prophecies had been handed down by tradition from century to century.** But in the Old Testament the Saviour's advent was more clearly revealed. The magi learned with joy that His coming was near, and that the whole world was to be filled with a knowledge of the glory of the Lord. {DA 59.3}

Is truth less inspired if it comes from a non-Christian source?

One of the criticisms of some of the immature in Christ, is to criticize the source, rather than look at the message itself.

Some time ago, when I first became familiar with Kohlberg and his six levels of moral development and presented them, one of the legally minded critics of ours argued that I was using human philosophers rather than inspired sources.

Do, you see the foolishness of such arguments? If it is truth, then it is inspired for all truth comes from God. But people argue this as a way of devaluing and ignoring the truth and rejecting something that doesn't fit with their view of things.

I have seen this same method done with Ellen White, someone is concerned she plagiarized something – so they don't want to read her writings. Misses the entire point – I give them this analogy:

Imagine your wife had cancer, an oncologist published a new treatment in the Archives of Internal Medicine, which works, and puts the cancer into remission for all who take it. But, you discover he plagiarized, i.e. copied his research from someone else, would you then not provide the treatment for your wife?

The question isn't whether something was plagiarized but whether it is true!

Likewise, if you are talking to non-SDAs regarding EGWs writings, and they ask if they are inspired, what do you say? This is my response:

Isn't it true that spiritual things are spiritually discerned? And that the carnal mind cannot understand spiritual truth without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit? Then to the degree any human writes spiritual truth, whether Billy Graham, Max Lucado, Martin Luther or Ellen White, they are only able to do so because that truth was revealed to them by the Holy Spirit. Don't get distracted arguing whether she was inspired or not, instead focus on what she wrote and decide if it contains truth or not.

Have you developed the ability to recognize truth without someone else telling you that it is true?

Can you recognize Bible truths without an Ellen White statement that supports it?

- All truth, whether in nature or in revelation, is consistent with itself in all its manifestations. {CE 193.3}
- In the pursuit of knowledge, he is searching for truth; and all truth comes from God, the source of truth. {CE 246.1}

When we think of the levels of moral decision-making, what level does one have to achieve to discern what is true?

Level five is the minimal level – level four and below are what Paul describes as immature, those who are not acquainted with righteousness and haven't developed the ability to discern the right from the wrong.

Level five loves others more than self and determines what is true and right by whether it helps others, is healing, is in their eternal best interest.

Level four, is much more preoccupied with factual correctness, defined doctrines, creeds, fundamental beliefs, correct rituals, precise definitions, agreement in cognitive understanding and behavioral conformity. Even if it hurts others to achieve it.

Just look at the Reformation and how people were willing to burn people at the stake because they believed differently about sacred relics, or the role of the church, or the validity of the Pope as vicar of Christ etc. The immature must enforce adherence to a way of thinking rather than promoting freedom of conscience.

Why did persecution of people who believe differently stop? Was it because the religious people matured and granted freedom, or the states stepped in and stopped the religious from having control of political power?

What is happening with some segments of Islam today? Where Islam gains control of governments what transpires? Why? Would Christians do better?

What about today, do some struggle with the ability to discern truth for themselves today? What kind of law would be recognizable as truth to all people, whether believers and non-believers?

Design law – examples?

SUNDAY

What do you think of the title, the knowledge of truth? Is there a difference between knowing something or someone and knowing about something or someone? What is the difference?

So what is the knowledge of truth? It is not mere awareness, but experience with the truth.

What do you think about this description of knowledge and education?

"The **highest education** includes the knowledge of the word of God, and is comprehended in the words of Christ, "That **they might know thee, the only true God**, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

The **highest class of education is that which will give such knowledge** and discipline as will lead to the best **development of character**, and will fit the soul for that life which measures with the life of God... The **highest education** will be that which will teach our children and youth, our teachers and educators, **the science of Christianity**, that will give them an **experimental knowledge of God's ways**, impart to them the lessons which Christ gave to his disciples of the paternal character of God. {RH, April 28, 1896}

What does this mean? It means God is Creator and His laws are the design parameters of life, which are scientific, have cause and effect, and can be tested. And we are to move past superstitious beliefs, to scientific ones in regard to our understanding of God, His character of love, the nature of sin, and how sin deviates from design and damages the deviant and how God's method heal.

What do you think of this quote – quite profound?

Experience is said to be the best teacher. **Genuine experience** is indeed superior to mere **theoretical knowledge**, but many have an erroneous idea as to what constitutes experience. **Real**

experience is gained by a variety of **careful experiments**, made with the mind free from prejudice, uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits. The results are marked with careful solicitude, and an **anxious desire to learn, to improve**, and to reform on every point that is not in harmony with **physical and moral laws**.

That which many term experience is **not experience at all**; it has resulted from mere habit, or from a course of indulgence, thoughtlessly and often ignorantly followed. There has not been a **fair trial by actual experiment and thorough investigation, with a knowledge of the principles involved in the action**. Experience which is opposed to **natural law, -- which is in conflict with the unchangeable principles of nature, -- is not to be relied upon**. Superstition arising from a **diseased imagination is often arrayed in opposition to reason and to scientific principles**. To many a person, the idea that others may gainsay what he has learned by experience, seems folly, and even cruelty itself. But there are more errors received and held through false ideas of experience than from any other cause. There are many invalids today who will ever remain such because they cannot be convinced that their experience is not to be relied upon. {BEcho, December 19, 1904}

Is God's law natural – the unchangeable principles of nature? What is superstition?

- Superstition is believing that if you break a mirror you have 7 years bad luck, or walk under a ladder you have bad luck, or see a black cat you have bad luck...
- Superstition is believing if you eat food offered to an idol you are under the power of the idol
- Superstition is believing if you stop and get gas in your car on Sabbath you are under Satan's power
- Superstition is believing if you go to a movie theater God's angels wait at the door
- Superstition is living in violation of God's law, i.e. design for life, and then praying for deliverance from the consequences. Smoking a pack a day and praying for healthy lungs, cheating on your spouse and praying for a happy marriage.
- Superstition is believing if you name something you have power over it
- Superstition is believing that only the King James Bible contains truth
- Superstition is believing rituals have power and must be done in the right way, or the right geographic location
- Superstition is believing one is in legal trouble with God and God requires a legal payment not to kill you
- Superstition is believing anything that requires you not to think, to shut down reasoning and to believe things that are not consistent with the evidences God has provided

What is true knowledge? It is not theoretical, cognitive, but experiential. Sadly, many Christians rest satisfied on theoretical knowledge of a superstitious nature and thus have no power and live in fear and insecurity.

With this in mind read fifth paragraph, "2. conviction..." What do you think of this definition of faith?

It is a false definition that misleads. It leads to superstition and belief in incredulous things.

Faith by definition is NOT the belief in things we don't understand, but trust in someone we know without doubt is trustworthy. Our faith is in God, not in the knowledge of the universe. And while there may be facts we don't understand, our faith is not in the facts, or the outcomes of things, but in the One who has given His life for us.

Therefore, our faith is never blind, never ignorant, never without evidence, never in something we don't understand, because God has revealed Himself to us and provided the supreme evidence of His trustworthiness.

This idea of faith in something without evidence, is one of Satan's deceptions to get people not to think and thus make them vulnerable to believe anything, and if a false believe they currently cherish is questioned, they are conditioned to fear that questioning is a lack of faith, so they continue to hold to false ideas.

But God says, "Come let us reason together..."

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Though it's always..." What do you hear as the reason stealing is wrong? Because God sees them and God has special concern for the helpless, i.e. because some external authority is overseeing the enforcement of law and will one day punish?

Read next sentence, "Indeed, Proverbs 22:23 implies that even if the thief gets away with no human punishment, God will repay."

At what level of maturity is this operating? Level four and below.

It is true that stealing is wrong – but why? What does it do to the thief? It sears the conscience, damages the reason, warps the character, inflames selfishness and ultimately destroys.

So how does God repay? What method does He use?

What law lens do you see this through?

Who created reality? Whose law does the fabric of the cosmos operate upon? What happens when one deviates from the design for life?

So, how does God repay? By removing His restraining hand and allowing people to reap what they have chosen.

Read third paragraph, "So, this warning..." What is suggested as the reason to be discouraged from stealing? There is an accounting and one day you will get punished for doing wrong.

What is the problem with this theology and reasoning? First, to what motive does it appeal? Selfishness, protecting self, avoiding punishment – therefore, is it appealing to a converted or unconverted heart?

This is language spoken to children, immature, infants, who according to Heb 5 are not righteous – this is what Paul says in 1 Timothy that the law was not given for the righteous but for the wicked... People whose hearts are selfish, whose minds are immature, do require being approached in this way, however, this is merely to bring them to a point of realizing what is wrong and showing them their helpless state.

So, first problem is it appeals to selfish motives what is another problem?

To obey for this reason actually creates rebels against God. People either become hard-hearted Pharisees who become petty spies and judges, seeking to behaviorally monitor and police others in their religious organization, or they reject God and leave the church.

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God **from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so**--will never enter into the joy of obedience. **He does not obey.** When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is **not a Christian life**. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}

A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897}

First it appeals to selfishness, second it incites rebellion and what is another problem with this type of theology?

It misrepresents God and His law as dictator like – God's law becomes like created beings make, and God is represented as an enforcer, the source of pain, suffering and death. Thus, ultimately this theological approach undermines trust in God, obstructs the work of the Holy Spirit and keeps people trapped in religious cycles of abuse and violence – thus we have what Paul warned the end of time would be like:

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— having a form of godliness but denying its power. 2Tim 3:1-5

Such presentations misrepresent God as being no better than fallen beings, creating rules and enforcing those rules. His law is not the law of life, but a list of rules that require coercive enforcement. This is the essence of the beast.

In Bible imagery beasts represent earthly governments – and earthly governments reign by imposed laws and coercive enforcement. The mark of their power and authority is the ability to coerce and control through external threat and punishment. It is beastly to behave this way.

Thus those who receive the mark of the beast in the forehead are those who actually believe God is like this, a cosmic enforcer, authoritarian god who imposes external punishments. And those who receive the mark in their hand are those who practice the methods of coercing other's consciences. It is beastly to do so.

The specific doctrine is irrelevant – whether it is day of worship, form of baptism, method of communion, matters not, it is the method of coercing others to conform, the violation of God's law of love and liberty that makes it beastly.

Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. **Compelling power is found only under Satan's government.** The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power. Desire of Ages 759

God could have destroyed Satan and all his sympathizers as easily as one can pick up a pebble and cast it to the earth. But by so doing he would have given a precedent for the exercise of force. **All the compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order.** He would not work on this line... **This principle is wholly of Satan's creation.** Review & Herald, September 7, 1897

What is compelling power? So what of the teaching that God will use power to torture and kill people who disobey – is that freedom or compelling power? It is the way human governments operate, and thus is beastly and we must stop presenting God as a beast!

TUESDAY

Title “Being Jealous of the Wicked” and the lesson asks, “Why would someone envy the wicked?” The lesson suggests it is because of the immediate gain or reward, thoughts?

I would like to suggest it is because of the *perceived* reward, which is based on failure to understand God's law and the nature of sin.

When one operates level four and below, and conceives of God's law as imposed, like human law without inherent consequence, then one falsely believes if one can break the law without getting caught one gets an

advantage.

A patient of mine came in one time very upset because of a situation at work. My patient was the secretary for a VP at her work, and across the hall was another secretary for another VP. Their work responsibilities did not overlap, so if one of the secretaries didn't do something it did not put more work on the other.

However, my patient was distraught because the other secretary would spend much of her day reading novels, doing her nails, talking to friends on the phone, playing games on the computer, while my patient worked all day at her job. The longer this went on the more my patient got angry, irritated and resentful to the point it was interfering with her sleep, she ruminated about it constantly. It just wasn't fair in her mind.

What was the problem for my patient? It was not understanding reality and how it works, but conceiving of reality through human law. She thought as long as the lady wasn't getting caught she was getting away with it and thus getting a better deal than herself, or stated another way, it was making my patient feel like she was being mistreated or taken advantage of.

So, I asked my patient, "If you agreed to wash my car for \$100 and I gave you the \$100 but you never washed my car, how would you feel?" She said, "I would feel guilty and ashamed." "Would you have as much peace, personal integrity, confidence, and satisfaction with yourself?" She said no.

Then I asked her, "So what if you agree to work for someone take their pay, but don't do the job?" She paused and thought and then realized, the other secretary wasn't getting a better deal, she was damaging her character, searing her conscience, warping her mind!

This is how reality works – we cannot be well or get well outside of God's design for life. There is never a reason to be envious of the wicked if we understand reality.

But, again it comes back to how do you understand God's law and character?

In the third paragraph the lesson states, "the temptation of sin is that its reward is immediate..." Thoughts?

This is often true, but not always true. Sometimes people plot vengeance that takes years to realize. The 9/11/2001 attacks on this country, took years of plotting and planning to carry out and achieve. Many other examples could be given. But it is true, that much sin brings an immediate gratification.

WEDNESDAY

The title for the day is "What We Put in Our Mouths" and the first sentence says, "It is no accident that the first human temptation concerned food."

When I read this I laughed, because it is implying that the temptation regarding food was somehow calculated by the enemy, i.e. it wasn't an accident. Well it is true it wasn't an accident – but why?

If God had said, regarding a small beautiful pond, “All the bodies of water upon the earth you may swim in, except this pond. In the day you swim in this pond you will surely die.” what then would they have been tempted upon?

The reason the temptation focused on what they ate, is because God set up the issue that way, not because the devil saw some weakness in their appetite he sought to take advantage of. They had no weakness in desire, lust, passion, appetite. It wasn't about appetite, it was about trust in God!

The second sentence states, “It was being disobedient and eating of the wrong thing that brought sin and death into the world.” Thoughts?

This is only a partial truth – and misleads focusing again on imposed law constructs and behavioral approach to right and wrong.

Consider this view from one of the founders of the SDA church:

“Eve **believed the words of Satan**, and the **belief of that falsehood** in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors...” Review & Herald 1/9/1886

What was it that changed them – eating the fruit, or believing lies about God?

Remember that cascade of destructive events:

- Lies believed break the circle of love and trust
- broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness
- fear and selfishness result in acts of sin
- acts of sin result in damage to mind, body, character

The act of taking the fruit was the results of believing lies and broken trust with the change of heart motive of love to fear and selfishness. Thus, the sin was in the change of heart to distrust God and was manifested in acting for self by taking the fruit. There was nothing wrong with the fruit; there was something wrong with believing lies about God, distrusting Him and then acting selfishly.

People at level four development and below, want to focus on behavior, rather than love for God and His design for life.

Read second and third paragraph, “Who hasn't seen...” No doubt alcohol in society has caused untold pain, suffering and deaths.

- Average age of first drink is 12
- 20% of teens 12-20 are binge drinkers
- Adolescent drinkers scored worse than non-users on vocabulary, general information, memory,

memory retrieval and at least three other tests

- Perform worse in school, are more likely to fall behind and have an increased risk of social problems, depression, suicidal thoughts and violence
- Alcohol affects the sleep cycle, resulting in impaired learning and memory as well as disrupted release of hormones necessary for growth and maturation
- Alcohol use increases risk of stroke among young drinkers
- <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/no-index/physician-resources/9416.shtml>
- **Adults (ages 18+):** Approximately 17 million adults ages 18 and older (7.2 percent of this age group) had an alcohol use disorder (AUD) in 2012. This includes 11.2 million men (9.9 percent of men in this age group) and 5.7 million women (4.6 percent of women in this age group).³
 - About 1.4 million adults received treatment for an AUD at a specialized facility in 2012 (8.4 percent of adults in need). This included 416,000 women (7.3 percent of women in need) and 1.0 million men (8.9 percent of men in need).
- **Youth (ages 12–17):** In 2012, an estimated 855,000 adolescents ages 12–17 (3.4 percent of this age group) had an AUD. This number includes 444,000 females (3.6 percent) and 411,000 males (3.2 percent).
 - An estimated 76,000 adolescents received treatment for an AUD at a specialized facility in 2012 (8.9 percent of adolescents in need). This included 28,000 females (6.3 percent of adolescent females in need) and 48,000 males (11.7 percent of adolescent males in need).

Alcohol-Related

Deaths:

- Nearly 88,000 people (approximately 62,000 men and 26,000 women) die from alcohol related causes annually, making it the third leading preventable cause of death in the United States.
- In 2012, alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities accounted for 10,322 deaths (31 percent of overall driving fatalities).
<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/alcohol-facts-and-statistics>

Was it possible, in Bible times, without refrigeration, to consistently store juices without it either turning to wine or vinegar?

What do you make of 1Tim 3:8:

- In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, (NIV)
- Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, ESV
- Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, KJV
- Church stewards must also be honorable people, dedicated, responsible with mature character, not drunkards, *The Remedy*

Or 1Tim 5:23:

- Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses. NIV
- (No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.) ESV
- Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. KJV
- As you travel, don't be so insistent on water only; impure water may be causing many of your digestive problems. Drink a little wine, as the wine will often kill the contaminants and reduce your risk of sickness. *The Remedy*

What is the Bible position on alcohol consumption and why?

There is no doubt that alcohol is dangerous and contributes to much pain and suffering – does that mean alcohol use is always sin?

What is the antidote for overdose with antifreeze? If your teenager tried to commit suicide by drinking antifreeze what would you do?

The antidotes for ethylene glycol poisoning are ethanol and fomepizole. This antidotal treatment forms the mainstay of management of ethylene glycol poisoning. The toxicity of ethylene glycol comes from its metabolism to glycolic acid and oxalic acid. The goal of pharmacotherapy is to prevent the formation of these metabolites. Ethanol acts by competing with ethylene glycol for alcohol dehydrogenase, the first enzyme in the degradation pathway. Because ethanol has a much higher affinity for alcohol dehydrogenase, about a 100-times greater affinity, it successfully blocks the breakdown of ethylene glycol into glycoaldehyde, which prevents the further degradation. Without oxalic acid formation, the nephrotoxic effects can be avoided, but the ethylene glycol is still present in the body. It is eventually excreted in the urine, but supportive therapy for the CNS depression and metabolic acidosis will be required until the ethylene glycol concentrations fall below toxic limits. Pharmaceutical grade ethanol is usually given intravenously as a 5 or 10% solution in 5% dextrose but it is also sometimes given orally in the form of a strong spirit such as whisky, vodka, or gin. Brent, J. (2001). "Current management of ethylene glycol poisoning".

Drugs **61** (7): 979–88. doi:10.2165/00003495-200161070-00006. ISSN 0012-6667. PMID 11434452.

How many have ever had cough syrup prescribed by a doctor? Most have alcohol in them. If anyone has taken liquid Nyquil, you have had alcohol.

So, what is the Bible principle? It is in operating in harmony with God's design to promote what is healthiest for the body, including the brain. If one has an illness of some kind, which is damaging the body, and alcohol can cure that illness, then as long as the cure isn't worse than the illness it is in harmony with God's plan to use the cure, as in the case of antifreeze poisoning.

Why does the liver have enzymes to break down alcohol? Because our own GI systems produce alcohol as

products of digestion, and the liver is designed to break it down before it reaches the brain. Intoxication occurs when enough alcohol makes it through the liver to the brain to alter brain function.

The Bible's injunction is against drunkenness, and any activity which undermines health and brain function.

Level 1-4 thinking wants to make rules, no alcohol ever, or all alcohol is sin. Level 5-7 understand God's design for life and realize we don't purposely do things that deviate from the design and injure, but realize also that sometimes in this world of sin a substance like alcohol can actual heal a person and save their lives and thus it is within God's design and plan to use in such circumstance.

THURSDAY

Read dark section at the top, "When I say..."

Read next two paragraphs, "Years ago..." How do you understand it? Consider which law lens one views this through.

Level 1-4 thinking, viewing it through the lens of imposed laws, thinks God has some judicial proceeding in which He determines your guilt or innocence for failing to act and then puts on you a proper punishment for failing to act.

Level 5-7 understand reality doesn't actually work this way – so how is it that God requires their blood at our hands?

It is via our restoration to love – consider the story of the woman being attacked, you looked out your window and did nothing and she was killed, and later you discovered it was your wife, mother, daughter, girlfriend – you could have acted to save them, but you didn't – now what do you experience?

This is what the saved will experience when they are restored to love and didn't share the life saving message of Jesus with other – they will grieve, hurt, and anguish at themselves because they lost someone they loved, and realize it might not have been that way had they acted in love for the other person.

Read third paragraph, "The law of Moses..." How do you understand this? Which law lens?

Level 1-4, seeing life through an earthly legal mindset again falsely concludes God, in some tribunal, holds one legally accountable and puts a punishment upon them.

But levels 5-7 realize the nature of sin, it is deviation from how life is built and results in pain and suffering and death, and is contagious, spreads to others if it is not checked, thus they report it as a way, NOT to seek retribution, but to stop the spread of a deadly disease, to quarantine people who need to be stopped from spreading sin sickness.

Imagine how you would feel if you knew someone was actively infected with Ebola and you said nothing, knowing they were going to the subway, to get on a plane to fly to NY? And then a plague spreads – would you bear any responsibility? Why?

This is why we warn those involved in sinful activity and those who are able to intervene with those involved.

This is also why the intervention is like a kiss on the lips, an act of love to save.

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “Souls around us...” What is more than a Sabbath religion? Why do we need more than that?

What is a Sabbath religion? Is it level 1-4, keeping the law, but not loving people, not understanding God’s design?

Read and discuss questions 2 and 3

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

The God-Shaped Church: Preparing People to Meet Jesus Seminar by Dr. Jennings

Please help us fill the church as we will be recording a new DVD set

When: March 21, 2015 2-5:30 p.m.

Where: Hamilton Community Church at 7997 Shallowford Road Chattanooga

Schedule:

2:00-3:00 Growing Up in Christ: The 7 Levels of Moral Decision Making

How do you determine what is right and wrong (moral decision-making)? Do you look to a higher authority – parent, teacher, political leader, pastor, priest, or deity to tell you? Do you look for consensus amongst peers, or perhaps a code of rules or system of established laws? Or do you have another standard? In this lecture we will examine seven levels of moral decision-making identifying a progression from more childlike perspectives to maturity.

3:00-3:15 Break

3:15-4:15 Becoming a Spokesperson for God: Telling the Story of the Cosmic Conflict from Beginning to End

Are you able to present a cohesive story of the conflict between Christ and Satan from the opening of the conflict in heaven? How Satan duped innocent angels, God's response, the spread of sin to planet earth, God's actions in human history and the back and forth battle between Christ and Satan throughout human history, culminating in our present circumstance? In this lecture Dr. Jennings presents a compelling case demonstrating that every action of God's has been redemptive and therapeutic designed to counter some attack of Satan's in order to save and heal humanity.

4:15-4:30 Break

4:30-5:30 Answering Tough Bible Questions

Have you ever struggled with tough Bible questions? Dr. Jennings will provide compelling and convincing answers that make sense and reveal a beautiful and gracious Creator God to the following questions:

- Why curse the ground?
- Why man to rule over woman?
- Why God killed people in the Old Testament
- Why raise the wicked only to torture and kill them again?
- What is the truth about hell?
- What is the seal of God and the Mark of the Beast?
- Homosexuality in a Christian world

Opportunity to Share:

The General Conference of SDA will have its meeting (which occurs every five years) in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. 50,000-70,000 Adventist from all over the world are expected to attend. This presents an opportunity to share this healing message about God in a most impactful way.

We plan on giving away our DVDs, Dr. Jennings' Book *Could It Be This Simple?* and other materials. This will be an enormous project. If you would like to share in this opportunity, you can do so by making donations to *Come and Reason Ministries* either via Paypal, or check mailed to our address below.

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And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

February 21, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be presenting the God and Your Brain Seminar at Shilo Inn. 3223 Bret Clodfelter Way, The Dalles, Oregon. For more info for this free conference contact Joyce Browne at 541-300-0111.

March 13-14, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in NYC at the Advent Hope Outreach Health Event.

March 21, 2015: NEW EVENT: The God-Shaped Church: Preparing People to Meet Jesus Seminar at Hamilton Community Church, Chattanooga, TN.

March 27-28, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the University of Tennessee Health Science, Psychiatry and Family Medicine Conference in Memphis, TN.

April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

April 23, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Faith and Mental Health Board in Goshen Indiana.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May 17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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1st Quarter 2015 – Proverbs

Lesson 10 – Behind The Mask

SABBATH

“Do not exalt yourself in the presence of the king, and do not stand in the place of the great”
(Proverbs 25:6, NKJV).

The 1st lesson speaks about deception [Satan’s deception of Eve, and appearing as an “angel of light”], and calls “self-pretention” a more dangerous deception. I think they have the same source – SELF. Think about why Satan would present himself as he was originally created, instead of what he’s become.

Don’t we all have “masks” to varying degrees? Has anyone heard of “progressive disclosure”? It’s a technique related to learning very detailed processes [usually with computer / web systems], however, it is also used in sales, and even evangelism. Do we, tell our Catholic brethren, interested in SDA doctrines, that we believe the Papacy represents the antichrist in our first conversation or do we typically disclose this little tidbit later? Do we reveal all of our closet’s skeletons at the beginning of a dating relationship or sometime later? Even Jesus wanted to tell His disciples “more”, but they were not ready [see John 16:12], so His disclosure had to be progressive. Bear in mind, Love sometimes avoids telling the truth [if it will injure], and Selfishness sometimes tells the truth [see I Sam 28 – Saul consulting the witch of Endor]. Satan impersonated Samuel, and told the truth about what would happen in the future. His intent, however, was to discourage Saul [see PP Chapters. 66, 67].

Most of us have heard about someone [usually a politician] who has falsified a job application, falsely claimed military service [aka “stolen valor”], or exaggerated their abilities/endeavors [ref. Brian Williams, NBC news]. When their deceptions are discovered, what happens? What happens is the deception is never discovered? Which is more dangerous? Does it matter which “Law” lens this is being viewed through?

SUNDAY

The Mystery of God.

From the lesson:

“Physicist David Deutsch wrote that “every- day events are stupendously complex when expressed in terms of fundamental physics. If you fill a kettle with water and switch it on, all the supercomputers on Earth working for the age of the universe could not solve the equations that predict what all those water molecules will do—even if we could somehow determine their initial state and that of all the outside influences on them, which is itself an intractable task.” — David Deutsch, *The Beginning of Infinity: Explanations That Transform the World* (New York: Penguin, 2011), Kindle edition, locations 1972–1975.

First, I think this is one of the more compelling arguments for Creation [intelligent design], as I’ve ever read. Is there more we can glean from this passage?



“It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter. As the heavens for height and the earth for depth, So the heart of kings is unsearchable.” Prov. 25: 2, 3

Why is it God’s glory to “conceal a matter”? Why is it the glory of kings to search out a matter? Is this God’s only glory? Does it make a difference which “matters” are concealed/revealed? Does it make a difference *how* they are concealed/revealed? How [if, at all] is this related to “Natural Law”?

Why is there a tendency, in Christianity, to just give up on searching out the mysteries of God? While there is an obvious, insurmountable gap between finite created beings, and their infinite Creator, does this mean we should just not bother? Should we just “have more faith” [see the colored section at the bottom of today’s lesson]? Might there be some benefit from wrestling with some of these “mysteries”? [see Isa. 1:18] Might we develop a better appreciation for an infinite God, while bettering ourselves as well? Might we have a better insight in to the 1st Commandment [see Ex: 20: 2,3]?

MONDAY

The Fool as Wise.

Is truth actually “relative”? The lesson gives the example of people, in different countries driving on the Left or Right side of the road. Which type of “Law” determines which side of the road will be driven on? Do the laws of physics [momentum, inertia, friction, acceleration] care which side of the road we drive on?

I have the expensive hobby of high performance driving, where I take my car to a local race track and “drive it like I stole it.” The general manager of the driving club likes to tell us in the 2nd day’s drivers meeting, that the laws of physics have not changed overnight, and we still need to drive within our abilities. Can the laws of physics be changed to meet us “in our condition” if we decide to drive on the wrong side of the road?

The lesson goes on to speak of our “moral law”. Any connection between driving on the wrong side of the road, or without brakes, and our moral code? What are some of the parallels or differences?

Why is “God’s foolishness” wiser than “man’s wisdom”? [I Cor 1: 25] How can “doing what’s right in our own eyes” lead to trouble? [see Prov 14:12 & 16:25]

How do we see “the folly of fools” play out today? Anyone here on Facebook or Twitter? Anyone watch the news?



TUESDAY

The Sluggard.

“The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth” (Prov. 26:15, NIV).

Ever meet anyone like this? Solomon has a lot to say about the lazy “sluggard” [see Prov 6: 6, 9; 10:26; 12:24, 27; 13:4; 15:19; 19:24; 20:4; 21:25; 24:30; 26:13-16]. We see laziness surrounding us today in our nation of plenty. What is the real problems with the “sluggard”? In addition to the numerous personal and social problems, THE CONDITION IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH LIFE. Does this change our conception of the 4th commandment now?

8 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.

Verse 9 can be read as *permission* to work 6 days OR a *command* to work 6 days because that’s how life operates. Everything in Creation is in motion. From the subatomic quarks, leptons, & bosons to single cell organisms to human beings to colossal super galaxies 4 billion light years across, everything moves, because motion is life is motion.

Why was Sodom destroyed? Most of Christianity would say it was God’s anger at homosexuality. His Word says otherwise.

Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and **abundance of idleness**; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy [emphasis added.] Eze. 16:49

The true joy of life is found only by the working men and women. The angels are diligent workers; they are the ministers of God to the children of men. The Creator has prepared no place for the stagnating practice of indolence. PP 50.

Did you know that God “works”? [see John 5:17]

WEDNESDAY

The Friend as Enemy

The lessons asks, “When can a rebuke be a sign of love?” Simple answer – When it’s in their best interest. Love does what’s right because it’s right.



We all struggle with this either with friends or family. How many have held their tongue when a young person was dating/marrying someone “unfit”? When the inevitable train wreck happened, how many asked their friends/family “Why didn’t you say something, then?”

THURSDAY

The Enemy as Friend

We even have a label for this kind of friend “a frenemy” [An enemy disguised as a friend - Urban Dictionary].

Read Prov 26:17-23. Any of this sound familiar? Do we know any eloquent speakers whose words don’t match their works [think church and national leadership]? Satan, himself, is an eloquent orator, however, he’s also known as the “father of lies”. How will we be able to distinguish the difference? I love the quote from the bottom of Tuesday’s lesson:

“In the judgment men will not be condemned because they conscientiously believed a lie, but because they did not believe the truth, because they neglected the opportunity of learning what is truth.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 55.



Proverbs 1Q 2015 Lesson 11

Living by Faith

SABBATH

Read memory text, “The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.”
Proverbs 29:25 NKJV

What does this mean? Safe from what? In what way? Is it talking about physical safety? Were the Apostles, other than John, failing to trust the Lord? Were they kept safe?

While there is no doubt God can, and sometimes does, intervene for our physical safety (Daniel in the Lion’s den, the three worthies in the fiery furnace) more often people die as martyrs. So, what do we make of this text?

What does fear do to a person? It causes them to be more selfish, increases the survival-of-the-fittest drive. It decreases the capacity for thinking and for altruistic other-centered actions. Thus, fear is a snare; it leads us to make foolish decisions.

Any examples?

- From my book the example of the chemistry teacher and her students who were failing her class...
- How many people lie because they are afraid of how someone will react if they speak the truth? What does lying do to the liar?
- In relationships, if someone is in a fear based relationship, afraid of rejection, afraid of not being loved, afraid of being alone, how do those relationships work? And what happens to the person who is always so fearful?

What does trust do to fear? It diminishes it. Thus, we are able to think and act more reasonably, in harmony with God’s design for life.

What about those who trust the Lord? Trust God for what?

A few months back I spoke to a very nice Jewish psychologist, who has written several books, has his own foundation, doing great work with boys. I asked him about how he saw God, and he told me that most of the Jews he knows don’t believe in God. He said to be Jewish today isn’t to have a belief in God but to belong to the tribe, to share their traditions, rituals, festivals, music, food etc. He said that after WWII and the holocaust most Jews gave up a belief in God.

Do you know anyone that had trusted God, but then life didn’t turn out how they expected and they either blamed God or rejected the idea of God?

What does this say about their trust in God?



It suggests to me people who have the idea of God, but don't actually know God. It suggests to me a pagan view of God, that God is a being who they "trust" has power, and they "trust" will do what we want Him to do when we do the right rituals, say the right prayer, claim the right promises, use the right words, pray in the right name, confess the right sins, have the right amount of faith. Do you see the problem?

This so called trust is not trusting a being you know and love so much you give your life to Him and know He has a plan. No, this type of trust is the trust we have in a tool, in an appliance, in a machine – we put our quarters in and push the right buttons in the right sequence and expect to get the candy we claim is ours by right of using the right blood quarters. When we don't get it, then we either doubt ourselves, thinking we are too sinful, doubt we have done the right ritual, or doubt the goodness or existence of God.

This is not trust in God. This is not faith in God. This is the false faith we get from penal legal religion.

Genuine trust in God is surrendering self into His hands and trusting the outcome to Him, even if it is painful now, trusting that God has a better plan in the end – Joseph, Job, Daniel, Stephen.

This type of trust only occurs when we actually know God, have a heart connection with Him and understand His character and methods of love.

Those who trust God like this choose to be honest, they choose to grant others freedom, they choose to give rather than take, even if they are physically abused here, like the Apostles, in the end they will be safe.

Read first paragraph, "So many voices..." thoughts?

This gives me opportunity to plug our seminar March 21, the first talk will be the 7 levels of moral decision making, how do we know what is right and wrong. We will explore this in detail, give many examples and help move from immature thinking to mature thinking.

What about the answer in the study guide, "The answer is found in God and His written revelation. We must come to rely on God and obey His Law."

Didn't the Jews who crucified Christ have this same standard for determining what is right and wrong? And didn't they repeatedly cite the written word and the law in accusing Jesus? Why did they want Him off the cross before sunset? Because they were relying on God and obeying His law.

So, while it is true we must turn to God and His law to know what is right or wrong, the lesson left out one critical key that makes all the difference – what lens are you using when you turn to God and His law?



Are you going to God and His law with the lens over your mind of imperialism, believing God's laws are of the same type as created beings make, rules without inherent consequence, a god who is like a human dictator, and who uses threats to enforce his rule?

Or do you have the lens of God who is love, the Creator, Designer whose law is the protocol upon which life operates?

The Jews 2000 years ago viewed things through imposed law, and Jesus constantly tried to elevate their thinking back to Design Law.

Look at what Jesus did to their legal, imposed law lens:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, **that you may be children of your Father in heaven.** He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Mt 5:38-48

In order to be children of God, what did Jesus say we must do? We must love others, including our enemies. We must stop thinking through human law lenses, stop retribution as justice, stop teaching God is the source of inflicted punishment for sin. We must return to seeing God as Creator who is love and His law as the protocols of life!

What does it mean God causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good, sends rain to the righteous and unrighteous? That God's laws are design laws, these are the laws nature runs upon, and God's laws don't change based on the goodness or badness of the person. People either choose to live in harmony with God's design or reject God's design to their own destruction.

Read second paragraph, “Jesus told us...” Seek first the kingdom of God – which is what? Is it a place or a way of living? Is it not the kingdom of love, truth and freedom, which is reproduced within us?

What of this sentence, “We can learn to trust God only by living a life of faith.” What do you think this means?

I think it would have been more helpful to say it this way – as we exercise our trust/faith in God



our trust/faith will grow stronger. Just as we exercise any ability, that ability grows stronger.

SUNDAY

What do you think of the title, Keep the Law?

Which lens do you hear it through? Might it have been more helpful to say, Live in Harmony with God's Design? Do you hear this differently than Keep the Law?

How do you hear the phrases differently? Which draws you in? Does "keep the law" sound like a command, an order? If so, it plants seeds of rebellion because it feels like freedoms are being eroded.

But, does "live in harmony with God's design" sound like a command, or wise counsel, which leaves you free? Which draws you in to want to do it?

Read second paragraph, "What made the people..." thoughts?

What do you think about "their concrete choices in life"? Does God want us to be concrete in our thinking and simply follow a list of rules for our behavior in what we eat, drink, dress, and worship practices?

What is the problem with concrete thinking, concrete decisions to follow codes, rituals, rules, lists?

Such an approach damages the mind and impairs development, thinking and growth in godliness.

People who take this approach will often become obstacles to God's work.

Examples:

- I'm going to keep the health message even if it kills me
- Refusing life-saving medicine because it isn't on the approved list of natural remedies
- Refusing to buy an engagement ring, so purchases an engagement watch instead
- Believing ritual has ability to save – thus argue over method of ritual baptism, communion, or any other ritual
- Believing there is power in the blood, rather than realizing the blood is symbolic and the power is in the one who shed His blood and the truth He revealed that sets us free
- Believing we are right with God when we attest to the right list of doctrines, thus become thought police and set up tests of orthodoxy, rather than tests of character – i.e. opportunities to love others

Listen to what God says to those concrete thinkers:

"The multitude of your sacrifices— what are they to me?" says the Lord. "I have more than



enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations— I cannot bear your worthless assemblies. Your New Moon feasts and your appointed festivals I hate with all my being. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands in prayer, I hide my eyes from you; even when you offer many prayers, I am not listening. Isaiah 1:11-15

What was the problem?

- Were they doing the wrong rituals?
- Were they worshipping on the wrong day?
- Were they wearing the wrong clothes?
- Were they eating the wrong foods?
- What was the problem?

They did it without thought. They didn't comprehend, understand, think, thus they were not growing in mind and character; they were actually being damaged by their concrete religion.

And what does God say to them in verses 18? Come let us reason...

It is in reasoning with God that we are cleansed from sin. Because it is in reasoning with God that we comprehend the truth about Him, His character of love, His design for life, and we have the lies displaced, trust and admiration grow, we choose to follow His methods and our brains are rewired, our characters renewed.

What does God want? Does He want concrete thinkers? Absolutely not! Satan wants concrete thinkers because he can keep them trapped in fear and mindless rounds of rituals.

I came across this historic view written in 1889:

When Jesus spoke to the people they were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. **The scribes had labored to establish their theories, and they had to labor to sustain them, and to keep their influence over the minds of the people by endless repetition of fables and childish traditions.** The loftiest models of public instruction consisted largely in going through **heartless rounds of unmeaning ceremonies and in the repetition of frivolous opinions.** The teaching of Jesus inculcated the weightiest ideas and the most sublime truths in the most comprehensible and simple manner, and "the common people heard him gladly." **This is the kind of instruction that should be given in our Sabbath-schools, Light, Heaven's light, must be reflected from Jesus, the wonderful Teacher, and the souls of the children and youth must be illumined with the divine glory of his character and love. Thus the children may be led in beautiful simplicity to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."** Sabbath School Worker April 1, 1889 par. 11



Wow – first do you agree with this description? What lessons do we learn?

- It is damaging to indoctrinate people into meaningless ritual, ceremonies, theories, creeds, fundamental beliefs
- Religious leaders tend to do this to maintain their powerbase and control over people who surrender their thinking to others
- Jesus didn't work in this way – He taught truths understandable to the people in simple terms, yet profound and life changing
- His methods was the integrative evidenced based approach in which He took Bible truth and demonstrated it via nature and life experiences
- Our Bible classes are to use the same methods, with the unwavering focus on God's character of love!
- When we do this, we participate in Jesus plan to remove the sin of the world, not, as is taught by tradition, that Jesus came to remove the wrath of God which stands as a barrier between us and God.

The critical thing is how one sees God and His law. Do you see God as dictator and his laws as rules? If so, then one becomes a concrete thinker and simply does what the rules say.

But, God has invited us to reason with Him. Jesus told His disciples they were His friends because He wanted them to understand and not be concrete slaves simply doing what they are told. (Isa 1:18, Jn 15:15)

We must grow up and understand God's law, His design for life, and how it impacts every aspect of life.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “No matter how crucial...” What law are they talking about? The written law, the 10 Commandments and the writings of Moses and even the prophets. The lesson is correct in the first sentence, that the law is not the source of life. That it was given to point out sin, or our sick condition.

Is the law they are speaking of in the form of the law that was in heaven and Eden that sinless beings broke?

Or was the written law, including the 10 Commandments added later because sinful humans needed it?

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that the **law is made not** for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and



for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. 1Tim 1:8-11

What law is the law that is not for the righteous?

- Is the law of love for the righteous? Absolutely!
- Is the law of truth, the law of liberty and the law of worship for the righteous? Yes!
- Is the law of gravity, the laws of health, the law of exertion for the righteous? Yes!
- God's laws are for the righteous!

Then what is Paul talking about when he says the law was made not for the righteous but for the wicked? He is talking about the 10 Commandments and other written laws, the codification of God's design, written especially for the need of beings out of harmony with that design to diagnose them so they will accept God's remedy.

Here is an historic SDA view:

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and **there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone.** And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}

I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: **Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments...** "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). **In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law.** {1SM 233, 234}

But I liked this quote the best, what do you understand it to say?

The law was not spoken . . . exclusively for the benefit of the Hebrews. God honored them by making them the guardians and keepers of His law, but it was to be held as a sacred trust for the whole world. The precepts of the Decalogue **are adapted to all mankind**, and they were given for the instruction and government of all. Ten precepts, brief, comprehensive, and authoritative, cover the duty of man to God and to his fellow man; and **all based upon the great fundamental principle of love.** "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." Luke 10:27.

God's law is not a new thing. **It is not holiness created, but holiness made known. It is a**



code of principles expressing mercy, goodness, and love. It presents to fallen humanity the character of God, and states plainly the whole duty of man. {FLB 86.3}

What does it mean? Was the 10 Commandment codification of the law of love in existence before the fall of humanity? No! That codification of the law of love was adapted for fallen humanity. Why didn't it exist in that form before the fall of humanity? Because it wasn't needed.

However, the law of love always existed and can never be changed, for it is the protocols life is built to operate upon.

The 10 Commandments are an adaptation of the law of love and thus are helpful in diagnosing us and leading us to Christ for healing of our hearts and minds!

The lesson asks us to read Galatians 3:24:

So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith.

What does this mean? Which law lens do you look at this through?

If looking through imposed human law, justification is a legal transaction in a courtroom.

If looking through Design law, justification is setting right, putting right, making right, healing, cleansing, renewing, what is wrong or out of line i.e. it is healing the heart/mind of the sinner, putting the sinner back in a right relationship with God.

Thus, in Romans 4:3 when Abraham trusted God he was recognized as righteous. Abraham's heart first changed from distrusting God to trusting God, and then he was recognized as being justified, or set right with God because his heart was right with God. This is true justification – the other thing – that God declares you righteous even though you are not, based on the legal accounting of Jesus record in place of your record commonly passed off on Christians has a form of godliness but no power. It focuses the work of God into a legal courtroom in the cosmos, rather than inviting the Holy Spirit in to transform and set right the heart, mind, character of the sinner.

Read last paragraph, "The word understand..." What do you think about tying faith with intelligence and thinking? Yes, faith is based on the evidence of the faithfulness of the one we have faith in. Or said another way, our trust is to be based on the trustworthiness of the one in whom we trust.

This is why Paul says in Romans 3:4 God may you be proved right when you are judged.

God has been lied about, our confidence, trust or faith in Him is undermined by the lies of Satan. God wants to reestablish in us trust in Him, and thus He sent His Son, so that whomever has seen Jesus as seen the Father and this truth will set us free from the lies of Satan, and the power of Satan is broken in our lives and we are restored to a trust relationship with God. Our hearts are set right



with God, this is justification!

But this requires, as Paul says in Romans 14, that every person must be fully persuaded in their own mind. How is this to happen? What persuades you? For you to think and reason through the evidence enough that you are willing to engage and experience for yourself the trustworthiness of God and His methods in your life!

What do you think of this commentary:

All whom God has blessed with reasoning powers are to become intellectual Christians. They are **not requested to believe without evidence**; therefore Jesus has enjoined upon all to search the Scriptures. Let the ingenious inquirer, and the one who would know for himself what is truth, **exert his mental powers** to search out the truth as it is in Jesus. Any neglect here is at the peril of the soul. **We must know individually** the prescribed conditions of entering into eternal life. We must know what is the voice of God, that we may live by every word that proceeds out of his mouth. **We cannot allow these questions to be settled for us by another's mind**, or another's judgment. We must search the Scriptures carefully with a heart open to the reception of light and the **evidences of truth**. We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to ministers, to idle traditions, to human authorities, or to pretensions. We must know for ourselves what God has said. Review and Herald, March 8, 1887

WEDNESDAY

Asks us to read Proverbs 29:13:

The poor and the oppressor have this in common:
The Lord gives sight to the eyes of both.

Read first paragraph, “The poor and the rich...” The poor and the rich have equal value in moral worth as human beings, as descendants of Adam. Further, the laws of physics and health, which govern life and eyesight, operate exactly the same for both the poor and the rich. Light doesn’t travel differently if one is rich or poor, neurons don’t fire differently if one is rich or poor. God’s laws cannot be changed based on one’s status.

But, imposed laws can be changed based on status – thus when the church adopted the imperial law view, the idea God’s laws are like human laws, imposed rules, the rich were able to have different standards than the poor. In the Dark Ages indulgences were common. The rich could pay the church for certain sins and it would not be counted against them, it was like paying a fine, which can work with imposed laws. But, it doesn’t work at all with God’s design laws.

Does the proverb mean God created one to be rich and one to be poor?

If a person is born into poverty and another born into wealth, did God do that?



If one person is born with great abilities, and another born with disabilities, did God do that?

Remember the text we read a few weeks back:

He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth Acts 17:26

God created humanity in Adam – but humanity has the ability to decide whether to procreate or not. We determine with whom we produce children. God doesn't decide this; thus He doesn't choose for one person to be born in one condition and someone else in another.

What about Proverbs 29:19:

Servants cannot be corrected by mere words;
though they understand, they will not respond.

Does this suggest that at level 1 decision making it takes some form of threat or coercion to get immature, childlike thinkers to do right. They might understand, but they still require some threat in order to act?

Is this why Jesus said to His disciples, "I no longer call you servants rather I call you friends..." Jn 15:15

THURSDAY

What does the title, Loving the Truth, mean? How does that operate in reality?

When Christ returns, amongst the saved, how many, at the moment of His return, will know correctly every detail of the Bible? NONE!

How many will love and trust God? All. How many will hunger and thirst for what is right, for the truth, will long to have any misunderstandings corrected? In other words, will love to grow in the truth? All

The lost are those who can't be taught, whose minds are settled into their version of the "truth" and attempts to correct them result in rebellion; they are closed to truth and love.

We read in Proverbs 29:1:

Whoever remains stiff-necked after many rebukes
will suddenly be destroyed—without remedy.



Does this have any bearing on the wicked in the end and why they die? Does it have any bearing on 2Thes 2:10 describing why the wicked die:

They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

Is it important only for theology? What about in life, do we have problems if we don't love the truth? Examples?

- Patient who stopped taking their meds for diabetes and high blood pressure because they were “healed” and ALSO stopped checking their blood sugar and blood pressure. Why did they stop checking?
 - Because they believe lies about God and what genuine faith is. They believe that faith means not asking questions, that if they should check it would be a sign of doubt and lack of faith, and thus the healing wouldn't happen, or be continued etc.
 - This demonstrates superstition, and a belief in Satan's view of God.
 - God is the God of truth. Jesus said He did everything in the open, nothing in secret – why? Because the truth doesn't need to hide, it wants to be revealed.
 - When Jesus healed people He told them to go and be examined, to have their condition scrutinized.
 - If a person believes they have been healed, then they should keep checking their blood sugars, and blood pressures etc. If, in fact, they were healed, then the evidence will demonstrate it and they can rejoice.
 - But, persons who refuse to check the evidence, demonstrate a lack of faith, a fear based belief system, in which they doubt their own healing and therefore live in fear of looking at the evidence.
- Person in relationship with someone who has defects of character that disqualifies them to be with, but the person denies, distorts, and makes excuses – doesn't want to acknowledge the truth – why?
 - Because they are afraid to see it because they would lose admiration and desire for the person and the relationship would end. Thus, they deceive themselves to believe the person is better than they really are

But – **you can never avoid the truth, you can only delay the day you deal with it!** Deal with truth here and now you do so under God's grace and experience healing of your heart, mind and character. For those, described in Thessalonians they refuse to deal with the truth about their own characters and thus solidify themselves in rebellion against God and there is no remedy for them.

FRIDAY

Read question one – “Russian author...” Why is it some think a belief in God is illogical? That faith in God is without logic?

I would suggest, it is because of the imposed law construct, which is arbitrary, and makes very little sense. But, when we come back to see a God of love, then we realize how truly sensible God is and His design for life.



It is interesting that the authors suggest Leo Tolstoy came to believe in something that isn't logical, given what he eventually came to know.

Listen to these quotes from one of the founders of the SDA church and then a quote from Leo Tolstoy:

- In living for self he has rejected that divine love which would have flowed out in mercy to his fellow men. **Thus he has rejected life. For God is love, and love is life.** E.G. White, Christ's Object Lessons 258
- But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth the **great principle which is the law of life for the universe.** All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the **circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.**
Desire of Ages 21
- **Love is life.** All, everything that I understand, I understand only because I love. Everything is, everything exists, only because I love. Everything is united by it alone. **Leo Tolstoy**

Does it sound like he came to some illogical belief?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: The God and Your Church: Preparing People to Meet Jesus Seminar by Dr. Jennings

Please help us fill the church as we will be recording a new DVD set

When: March 21, 2015 2:30-6:00 p.m.

Where: Hamilton Community Church at 7997 Shallowford Road Chattanooga

Schedule:

2:30-3:30 Growing Up in Christ: The 7 Levels of Moral Decision Making

How do you determine what is right and wrong (moral decision-making)? Do you look to a higher authority – parent, teacher, political leader, pastor, priest, or deity to tell you? Do you look for consensus amongst peers, or perhaps a code of rules or system of established laws? Or do you have another standard? In this lecture we will examine seven levels of moral decision-making identifying a progression from more childlike perspectives to maturity.

3:30-3:45 Break

3:45-4:45 Becoming a Spokesperson for God: Telling the Story of the Cosmic Conflict from Beginning to End

Are you able to present a cohesive story of the conflict between Christ and Satan from the opening of the conflict in heaven? How Satan duped innocent angels, God's response, the spread of sin to planet earth, God's actions in human history and the back and forth battle between Christ and Satan throughout human history, culminating in our present circumstance? In this lecture Dr. Jennings presents a compelling case demonstrating that every action of God's has been redemptive and therapeutic designed to counter some attack of Satan's in order to save and heal humanity.

4:45-5:00 Break

5:00-6:00 Answering Tough Bible Questions

Have you ever struggled with tough Bible questions? Dr. Jennings will provide compelling and convincing answers that make sense and reveal a beautiful and gracious Creator God to the following questions:

- Why curse the ground?
- Why man to rule over woman?
- Why God killed people in the Old Testament
- Why raise the wicked only to torture and kill them again?
- What is the truth about hell?
- What is the seal of God and the Mark of the Beast?
- Homosexuality in a Christian world

Opportunity to Share:

The General Conference of SDA will have its meeting (which occurs every five years) in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. 50,000-70,000 Adventist from all over the world are expected to attend. This presents an opportunity to share this healing message about God in a most impactful way.

We plan on giving away our DVDs, Dr. Jennings' Book *Could It Be This Simple?* and other materials. This will be an enormous project. If you would like to share in this opportunity, you can do so by making donations to *Come and Reason Ministries* either via Paypal, or check mailed to our address below.



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And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

March 13-14, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in NYC at the Advent Hope Outreach Health Event.

March 21, 2015: God and Your Church: Preparing People to Meet Jesus Seminar at Hamilton Community Church, Chattanooga, TN.

March 27-28, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the University of Tennessee Health Science, Psychiatry and Family Medicine Conference in Memphis, TN.

April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.



April 23, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Faith and Mental Health Board in Goshen Indiana.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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Proverbs 1Q 2015 Lesson 12

The Humility of the Wise

SABBATH

Memory text, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” MT 5:3 NKJV

What does it mean to be poor in spirit? To be humble.

What is humility, what does the word humble mean?

Here are dictionary definitions – which apply to the Biblical concept of humility?

1. not proud or arrogant; modest
2. having a feeling of insignificance, inferiority, subservience, etc.:
In the presence of so many world-famous writers I felt very humble.
3. low in rank, importance, status, quality, etc.; lowly: *of humble origin; a humble home.*
4. courteously respectful: *In my humble opinion you are wrong.*
5. low in height, level, etc.; small in size: *a humble member of the galaxy.*

The primary Biblical definition is the first, it is about character. Depending on the company, the second definition could apply, however, the second definition could also be exploited to cause one to waiver in duty.

The lesson points out the virtue of humility, why is humility a virtue?

If one is humble, they are open to be taught, they can learn, they can accept correction.

What is the difference between being humble and being insecure, fearful, having low self-esteem, allowing people to exploit, abuse or walk on you?

Can a person be humble and confident at the same time?

Moses was the meekest, or most humble, man in the world, but did he allow people to walk on him? Did he refuse to stand for what is right? Did he cower before Pharaoh?

Jesus was meek and humble, did He have low self-esteem, lack of confidence? Was He afraid to speak the truth in love, even if it was confrontational?

What is the essential element of humility? It is not self-loathing, or insecurity, or fear, or low self-esteem. It is an other-centered orientation to living. It is a mindset that does NOT seek to promote self, but instead considers others more valuable than self. Thus, with love for the other, one will, in love confront, stand for the right, be firm and confident in one's duties, but not because one has confidence in self, but confidence in God, His methods and your mission in His cause.

I found these quotes this week, what do you think?



The spirit of the slothful servant we are often fain to call humility. But true humility is widely different. **To be clothed with humility does not mean that we are to be dwarfs in intellect, deficient in aspiration, and cowardly in our lives, shunning burdens lest we fail to carry them successfully. Real humility fulfills God's purposes by depending upon His strength.** {COL 363.3}

And why should not a man thus privileged become intellectually strong? Again and again have worldlings sneeringly asserted that those who believe present truth are weak-minded, deficient in education, without position or influence. This we know to be untrue, but is there not some reason for these assertions? **Many have considered it a mark of humility to be ignorant and uncultivated. Such persons are deceived as to what constitutes true humility and Christian meekness.--** {Christian Education 243.2}

A Christian reveals **true humility by showing the gentleness of Christ, by being always ready to help others, by speaking kind words and performing unselfish acts**, which elevate and ennoble the most sacred message that has come to our world. {CET 74.2}

Skepticism and unbelief are not humility. Implicit belief in Christ's word is true humility, true self-surrender. {DA 535.2}

Implicit belief in Christ's word, i.e. Scripture, what does this mean? Does it mean, "God said, I believe it, that settles it?" No, it does not mean a thoughtless following of Bible statements, but accepting the Scriptures are inspired, but still requires we prayerfully think through the meaning, comparing Scripture with Scripture and with science and experience to ensure we get the most mature and healthiest understanding.

The precious grace of humility is sadly wanting in the ministry and the church. Men who preach the truth think too highly of their own abilities. **True humility will lead a man to exalt Christ and the truth, and to realize his utter dependence upon the God of truth.** It is painful to learn lessons of humility, yet nothing is more beneficial in the end. **The pain attendant upon learning lessons of humility is in consequence of our being elated by a false estimate of ourselves**, so that we are unable to see our great need. Vanity and pride fill the hearts of men. God's grace alone can work a reformation. {Lift Him Up 282.3}

SUNDAY

The lesson title: Who Do You Think You Are? How do you answer this questions? What is a healthy answer to this question?

Have you heard people describe answers that degrade and demean the human being and themselves. We are so sinful we are nothing?

Have you heard of Worm Theology? Perhaps from Ps 22:6 "But I am a worm and not a man"

From Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Worm_theology

Worm Theology is a term used for the conviction in Christian culture that in light of God's holiness and power an appropriate emotion is a low view of self. Some might suggest that because of this view God is more likely to show mercy and compassion. The name may be attributed to a line in the Isaac Watts hymn *Alas! and Did My Saviour Bleed* (Pub 1707), which says "Would he devote that sacred head for such a worm as I?"... Furthermore, worm theology can be attributed to a recognition of the ugliness of sin, resulting in contrition.

Some might suggest adherents of worm theology have inner wounds that they are not necessarily aware of, and such a belief just matches what they feel about themselves and sometimes others. On the other hand God detests sin so much because it separates us from Himself; it could then be argued that in our sin we are as worms in God's sight.

C.S. Lewis expresses the view, "Whenever we find that our religious life is making us feel that we are good-above all, that we are better than someone else-I think we may be sure that we are being acted on, not by God, but by the devil. The real test of being in the presence of God is that you either forget about yourself altogether or see yourself as a small, dirty object." (Mere Christianity 1952, P.124)

How would you answer the question, Who Do You Think You Are?

- I am a child of God!
- Born in sin, conceived in iniquity (Ps 51)
- Defective from birth, terminal in selfishness and fear
- Yet loved of God so much that Jesus came to deliver me and cure me (Jn 3:16)
- Though born defective and terminal, I accept and partake of what Jesus has procured and have a new heart with a desire to be more like Jesus every day, yet acutely aware of how much more healing needs to happen within me

FRIDAY

Read question 1 and discuss

"Dwell on the plan of salvation and what was required to save us. That is, we are so fallen, so corrupt, so evil, that mere regeneration would not be enough to redeem us from sin. No matter how much we are changed and restored, that regeneration and restoration cannot save us. We need a substitute, someone who legally stands in our place and whose righteousness alone is enough to make us right with God. What should this reality itself tell us about why arrogance and pride have to be some of the worse sins in fallen beings like us?" thoughts?

What is revealed about the author's mindset from the question? They are operating at level four and below. They are stuck in a false paradigm.

They still see God's law no different than the type of law created beings make, rules that require legal action and enforcement.

This week I was listening to Christian radio talk program and a woman was on from a well known

worldwide ministry talking about how we must teach our children Bible truths.

This is part of what was said:

Even for little children, hell might upset them, Satan and demons might upset them, and we don't want to upset them so we've watered down the gospel. You know, so it comes to this, God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life and part of that plan is to know Jesus and to invite Him into your heart because if you don't you might be separated from God in eternity. So accept Jesus into your heart and He will love you and there you go, life turns out great and then you get to go to heaven.

There might be some remnants of truth in that but... I think we're actually manipulating children by not sharing them the full truth. Jesus did not die on the cross just because I don't want to be separated from God. He died on the cross because somebody had to be violently, there had to be a blood sacrifice for the sin that I had committed because my sin is so heinous against a holy God. And the cross is a bloody violent picture of how horrible our sin is. Now while we don't want to go into too much detail when they're young. We have to let them know that when Christ died on the cross it was a punishment and if Christ doesn't take the punishment then we have to be punished. And I will be punished in a place called hell"

Host: "there are adults, perhaps listening right now, who discount the idea of the wrath of God. Your painting a picture of a vengeful, sadistic, violent God who is taking it out on His Son instead of taking it out on you and me and that is just not the God of the Bible."

Smith – "If I was sarcastic I would say what Bible are you reading. But I don't want to be sarcastic so I won't say that. So what I'll say is let's not go from one end of the pendulum to the other. One end of the pendulum is we only talk about the vengeance and wrath of God which is required because of His justice. The other extreme is we only talk about the love of God. I'll even say when it comes to the love of God we've redefined hell to say something like well hell is where you are separated from God. My question is separated from what? If God is omnipresent He is everywhere including hell and hell serves a purpose in the bigger universe and for God. So what are we separated from? I'm separated from His love and mercy and kindness, but I am also separated from God when I go to heaven because I am separated from His condemnation and from the wrath that I deserve.

After we die we are all separated from God in a sense, the question is what are you separated from. Go ahead and tell the children the truth and as they get older you can go into more and more detail but when they are younger to say there is a God who created you and because He created you He owns you. You owe Him your allegiance because He is worthy, He is your master, He created you. And when you do not think, live, feel, behave in such a way that gives Him the glory and honor He is deserving of that is called sin. It is cosmic treason. And when you sin, God must, because of His holy sovereign justice punish you. And either we get in trouble and we take the punishment or someone has to do it for us.

And God out of His great love for us came as a man and lived a perfect life and died the perfect death and rose again to conquer sin and death and in knowing that and accepting that Christ as God was our punishment paid that penalty and when I repent and receive Christ as that substitutionary

atonement then I enter into a relationship with God that lasts the rest of my life and for eternity but the moment I accept Christ into my life I actually enter into a cosmic battle because I enter spiritual warfare. I go in as a warrior for my king. I'm not going to Walt Disney World and vacation the rest of my life. So what pictures are we giving children of this God who is worthy of our allegiance and himself paid a violent sacrifice for our debt. We water everything down through this moralistic lens to protect children from something they don't really need to be protected from. Chris Fabry Live with Elizabeth Smith from Moody Bible Institute March 5, 2015

<http://www.moodyradio.org/radioplayer.aspx?episode=156392&hour=2>

This line of thinking, this presentation of God is the infection that obstructs the church from completing its mission. It is based on the lie that God's law is operationally, functionally, qualitatively no different that created beings make, rules imposed without inherent consequence. This is the thinking of children, infants, who, according to Hebrews 5 are not acquainted with righteousness.

What they say is reality – is not reality, it is fantasy, reality does not actually work like they describe it. Do we need a substitute in order to be saved? Absolutely! Yes we do – but not for legal purposes, we need a substitute to fix what Adam did to this creation, to restore humanity back to God's original design. This is what Christ achieved.

And with the Remedy procured by Christ, we are regenerated back to God's original design.

This idea, the theology in this question is what Paul wrote to Timothy that would be in the last days, a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. This legal theology, which devalues the regeneration of our hearts and minds, directs people into a false legal security in which hearts remain selfish and fear ridden, claiming legal security from a god presented as a stern judge bent on killing those who have broken his rules.

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read Proverbs 30:1-3 and 32,33 – would someone like to read this for us?

"I am weary, God,
but I can prevail.
² Surely I am only a brute, not a man;
I do not have human understanding.
³ I have not learned wisdom,
nor have I attained to the knowledge of the Holy One.

³² "If you play the fool and exalt yourself,
or if you plan evil,
clap your hand over your mouth!
³³ For as churning cream produces butter,
and as twisting the nose produces blood,
so stirring up anger produces strife."

The lesson states that for a king to write this it is quite a contrast to what kings normally write about themselves.

What is the message of these verses? That our strength and health and happiness and success come only as we realize our own condition, see God for who He is, trust Him over ourselves, and choose to walk in harmony with His design.

Notice the verses tell us

- That in our own strength we cannot succeed, but with God we can.
- Our natural selves are brute, survival of the fittest driven, seeking to get our own way, and thus without true understanding or wisdom, such a way of living doesn't know God or Jesus
- It is foolish, i.e. outside what is healthy, to be proud and promote oneself, it is destructive to do so
- And life operates upon Design law with cause and effect, thus just as churning cream creates butter or twisting the nose causes it to bleed, so too inciting anger results in conflict and strife

MONDAY

The two sentences say: "Pride arises in those who don't know the Lord in a personal way. In contrast, the person who lives in communion with God, will be humble, for he or she is constantly in touch with the One who is infinitely greater than any of us."

This almost sounds right doesn't it? Any thoughts or ideas that come to mind that call this into question?

My mind is sensitive to absolute statements and would have had no difficulty had they said, the knowledge of the Lord protects us from pride and vanity. Maybe I am misunderstanding this, but it sounds like the lesson is suggesting that pride can only arise in those who don't have a personal knowledge of the Lord, am I misunderstanding this? My mind thought of something I read long ago in the book *Desire of Ages*:

But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. **Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will.** This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. **The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.** {DA 761.5}

Does this sound like a being who didn't have a personal knowledge of God?

I believe Lucifer did have a personal knowledge of God, but he chose to devalue that knowledge and he chose to become prideful and promote self despite the knowledge of God.

Also, did you notice what this author said was the hope of mankind and what humankind needed to be drawn back to God? Why was this needed by man? Because man did NOT know the fullness of God's character of love, thus human beings could be won back to trust in God by a revelation of God's character of love, but Lucifer already knowing the fullness of God's character of love and having rejected it, there

was no more to do to win Him to trust.

God could have used power to cower, to intimidate, to coerce Lucifer into line – but such methods are contrary to His character. God wins by revelations of truth which brings people to love and trust, thus for Lucifer, having rejected the full revelation of God’s character of love there was nothing more God could do for him.

Read Proverbs 30:4-6:

- ⁴ Who has gone up to heaven and come down?
Whose hands have gathered up the wind?
Who has wrapped up the waters in a cloak?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What is his name, and what is the name of his son?
Surely you know!
- ⁵ “Every word of God is flawless;
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.
- ⁶ Do not add to his words,
or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.

The Proverb is trying to draw our minds to the reality of how little we know and how little we can do – that we are finite, not infinite, we cannot create reality, the fabric of the cosmos, and we should be humble in that knowledge.

What about verse six, what does it mean, “Do not add to his word, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.”

Does it mean do not add any actual words, or do not change the meaning or ideas of God’s word?

For instance, when we read a Bible verse and it say, “God is love” and a person adds, “God is love, all the time” or “God is love, selfless, beneficent, self-sacrificing” has the person added words? Yes, have they changed the meaning? No!

I believe the passage is speaking of changing the meaning, not adding actual words that connote or describe the same meaning or expand the meaning or make the meaning easier to understand.

Consider all the Bible commentaries, which seek to explain the Bible, they are adding words or explanations to the Bible, but not seeking to change the meaning. Also, consider translations, when the Bible is translated many words are added, that are not in the original language, but in an attempt to present the right meaning.

However, when words are added, that do change the meaning, and this has happened, like all the legal interpretations and explanations, those explanations will be proven false, just as the Proverb says, because reality doesn’t work that way and reality will reveal such explanations are false.

Middle paragraph states, “The expression ‘knowledge of God’ is to be understood as meaning ‘knowledge

about God.”

When Jesus said, “This is life eternal that they might *know* you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” (Jn 17:3) was he speaking of knowledge about, or actually knowing?

Are we saved by knowing *about* God, or by *knowing* God?

Do Satan and his angels know about God? But do they *know* Him in the intimate, trusting relationship knowledge?

What about the last sentence, “Who are we—whose understanding of even the simplest things in nature is clouded and full of mystery—to challenge the Word of God, even the parts that baffle or disturb us?”

We certainly are not here to “challenge” the word of God, i.e. to suggest God’s Word is not reliable, or that we know better than God’s Word – never.

But we are God’s children, created in His image, with individuality, power to think and act, and are to develop those abilities and become understanding friends of God who rightly comprehend the meaning of Scripture.

Thus, we are not to approach Scripture as merely words written down to be accepted as they read, but truths of God to be thoughtful contemplated and understood and then assimilated into our own characters.

Therefore, we will never challenge the authority of God’s word, but will frequently challenge our own and other people’s interpretation as to the meaning of God’s word.

Are we, as humble believers in God, who value and trust His word, supposed to challenge the meaning and interpretation we hear and are told? How about if that other person is a church leader, pastor or even prophet of God, are we still to think through and question the ideas if it doesn’t make sense to us, with a genuine desire to find the truth?

Should the church members in the New Testament have challenged Peter when he refused to eat with the uncircumcised fellows? Can error be challenged by anyone, or must the person also be an anointed Apostle or prophet of God?

Any examples in your life?

TUESDAY

Read verses 7-9:

- ⁷“Two things I ask of you, Lord;
do not refuse me before I die:
- ⁸Keep falsehood and lies far from me;
give me neither poverty nor riches,
but give me only my daily bread.
- ⁹Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you

and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’
Or I may become poor and steal,
and so dishonor the name of my God.

I really liked this proverb – first, it is a request for the truth, to have a mind that understands reality, that isn’t deceived. That has been my prayer for years and years.

There was a time in my life when I didn’t understand the value of truth. I was afraid of the truth. I was in a relationship many years ago and had strong feelings, and there were truths that verified that the relationship was not healthy, but I didn’t want to acknowledge those truths, because it would have meant ending the relationship. But, I discovered through that experience that, one can never avoid the truth only delay the day you deal with it. And when you delay the problems, pain, and suffering is much worse the longer you delay.

So, years ago I began praying, “God help me comprehend truth, in all domains, at the earliest possible moment I am capable. Give me a heart that loves the truth, a mind sensitive to truth and the ability to assimilate the truth.”

And then also the prayer regarding wealth – what is the benefit to pray for one’s daily bread, just as Jesus taught us to pray?

The Proverb suggests that with too much wealth we might become self-dependent and forget all comes from God, and with poverty our desperation might lead us to steal.

But, providing for our daily needs, puts us in a position where we have the opportunity to develop trust in God, each day, week, month, trusting God to provide our needs and when He does this exercise in trust is suppose to result in increasing confidence or faith in Him and decreased fear and insecurity.

How does the devil cheat us from experiencing the blessing of ever increasing strength and trust?

By getting us to focus on the future, which is unknown to us, and having us create imaginary scenarios in our minds in which we don’t have the resources to provide for our needs, thus we begin to worry, doubt and live in fear and anxiety, rather than in peace trusting the Lord, because we remember how He has delivered in the past.

I really like this quote:

We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and his teaching in our past history. We are now a strong people, **if we will put our trust in the Lord;** for we are handling the mighty truths of the word of God. We have everything to be thankful for. **If we walk in the light as it shines upon us from the living oracles of God,** we shall have large responsibilities, corresponding to the great light given us of God. We have many duties to perform, because **we have been made the depositories of sacred truth** to be given to the world in all its beauty and glory. We are debtors to God to use every advantage he has entrusted to us **to beautify the truth of holiness of character, and to send the message of warning, and of comfort, of hope and love, to those who are in the darkness of error and sin.** {General Conference Daily Bulletin, January 29, 1893 par. 5}

Read second paragraph, “Before we ask... Any concerns about this paragraph?

What about, “This is why the confession of sin is a prerequisite for forgiveness.”

This statement is poorly worded, because it is stated through the imposed law model.

Did those who crucified Christ confess their sin? Did Jesus forgive them? Does Jesus have the power in heaven and earth to forgive sins?

So were these evil men forgiven by God? Yes, and this disturbs the legal adherents greatly, because they falsely believe our problem is legal, and what we need is the proper payment to the legal authority to get forgiven or pardoned. But, here we have those who crucified Christ being forgiven by God the Son, BUT did they receive the forgiveness? No!

Why, even though God forgave them, were they unforgiven? It is true that confession/repentance is necessary for a person to *receive* God’s forgiveness, and thus move from an unforgiven state to a forgiven state of being. But it is not true, that confession/repentance is necessary in order for God to forgive, or that God refuses to forgive those who don’t repent or confess – He forgives everyone, but only those who humble themselves in confession and repentance open their heart to receive God’s grace and forgiveness and thus move from a state of unforgiveness to forgiveness.

This is Design law, it is reality, it is the change in actual state of being, not some legal mechanism, in a court of law, which is what people think when looking through imposed law lenses.

WEDNESDAY

Read Proverbs 30:11

¹¹ “There are those who curse their fathers
and do not bless their mothers;

What is the proverb speaking about? Does it remind you of the commandment to honor your mother and father?

What does it mean to honor mother and father? What does honor mean?

1. honesty, fairness, or integrity in one's beliefs and actions:

How would one be honest, fair, or act with integrity to a parent who was: 1. sexually abusing them 2. constantly verbally abusing them 3. stealing the child’s Christmas gifts to pawn in order to buy drugs etc. etc.

2. a source of credit or distinction:

How does one do this? By developing one’s abilities and living to fulfill God’s purpose for your life



3. high respect, as for worth, merit, or rank:

How does one respect a parent who acts disreputably? What if the parent defiles themselves? What if a child was raised in a Muslim home and converts to Christianity and the parents allege to do so dishonors them as parents and therefore they should not become a Christian?

THURSDAY

Read Proverbs 30:24-28:

- ²⁴ “Four things on earth are small,
yet they are extremely wise:
²⁵ Ants are creatures of little strength,
yet they store up their food in the summer;
²⁶ hyraxes are creatures of little power,
yet they make their home in the crags;
²⁷ locusts have no king,
yet they advance together in ranks;
²⁸ a lizard can be caught with the hand,
yet it is found in kings’ palaces.

Note they are appealing to nature to teach things about God, just as Romans 1:20 says – this would be the integrative evidenced-based approach.

Any lessons you wish to discuss from these verses?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: God and Your Church: Preparing People to Meet Jesus Seminar by Dr. Jennings

Please help us fill the church as we will be recording a new DVD set

When: March 21, 2015 2:30-6:00 p.m.

Where: Hamilton Community Church at 7997 Shallowford Road Chattanooga

Schedule:

2:30-3:30 Growing Up in Christ: The 7 Levels of Moral Decision Making

How do you determine what is right and wrong (moral decision-making)? Do you look to a higher authority – parent, teacher, political leader, pastor, priest, or deity to tell you? Do you look for consensus amongst peers, or perhaps a code of rules or system of established laws? Or do you have another standard? In this lecture we will examine seven levels of moral decision-making identifying a progression from more childlike perspectives to maturity.

3:30-3:45 Break

3:45-4:45 Becoming a Spokesperson for God: Telling the Story of the Cosmic Conflict from Beginning to End

Are you able to present a cohesive story of the conflict between Christ and Satan from the opening of the conflict in heaven? How Satan duped innocent angels, God's response, the spread of sin to planet earth, God's actions in human history and the back and forth battle between Christ and Satan throughout human history, culminating in our present circumstance? In this lecture Dr. Jennings presents a compelling case demonstrating that every action of God's has been redemptive and therapeutic designed to counter some attack of Satan's in order to save and heal humanity.

4:45-5:00 Break

5:00-6:00 Answering Tough Bible Questions

Have you ever struggled with tough Bible questions? Dr. Jennings will provide compelling and convincing answers that make sense and reveal a beautiful and gracious Creator God to the following questions:

- Why curse the ground?
- Why man to rule over woman?
- Why God killed people in the Old Testament
- Why raise the wicked only to torture and kill them again?
- What is the truth about hell?
- What is the seal of God and the Mark of the Beast?
- Homosexuality in a Christian world

Opportunity to Share:

The General Conference of SDA will have its meeting (which occurs every five years) in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. 50,000-70,000 Adventist from all over the world are expected to attend. This presents an opportunity to share this healing message about God in a most impactful way.

We plan on giving away our DVDs, Dr. Jennings' Book *Could It Be This Simple?* and other materials. This will be an enormous project. If you would like to share in this opportunity, you can do so by making donations to *Come and Reason Ministries* either via Paypal, or check mailed to our address below.

New Mailing Address: PLEASE UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS BOOK:

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PO Box 28266
Chattanooga, TN 37424

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And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

March 13-14, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in NYC at the Advent Hope Outreach Health Event.

March 21, 2015: God and Your Church: Preparing People to Meet Jesus Seminar at Hamilton Community Church, Chattanooga, TN.

March 27-28, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the University of Tennessee Health Science, Psychiatry and Family Medicine Conference in Memphis, TN.

April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

April 23, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Faith and Mental Health Board in Goshen Indiana.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May 17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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1st Quarter 2015 – Proverbs Lesson 13

Women and Wine

SATURDAY

Memory text from Proverbs 31:2-4 MSG says,

“Oh, son of mine, what can you be thinking of! Child whom I bore! The son I dedicated to God! Don’t dissipate your virility on fortune-hunting women, promiscuous women who shipwreck leaders. Leaders can’t afford to make fools of themselves, gulping wine and swilling beer, Lest, hung over, they don’t know right from wrong, and the people who depend on them are hurt.”

Do we see any of this happening today...any leaders making fools of themselves? Are wine and/or women generally a factor?

Saturday’s lesson points out the shift that takes place over the course of the book of Proverbs. It starts out with the teachings of a father and ends up here in chapter 31 with the teachings of a mother...and Solomon’s mother warns her son against the two most serious threats to the king: wine and women. Any thoughts on why these particular teachings came from Solomon’s mother? What sort of special insight might she and his father have into this specific situation?

This association of wine and women was deliberate, because both could be very powerful influences on men in positions of power. And although finding a virtuous woman could be beneficial, there were really no upsides to the influence of alcohol.

The father’s introductory advice was concerned with the spiritual acquisition of wisdom...and now the mother’s concluding chapters are concerned with applying wisdom in real life...because the spiritual principles taught by the father means nothing if the mother’s practical advice is not followed. How many have found this to be true in their own lives and in their own quest for knowledge? This is the “Experiential” arm of our integrative evidence based approach. This is the difference between knowing *about* something or how to do something...and actually doing it. So this week, we are going to dive deeper into the practical advice given by Solomon’s mom.

SUNDAY

A Toast “To Life”?

In many cultures, drinking alcohol is associated with all aspects of living a good life...living *the* good life. Think about the advertisements you see during an average football game telecast...or the



print ads you might see in a single Sports Illustrated magazine. What is the consistent theme and what do you see consistently depicted?

- Beautiful people, usually attractive and attracted couples
- Fun – party atmosphere, good friends, good food, good times
- Wealth, affluent lifestyles
- Celebration, your team always wins

We toast at weddings, at birthdays, on New Years, to celebrate...anything – wishing each other a long, healthy life, when, as the quarterly says, “ironically, each toast/glass may very well work to negatively impact health and shorten life.” Of course, this is always disguised in beautifully designed bottles, slick marketing campaigns, clever commercials and songs, and even some “scientific” findings that help comfort drinkers in thinking that alcohol is in any way good for them.

Solomon warned of these deceptions previously back in Prov 23:30-35 MSG:

“Who keeps getting beat up for no reason at all? Whose eyes are bleary and bloodshot? It’s those who spend the night with a bottle, for whom drinking is serious business. Don’t judge wine by its label, or its bouquet, or its full-bodied flavor. Judge it rather by the hangover it leaves you with—the splitting headache, the queasy stomach. Do you really prefer seeing double, with your speech all slurred, Reeling and seasick, drunk as a sailor? “They hit me,” you’ll say, “but it didn’t hurt; they beat on me, but I didn’t feel a thing. When I’m sober enough to manage it, bring me another drink!”

The warning is reiterated in verses 4-5 that we read in Saturdays lesson, and is directed specifically to kings and those in leadership, but are there any applications to each of us as followers of Christ?

One of the founders of the Adventist church had this to say on the subject:

“Intemperate persons should not by vote of the people be placed in positions of trust. Their influence corrupts others, and grave responsibilities are involved. With brain and nerve narcotized by tobacco and stimulus they make a law of their nature, and when the immediate influence is gone there is a collapse. Frequently human life is hanging in the balance; on the decision of those in these positions of trust depends life and liberty, or bondage and despair. How necessary that all who take part in these transactions should be those who are proved, those of self-culture, those of honesty and truth, of staunch integrity, who will spurn a bribe, who will not allow their judgment or convictions of right to be swerved by partiality or prejudice. Only men and women of strict temperance and integrity should be admitted to our legislative halls and chosen to preside in our courts of justice. Property, reputation, and even



life itself are insecure when left to the judgment of those who are intemperate and immoral. How many innocent persons have been condemned to death, how many more have been robbed of all their earthly possessions, by the injustice of drinking jurors, lawyers, witnesses, and even judges! – BLJ 177 (To Be Like Jesus)

While the effects of alcohol are bad enough for “common folks”, for a king or someone in power or a leadership role, the results can be disastrous. What is at stake is the capacity to discern between right and wrong through clear, undistorted judgment. A drunk king or judge or dictator, etc. may “forget the law”, may not correctly distinguish what is right or wrong...and may subsequently issue distorted judgments – declaring the guilty to be innocent and the innocent guilty. Isn’t this what happened to Aaron’s sons? Remember they were Israelite priests...they got drunk and had trouble performing the sacrificial ceremony correctly. Mrs. White says:

“When indulging their appetite for wine and while under its exciting stimulus, their reason was clouded, and they could not discern the difference between the sacred and the common. Contrary to God’s express direction, they dishonored Him by offering common instead of sacred fire. **[God visited them with His wrath; fire went forth from His presence and destroyed them.]**”—Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 295.

Can anyone recall any other biblical examples in which alcohol or drunkenness brought terrible, long-lasting results?

- Noah and his sons [Gen. 9:18–27]
- Lot and his daughters [Gen. 19:30–38]).

And don’t assume this can happen only if the leader is physically drunk at decision-making time. A little research into the physiological effects of alcohol reveals that it clouds the areas of the brain where moral thinking is done. Heavy drinking reduces brain cell production in the hippocampus, the part of the limbic system that governs self-control (ironically the self-control required to stop drinking), memory, and emotional response...however, after a 1 week period of abstinence, new cell production begins again. The point is, if you destroy enough brain cells with alcohol use...your judgment can be impaired even when you’re sober.

The prohibition of wine drinking and alcohol consumption has to do with basic wisdom, science, physiology – all three prongs of the integrative evidence based approach are covered, and as such, should apply to every human being. Doesn’t this sound a lot like natural law concepts?



The pink box at the bottom of Sunday's lesson asks: Who hasn't seen the devastating effects of alcohol in so many lives?" I gathered some Google statistics on alcohol use/abuse, many that I am sure we could validate just by a show of hands in this room, but here's what I found:

- Alcohol is the number one drug problem in America.
- Americans spend \$197 million each day on alcohol.
- In the United States, nearly 14 million adults, or every one in 13 adults, abuse alcohol or have an alcoholism problem...but since an alcoholic's spouse, children, and family suffer due to the alcoholic's condition, there are an estimated 40 – 50 million people affected by alcoholism.
- Several million more partake in risky alcohol consumption that could potentially lead to abuse, and over three million American teenagers aged 14 to 17 have an alcohol problem.
- Compared to adult drinkers who start drinking around age 21, youth who begin drinking before the age of 15 are twice as likely to abuse alcohol and four times more likely to develop dependence on the drug.
- Approximately 53 percent of Americans have one or more close relatives who have an alcohol dependency problem.
- 43 percent of American adults have been exposed to the problem of alcoholism in the family, either as something they grew up with or something they experienced with a spouse or a partner.
- Today, it is estimated that 6.6 million children under the age of 18 live with a parent who struggles with alcoholism.

Not included in the above statistics are alcohol's "other victims" - those affected by alcohol though they are not alcoholics and may not even drink at all. Consider that alcohol is a contributing factor in the following:

- 73% of all felonies
- 73% of child beating cases
- 41% of rape cases
- 81% of wife battering cases
- 72% of stabbings
- 83% of homicides
- In the United States, a person is killed in an alcohol-related car accident every 30 minutes.

Mrs. White said this...not just about alcohol's other victims...but about just our ability to influence others:

"The influence of an ill-regulated family is widespread, and disastrous to all society. It accumulates in a tide of evil that affects families, communities, and governments. It is



impossible for any of us to live in such a way that we shall not cast an influence in the world. No member of the family can enclose himself within himself, where other members of the family shall not feel his influence and spirit. The very expression of the countenance has an influence for good or evil. His spirit, his words, his actions, his attitude toward others, are unmistakable. If he is living in selfishness, he surrounds his soul with a malarious atmosphere; while if he is filled with the love of Christ, he will manifest courtesy, kindness, tender regard for the feelings of others and will communicate to his associates, by his acts of love, a tender, grateful, happy feeling. It will be made manifest that he is living for Jesus and daily learning lessons at His feet, receiving His light and His peace. He will be able to say to the Lord, ‘Thy gentleness hath made me great.’ ”—The Adventist Home, pp. 33, 34.

MONDAY

A Toast to Death

Monday’s lesson in the quarterly looks at Prov 31:6-7, and attempts to define what Solomon’s mother means when she writes,

“Let beer be for those who are perishing, wine for those who are in anguish! Let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more.”

In the MSG, the text reads:

“Use wine and beer only as sedatives, to kill the pain and dull the ache of the terminally ill, for whom life is a living death.”

And isn’t this the exact reason why many folks drink?! To forget and escape their poverty, their misery, and other facets of their condition that they can’t cope with. The quarterly appears to reject those interpretations by pointing out that elsewhere in Proverbs, the use of the expression “who is perishing” repeatedly refers to “the wicked”, and this may be the intended reference here as well...supported by the seeming foolishness of giving something inherently unhealthy to someone who is already in poor health or dying, not to mention the reasons for not giving a depressant to someone who is already depressed.

Did everyone read the powerful quote from Mrs. White at the bottom of Monday’s lesson? “Satan gathered the fallen angels together to devise some way of doing the most possible evil to the human family. One proposition after another was made, till finally Satan himself thought of a plan. He would take the fruit of the vine, also wheat, and other things given by God as food, and would convert them into poisons, which would ruin man’s physical, mental, and moral powers, and so overcome the senses that Satan should have full control. Under the influence of liquor, men would be led to commit crimes



of all kinds. Through perverted appetite the world would be made corrupt. By leading men to drink alcohol, Satan would cause them to descend lower and lower in the scale.”—Ellen G. White, *Temperance*, p. 12. Based on the statistics we just reviewed, it is easy to see why Satan chose this method of harming the human family.

TUESDAY

A Virtuous Woman

Let’s have someone read the familiar description of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31...someone please read verses 10-31 of chapter 31.

Did anyone else here think the perfect “virtuous woman” described in Prov 31 only referred to amazingly ideal married females? I always kinda thought it did! But, as the quarterly suggests, there are many indications that the author may be writing about broader concepts here. There are many prior passages in Proverbs that give us good reason to think that the “virtuous woman” may represent wisdom itself...wisdom personified. The quarterly states that chapter 31 pictures wisdom “not as some lofty and unreachable ideal, but as a very practical and approachable woman who could become our life companion.” So no one else has ever read this description and seen a “lofty and unreachable ideal”? I guess I’m the only one then.

But to shift the paradigm to see true, practical wisdom being described here makes the concept a little easier to digest and absorb. The lesson also points out that this last teaching about wisdom is delivered through a beautiful acrostic poem (definition: An acrostic poem is a type of poetry where the first, last or other letters in a line spell out a particular word or phrase), where each verse begins with a Hebrew letter following the alphabetic order, similar to the book of Lamentations and many of the Psalms. Anyone else have to look that one up?

So let’s take a look at the Proverbs 8 passage on wisdom...and compare it with the virtuous woman we have described here in Proverbs 31, and see if we can find any similarities:

- Precious and worth finding - Prov 31:10 / 8:35
- Worth more than rubies - Prov 31:10 / 8:10-11, 18-19
- Provides food - Prov 31:14 / 8:19
- Strong - Prov 31:17, 25 / 8:14
- Wise - Prov 31:26 / 8:1
- Praised - Prov 31:28 / 8:34
- Tons of strong correlations between the two concepts it seems.



Amassing information and acquiring knowledge is easier than ever in this “information age”...but does this necessarily equate to *wisdom*? We have mentioned in this class that knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit...but wisdom is knowing not to put it in a fruit salad. There is very little evidence to suggest that this abundance of information has not made this generation any wiser than previous ones. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, “We have guided missiles...and misguided men.”

WEDNESDAY

She Works

This virtuous woman seen in Proverbs 31 is not lazy...she is very active and works hard in many areas. This industrious quality is mentioned throughout the book of Proverbs when contrasting the wise versus the foolish. Proverbs 6:6-11 reads:

“You lazy fool, look at an ant. Watch it closely; let it teach you a thing or two. Nobody has to tell it what to do. All summer it stores up food; at harvest it stockpiles provisions. So how long are you going to laze around doing nothing? How long before you get out of bed? A nap here, a nap there, a day off here, a day off there, sit back, take it easy—do you know what comes next? Just this: You can look forward to a dirt-poor life, poverty your permanent houseguest!”

Contrast that description of a lazy fool with our virtuous woman, who bargain hunts, knits, sews, travels, organizes her home, feeds her family, saves her money, buys and sells property, plants a garden, helps the poor, designs and sells clothes – and verse 11 says that she does all this work with her hands *willingly*.

The lesson makes an interesting observation that this very spiritual person is never depicted praying or meditating, but rather is shown as an efficient and productive woman, like Martha in the gospels. To be spiritual does not mean that we should be idle, all under the pretext that we are too concerned with highly important religious issues, and thus have no time to take care of “trivial” matters – remember the parable of the talents in Luke 16?

Also, has it ever struck anyone else how odd this entire description is of a *woman* in Biblical times? Women were merely property in those days...just above a slave on the social ladder...and if they weren't married – single, divorced, widowed didn't matter...they needed to be attached to a man, or if they were married but couldn't have children, they were basically nothing...value-less. Even married women had no rights, could not own property, they could not vote, there was no equal rights amendment, no equal pay act. But that's the opposite of what is described here. This woman sounds like she rocks! She is working it – literally – day and night. She has many responsibilities and she gives them her constant attention.

I am not sure this is exactly how we and society are teaching girls to measure and value their worth today. I mean what sort of role models and standards are they being given? They are taught that their looks...their bodies...their outward appearance are paramount – such shallow and superficial markers...such vain and empty measures. And the magazine images inundating them are complete photoshop fantasy! I am encouraged to see an increasing number of these fallacies being exposed by the publishing of unretouched photos, but it's going to take a whole lot more to change the unhealthy feelings of inadequacy caused by the unattainable pictures of perfection. Oh, that we could develop a meaningful way to teach the concepts of this chapter...that charm can mislead, and that beauty soon fades...but this woman's true beauty is found in her character and how those facets of character are made manifest in her life and works. Throughout the entire book, readers have been warned of ungodly, "strange" women whose seductive powers cause ruin. This final portrait is in contrast to those women, describing a feminine role model of wisdom and godly values. This amazing, talented, industrious, successful woman who develops a virtuous character, and who really knows God – that's what matters...she is to be praised.

This character that we are developing while here on earth...is the one we will take with us into all eternity. I work in the technology/computer field, so I really like Tim's hardware/software analogy when describing what happens with our character. If you are not familiar with the analogy, he describes our physical body as the hardware – so the physical computer/laptop, the electronics, the components. In case you are unaware, our hardware is deteriorating and degrading...literally breaking down while we are here on this earth. In contrast, our characters, our personalities, the essence of who we are...are being formed, and developed, and cultivated...hopefully perfected during our time on this earth. All the while we are alive and that character development is taking place, our character software is being constantly "backed up" on heavenly servers... the fact that we know have servers and software in the "cloud" just makes the analogy even better. We could use the current example in the news about Mrs. Clinton's email server, but that's probably a whole nother class. Anyway, when we die and are buried our hardware is in the ground, but our character software remains on the heavenly servers...just as it was. And when we get new hardware at the resurrection, it gets downloaded onto that new, immortal hardware just as it was...for all eternity! So, can you see how critically important it is to develop a character that is fit for eternity while we are here? It was to be Adam and Eve's main purpose...it was one of the perfectly accomplished goals of Christ's time here on this earth...so how much more important must it be for us in this life?

"A great name among men is as letters traced in sand, but a spotless character will endure to all eternity."—Ellen G. White, *God's Amazing Grace*, p. 81.



The lesson makes another important point regarding our work and effort: they can only really be tested by time. Only the future will testify to the quality of our deeds. To work wisely is to work with the future in mind, not just for an immediate reward...perhaps never more true than when raising children?

THURSDAY

She Cares

The lessons asks what other important characteristics are seen in this women in verses 26-31?

- She speaks with wisdom and gives faithful instruction
- Orders the affairs of her household and is never idle
- Her children arise and call her blessed
- Her husband praises her and the whole city honors her

She is known for her wisdom and her kindness...and they are related. The quarterly argues that kindness is another form of wisdom, especially when we understand that wisdom isn't just *what* we know but *what* we say and do and *how* we say and do. Take a look at the 3rd paragraph in Thursday's lesson...it says, "Notice, too, the phrase the 'law of kindness.' That is, kindness is not just some fleeting attribute that escapes from her mouth now and then. It is a law, a principle of her very existence. How powerful it would be if the 'law of kindness' were to guide all that came out of our mouths." It sounds suspiciously like the author has stumbled upon some natural law concepts here when referencing the law of kindness.

Ellen White said this on the subject:

"Kindness and love and courtesy are the marks of the Christian.... In our association with each other let it be ever remembered that there are chapters in the experience of others that are sealed from mortal eyes; there are sad histories that are written in the books of heaven but are sacredly guarded from prying eyes. There stand registered long, hard battles with trying circumstances, arising in the very homes, that day by day sap the courage, the faith, the confidence, until the very manhood seems to fall to ruins. But Jesus knows it all, and He never forgets. To such, words of kindness and of affection are welcome as the smile of angels; a strong, helpful grasp of the hand of a true friend is worth more than gold and silver. The true, honest expression of a sister, or brother, or friend, given in genuine simplicity, has power to open the door of hearts which need the fragrance of Christlike words and the simple, delicate touch of the spirit of Christ's love. – {ML 178.4 (My Life Today)}



Dwell more on the idea that although we have a lot of knowledge for our time, we don't necessarily have more wisdom. In what ways can knowledge without wisdom be even more dangerous than a lack of knowledge without wisdom? What are some recent examples we can see of just how damaging knowledge without wisdom can be?

The book of Proverbs is filled with practical wisdom. This should tell us that our religion, even with all its lofty theology and spiritual dimensions, has a very practical side to it, as well. How can we make sure that we don't neglect the practical aspects of faith as we seek to fulfill its theological and spiritual dimensions?



The Book of Luke 2Q 2015 Lesson 1

The Coming of Jesus

SABBATH

When you hear the title what do you think? I think the second coming, but the title is actually referring to His incarnation, His first coming.

Read memory text, “For with God nothing will be impossible.” Luke 1:37

This text serves as a good example of verses that can be misused, misunderstood, misapplied, i.e. the dangers of taking a Bible text by itself and believing it without thinking through what it actually means.

Is this statement true, as it reads?

- “For God cannot be tempted by evil” James 1:13
 - Can we say it is impossible for God to be tempted by evil?
- “The hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago: Titus 1:2
 - Can we say it is impossible for God to lie?

So are there some things impossible for God? Any others?

- Can God sin?
- Can God save a person against that person’s will? Why or why not?
- What does salvation actually mean? It means reconciliation to God in a trust relationship of love. Can trust and love be forced? So, can God save someone who refuses?

So, are there some things impossible for God? Why?

Because of His character and nature of love, which is the template and design parameters upon which reality exists. He cannot create a reality deviant from Himself, from love, because He is the source of life and only in Him does the universe hold together. Disintegration occurs without Him. This is reality.

So, when the text says “For with God nothing will be impossible” it is true in its context, which is in the context of telling a virgin she will get pregnant and conceive.

But taking this text blindly, simply believing it without thought, without understanding reality, is one way many distortions get taught about God. Thinking God can do anything, people then blame God when life doesn’t go the way they want it to.



Some, teaching the idea that all things are possible for God, that He therefore wanted Adam and Eve to sin, or that God causes evil, or that God makes all our choices for us, or that God chooses who will be saved and lost etc.

This leads to magical thinking, people do rituals to get God to give them what they want, people pray for things impossible for God to do such as heal a marriage in which the partners cheat on each other, lie to each other, abuse each other etc. Or, universalism, which teaches God saves everyone, but He cannot save those who won't allow Him.

Are there other passages of Scripture that pop into your mind that are taken as a proof text and applied where they don't belong?

Read first paragraph, "The Gospel of Luke..." Did you notice Luke was a physician? And what did the Study Guide note the doctor did? He presented facts, evidence, reliable testable data!

Doctors think through the lens of evidence and want people to be persuaded to understand and see reality as it actually is, just as the Study Guide says in the second paragraph, to believe reality not myth.

Are there myths taught in Christianity today?

- The *Universe* was created 6000 years ago (Job 38:6.7); The Bible doesn't teach this, the earth was terraformed sometime in the last 10,000 years, but the universe is billions of years old.
- Leadership in the church is for men only
- Leadership in the church is for those with theology degrees only
- God is the source of death which He inflicts as punishment for disobedience
- God requires some payment in order to assuage His wrath
- Sin is a legal problem
- Others?

SUNDAY

Read bottom pink section – "Luke, an inspired author..." What is the issue? Why is this being pointed out?

What is the concern for those who have lost confidence in certain sources because of allegations of plagiarism? They fear the information is not reliable – why do they fear this?

This question helps us consider the thinking of the immature versus the mature.

Children, the immature, don't know how to think things through for themselves. They don't know how to evaluate evidence, integrate diverse threads of evidence, weigh various points of



view, test against reliable standards, and come to healthy conclusions.

So, children want, seek, demand, an authority figure to tell them the answer, to make a ruling, they turn to mommy or daddy, whose right, or the teacher, or the umpire, referee, or judge, or the pastor, pope, Bible.

Many Christians operate at this level, not wanting to think through issues, not wanting to research, weigh evidences, integrate divergent sources of information, but instead simply want to be told the answer. They want a concise list of rules, dos and don'ts they can feel safe observing. They rest secure in someone else's conclusions. "My mommy said..." "My Pastor said..." "My Bible says..."

Those who want a rulebook get very concerned about who has been writing the rules. They have magical thinking about the Bible, and if something undermines their confidence in the source, not having the ability to assess the source material for themselves, they throw it out.

This is how many use the Bible and other Christian writings, as a rule book, a code, an external authority to make judicial rulings on thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors. We don't need to think, to weigh evidences, to understand God, His design, His principles, comprehending our duty in God's purposes, no, we need to find the right rule and apply it.... We are so concerned about being right, we want a ruling so we can feel good about ourselves and feel safe in what we are doing.

I get this frequently, people come up to me or email me and ask: "Is it right to work on Sabbath as a nurse and keep the pay? Is it right to eat this, or drink that? Is it right to divorce a spouse who ... fill in the blank?" etc.

But this approach is distinctly non-Biblical – Paul, in Romans 14 – addressed issues of worship, including Sabbath, and said every person must be fully persuaded in their own mind. Not, every person must submit their mind to the proper ruling authority.

Sadly, many times in church history, the institutional church has come down with rulings and mandated membership conform their beliefs to the ruling of the church. Again, this is not Biblical.

Presenting truth, in love and leaving people free is Biblical. Why? Because what God wants is love and trust, and love and trust can only occur when individuals come to understand reality for themselves. A person cannot love another because someone said, "It is the rule you must love him, and if you don't, well that is treason, law breaking, and God will kill you. So obey and love him."

Submission by rule leads to rebellion – it is only in an atmosphere of freedom that love grows.



And this comes back to which type of law one is operating upon. **Imposed law requires a ruling authority to rule – natural law requires educators to educate**, but deviants are left free to reap what they sew. We educate upon the dangers of smoking, drinking, drugs, unhealthy diet, premarital sex, pornography, rejecting the truth about God, etc. etc. but leave people free, and if they choose to do these things they reap the consequences and the consequences are ALWAYS damaging and eventually bring its harvest.

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “The birth stories...” The lesson points out that the births of John the Baptist and Jesus were both miraculous – but it is important to note, the miracle performed in each case was quite different, and I want to note this because when it comes to pregnancy many people get confused by this.

What was the miracle performed in Elizabeth’s case, which is also the same miracle performed in all the cases in the Bible of women who were barren getting pregnant?

Did God perform a miracle to get them pregnant? No, the miracle performed was one of physical healing, like healing blindness, or deafness, but in these cases God healed or restored their ability to reproduce. The women still had natural relations with their husbands that got them pregnant. God did not get them pregnant.

Mary was different. In her case no miracle was performed to heal a physical defect or malady that prevented her from conceiving. In her case, God did instill a pregnancy in her, a true miracle birth.

When we speak of miracle births it also gives opportunity to demonstrate how Bible history also serves the purpose of revealing a larger reality. There are many examples of this: The family of Jacob:

- Brothers betray brother – symbolic of Lucifer’s betrayal of Christ
- The children of Israel as slaves in Egypt, symbolic humanity slaves in sin
- Pharaoh symbolic of Satan enslaving and abusing
- Moses a deliverer – symbolic of Christ our deliverer
- Attacks against the gods of Egypt – symbolic of Christ’s attacks against the lies of Satan
- Walking through red sea – symbolic of baptism
- Manna from heaven – symbolic of Jesus the bread of heaven

There are 7 examples of barren women who were healed and gave birth and they are all types of Christ. Real people, real history, but also serve as object lesson of Christ:

1. Sarah – Isaac – Mount Moriah symbolic of Jesus to be sacrificed
2. Rebekah – Jacob – who became Israel, twelve sons, Jesus twelve apostles to foundation



of the church

3. Rachel – Joseph – who sold into slavery, became ruler to free the people; Jesus went into the slavery of sin in order to free us from it
4. Monoah's wife – Samson – blessed with strength to deliver Israel from bondage and rule over them; Jesus our shield and strength and to rule the universe
5. Hannah – Samuel – who became High Priest
6. Shunammite woman – child died and resurrected
7. Elizabeth – John the Baptist – who greatest of prophets

Isn't it odd – that God chose Abraham to be the family through which the Messiah would come, and the first three generations – Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel are all barren, and all require a miracle healing to conceive? What are the chances? Random? Or is there a great controversy going on? Was Satan afoot trying to obstruct God's plan by causing health problems? We don't have any inspired word that this happened, but I wonder?

Third paragraph states, "John was to be a preparer of the way for Jesus." What does this mean? Prepare how? Prepare what?

John was to prepare the minds of people to be ready to receive Jesus as Messiah. How?

John was basically diagnosing people as terminal in sin, telling them if they didn't recognize they were terminal and turn back to God for healing they would die. He wanted to introduce uneasiness with their current system and way of thinking, to cause them to be dissatisfied with their rituals and routines which had no power to heal them of their fear and selfishness and instill a longer for something better.

This he did and then Jesus came as the better way, the true Way, Truth and Life! And the people responded.

John was called the second Elijah – to prepare for the first Advent.

Do we have a role today to present a message of truth, like John, which exposes the failing of much of religion in the world today and motivate people out of complacency and stir up a desire for something better?

There is a prophecy in Malachi about Elijah coming before the second coming – why? What is the purpose?

Has the church found itself in a similar place as Israel 2000 years ago, popular, but powerless, filled with routine, ritual, rote performance and people stuck in sin?

Is there to be a message which is to cause people to be dissatisfied with the status quo, realize we have a terminal condition, and point them to a real remedy that heals?



Come to our seminar this afternoon, the second talk, becoming a spokesperson for God is all about this very topic.

TUESDAY

Read third paragraph, “The virgin birth of Jesus...” Why is the virgin birth of Jesus important?

- Establishes Jesus as something other than a mere product of sinful beings
- Why is it important that He was born of a sinful woman, rather than just coming as a man to earth?
- What was His mission? To do what?
 - To reveal the truth about God in order to expose Satan, destroy Satan’s lies and win beings to trust – could He have done that by just appearing as a man? Yes. Was that His total mission? No!
 - What else? He had to destroy death (2Tim 1:10) and had to destroy the devil’s work (1John 3:8) – and cure the human condition (Heb 2:14). Could He have done this without being born of a sinful woman? No – why?
 - Because the only way to cure this creation was to become a partaker of it, to be an actual descendant of Adam, and with the abilities of a human being, exercising a human brain, restore God’s design, God’s law of love into the species created to be its repository. Jesus Christ, in His humanity, developed a perfect human character, restoring God’s image into the species human, and destroyed the infection of selfishness – this destroyed death, the devil’s work and cured the terminal condition.

What do you think of this: “Every human question, no matter how natural or logical, must give way to the divine answer. Be it Creation or the Cross, the Incarnation or the Resurrection, the downpour of manna or the outpouring at Pentecost—the divine initiative demands human surrender and acceptance.”

What is meant by divine initiative? If it means, the evidence is so clear, so self-evident, the weight of truth and evidence itself demands we recognize it by its overwhelming clarity and reality, then okay, well and good. But, what if it means, God, declares the truth and then He demands we surrender and accept, is that the same thing? What is the problem with such a position?

It doesn’t persuade, it doesn’t convince, it doesn’t transform, it doesn’t ennoble, develop, mature, solidify in righteousness. Such a position as God demands and we must believe, makes us into mindless robots and this is not what God wants. It is a false idea, based on a core truth but twisted subtly to destroy the image of God in man.

John 15:15 Jesus gives the ideal by telling His apostles He wants them to be His friends, not



mindless slaves, because friends understand. He wants our understanding, not mere agreement. Because understanding increases our admiration, appreciation, awe, love, affection, devotion, loyalty.

Read bottom pink section, “Some secular cultures...” Are they suggesting God does things that are not scientific? Are they suggesting God does things that don’t make sense, that are unreasonable, that defy reality, that goes against the laws of nature?

Or are they suggesting only, that our understanding of science is limited and it is grandiose to think our finite minds can conceive of infinity, and therefore to suggest God be restricted to our current understanding of science is foolish?

Which way do you think things will go in the future: as we grow in our understanding of God and His design, as we live through eternity future, will we find things become less and less understandable, more and more mysterious and unclear, or that God and His actions become ever more clear, with sound reasons, in harmony with His own nature and design, i.e. the laws of nature?

For instance, the virgin birth, do you think God did this without using DNA and RNA? If DNA and RNA were used then was science involved? Was nature and nature's laws involved? But who is the author of nature and science? God is – to suggest God's ways are somehow outside of nature and science is suggesting God violates His own design for reality.

The problem is only in our limited understanding, not in science and nature.

WEDNESDAY

When you consider Jesus in a manger in Bethlehem, what is significant to you in this story? Has it become told so often that it has become a story without meaning?

Have you ever sat for a moment and considered, what it would be like to go to a barn, find a 17 y/o girl with her husband and newborn baby, and be told that child is the Creator God from heaven.

First, would you have a hard time believing it?

Second, when you did believe it what happens in you?

Do you want to worship Him or try to take possession of Him? Do you think how can I humble myself before Him, or how can I use Him? Do you feel safe and secure with a God who has to have his diaper changed?



What law lens are you considering this through? If your view is through imposed law, and we need a powerful authoritative deity, then seeing Jesus as a babe might be scary.

But, if we see through design law, and realize our condition is terminal, and this baby is the cure, the remedy, then we are in awe, reverent and in great appreciation!

Read last paragraph, “Luke’s record...”

- What is the significance that Jesus is the Savior of all people?
- There is no Jew or Greek, male or female etc. why? Because the entire human race has the same terminal condition, and Jesus is the Remedy for all human beings who partake, regardless of ethnicity, religious affiliation, sex, nationality etc.
 - i.e. design law – laws of health make no distinction for nationality etc. likewise the Remedy for sinfulness makes no distinction based on race etc.
 - But arbitrary laws, imposed rules can and do make distinction. Diplomats get special privileges when it comes to the laws of the nation they are visiting, police and other government officials get special privilege in observing the imposed laws of the land. But laws of health, physics, and God’s laws of love, liberty, truth, worship etc. make no distinction between people.
- What is the significance that there is no other Savior than Jesus?
 - Simply that Jesus is the only cure – does that mean a person has to know about Jesus to partake of the Remedy He has procured? i.e. only those who are baptized into Christianity can be saved?
 - If Penicillin cures a particular infection – does someone have to know about Penicillin to benefit from taking it? Do they have to call it Penicillin to benefit from taking it? How about they take the Penicillin, but call it Shaman’s magic milk, will calling it Shaman’s magic milk make it less effective, turn it into something else?
 - If a person responds to the Holy Spirit and chooses love, truth, freedom, whose character are they choosing? If they live to love others more than self, whose character are they living by?
 - Romans 1:20 God’s divine nature is seen in what he has made so men are without excuse
 - For it is **not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.**¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, **do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves**, even though they do not have the law. ¹⁵They **show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts**, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.) Romans 2:13-15



- ¹³For it is not those who hear about love, truth and freedom who are healthy and right in God's sight, but it is those who internalize in their hearts and minds the principles of love, truth and freedom and have characters transformed to be like Jesus who are diagnosed as righteous.¹⁴(Indeed, when Gentiles, who have not heard the truth about God's character, methods and principles as revealed in Scripture, internalize in their characters God's methods of love, truth and freedom which they have understood from God's revelation in nature, they are in harmony with God and his great law of love, even though they have not had the benefit of Scripture,¹⁵ since they reveal that the infection of selfishness has been removed and love has been written in their hearts, their consciences are cleansed and are in harmony with God, and their thoughts are able to discern the right from the wrong - the healthy from the unhealthy.) *The Remedy* Rom 2:13-15
- Revelation 12:11 these are they who do not love their lives so much as to shrink from death
- Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but **they have cherished His principles**. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. Even among **the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness**; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. **Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly**, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. **Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God.** {DA 638.2}

So, no one can be healed to be like Christ without the victory that Christ procured at the Cross. But, that doesn't mean there is some mechanical, legalistic process a person must go through in some ritualistic way claiming the right words etc. No, it is about character, about being restored to Christlikeness in heart where we love others more than self and have fear and selfishness purged by love.

This is only possible because of the victory of Jesus and even those who haven't heard of Christ, but who are transformed to love are transformed only as they partake of Christ via the work of the Holy Spirit.



THURSDAY

The lesson points us to Simeon's prophecy in Luke 2:25-35, from *The Remedy*:

In Jerusalem was a faithful and pure-hearted man named Simeon. He was waiting to see the deliverer, promised to come through Israel, and his mind was enlightened by the Holy Spirit.²⁶ The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not die before he had seen God's Remedy.²⁷ Impressed and directed by the Holy Spirit, he went to the temple courts. When Mary and Joseph brought baby Jesus to fulfill the rituals required by the script,²⁸ Simeon held him in his arms and praised God. He said:

²⁹"Sovereign God, you have kept your promise to me and now I can retire in peace.³⁰ For with my own eyes I have seen your Remedy,³¹ whom you have sent for all the people to behold,³² a beacon of truth to enlighten the world and for the complete restoration and glorification of your triumphant people."

³³The boy's father and mother were deeply moved by what this man said about Jesus.³⁴ Then Simeon gave them his blessing and said to Mary, the boy's mother: "This child's purpose and mission is to cause the downfall of selfishness and the rising up of love in those who overcome with God, and to be the supreme evidence of God's character of love, but many will oppose him.³⁵ As a result the true thoughts and motives of many hearts will be revealed, and a sword will pierce your soul."

FRIDAY

Read question 3 – if you had the opportunity to interview Jesus what question would you like to ask Him?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase is now available on our website, and the app for android devices is in the Google play store. The IOS version will be available shortly.

- This is a FREE app
- Please read the preface to understand the approach to this paraphrase
- We have cards available to share with others and will ship them at no cost
- Also, if you find typos please email those to us so we can fix any missed typos

CARDS – If you have any of our ministry business cards please check to see if they have our current address: PO Box 28266 Chattanooga, TN 37424. If they are the old ones please discard them. We will be happy to send new ones, just email us. Thanks!

Opportunity to Share:

The General Conference of SDA will have its meeting (which occurs every five years) in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. 50,000-70,000 Adventist from all over the world are expected to attend. This presents an opportunity to share this healing message about God in a most impactful way.

We plan on giving away our DVDs, Dr. Jennings' Book *Could It Be This Simple?* and other materials. This will be an enormous project. If you would like to share in this opportunity, you can do so by making donations to *Come and Reason Ministries* either via Paypal, or check mailed to our address below.

New Mailing Address: PLEASE UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS BOOK:

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Chattanooga, TN 37424

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Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

April 23, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Faith and Mental Health Board in Goshen Indiana.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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The Book of Luke 2015 Q2 Lesson 2

Baptism and the Temptations of Christ Jesus

A friend of mine from another faith visited Come and Reason with me one week and concluded that we surely do like to get into the details. She had never attended a religious service that talked about anything other than the basic Christian beliefs about loving God how His grace covers our sins.

She wondered if we believed that going into this depth was what we thought had to be done in order to be saved.

I responded that according to the Bible, trust and belief in God enough to keep allowing Him into your heart to do his work of healing was what saves a person.

However, the reason we take delight in digging deeper can best be expressed by

- **Proverbs 24: 3-4:** "By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures."
- **Isaiah 33: 6:** "He will be a sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of The Lord is the key to this treasure."

So let's see what rare and beautiful treasures The Lord can show us today to give beauty to our inner rooms!

INTRODUCTION

What I like about the book of Luke

Luke - Physician, a converted Gentile - not one of the 12 disciples.

Like the physicians of today, including those that attend this class, he was on a quest for honest answers, and he wasn't afraid to dig for the facts, try to understand them and to present them as understandably as he knew how. He said:

"Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the work. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught."

Luke writes this gospel to present Jesus as a Savior for the whole human race. The stories emphasize how kind and loving Jesus is to those despised by society (such as tax collectors, Samaritans, the poor, and women). He stresses the importance of prayer in Jesus' life.



He emphasizes facts, healing, miracles, parables, with a focus on making the events clear to the Gentiles - how to be saved

Only Luke and Matthew go into the detail of Jesus' genealogy.

Luke is the only one of the gospels to document Zechariah's prophecy about the roles of his son John the Baptist and Jesus:

Luke 1:67-79. "His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: 'Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people.

He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us - to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our father Abraham: to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before The Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."

Luke is also the only gospel to document Simeon being moved by the Spirit to go to the temple, where he said:

Luke 2:30-32, 34, 35: "My eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel....This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed...."

All of the Gospels discuss the baptism of Jesus and the Spirit descending on Jesus in the form of a dove, but They vary in what a voice from heaven says:

- **Matt:** This is my Son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased
- **Mark and Luke:** You are my Son, whom I love, with you I am well pleased
- **John:** does not mention the voice, but says that John was told by the one who sent him to baptize with water that the one upon whom the dove comes down and remains is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit - the Son of God

Only John does not discuss the temptations, but goes straight from Jesus' baptism to gathering disciples.

Luke and Mathew go into detail about the temptations.



SABBATH

This historic figures mentioned give us a date around AD 27 or 28 for the start of the ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus points out that God chose a “lowly” man as Jesus’ herald, not one of the world’s “great men”

Tornado – the 7 huge, ancient oaks twisted and broken off, but wildflowers still all over the yard,

SUNDAY

What does repentance mean?

A change of mind – that changes the pattern of your life

“To baptize means to dip or immerse fully in water. Even before John, Jews commonly practiced this when Gentile proselytes chose to join the Jewish faith. In inviting Jews to be baptized, John the Baptist was setting forth a new principle: baptism is an occasion to publicly renounce one's old sinful ways and to prepare oneself for the coming of the Messiah”

Baptism - symbolic of death of body and spirit, resurrection to new life and spirit

Total immersion is used to symbolize whole hearted - not partial giving over – an “all in” total change of heart, as in:

- plant dies, its seed goes into soil, comes to life as a new plant.
- What Jesus was talking to Nicodemus - you must be born again.

John the Baptist said in Luke 3:16, 17:

"I baptize with water, but one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

How does Jesus baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire?

HOLY SPIRIT

Matt. 28:18-20: "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

- **Mark 16:15-18:** "He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be



condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands, and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all, they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

- **John 20:21:** "Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.'"
- **Luke 24: 49:** "I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."
- **Acts 1:4-8:** "On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command, 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit....you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'"
- **Acts 2:1-12:** When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked, 'Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us heard them speaking in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene, visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs -we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues.'"
- **Acts 2:36--39:** "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.' When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call.'"

FIRE

- **Malachi 3:2-5:** "But who can endure the day of His coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire, or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites, and refine them like gold and silver. Then The Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to The Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years."
- **Malachi 4:1-3:** "Surely the day is coming, it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire,' says The Lord



Almighty. 'Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun on righteousness will rise with healing in his wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things,' says The Lord Almighty."

- **Isaiah 43:1-3:** "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned, the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am The Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior...since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you."
- **Isaiah 33: 14-16:** "The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless. "Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with the everlasting burning? He who walks righteously and speaks what is right, who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes, who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil - this is the man who will dwell on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress. His bread will be supplied and water will not fail him. Your eyes will see the king in his beauty and view a land that stretches afar."
- **Jeremiah 23:29:** "Is not my word like a fire," declares the Lord, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"

MONDAY

Why did Jesus have to be baptized?

In **Mathew 3: 13-15**, when John tried to deter Jesus from being baptized by John, Jesus said, "it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness."

What does to fulfill all righteousness mean?

His ministry included being an example for us of how to be full of righteousness:

1. Start with a decision to give up our life, which leads to destruction, (Baptism into the water)
2. Begin living a new life (Baptism coming out of the water)
3. Allow the Holy Spirit to fill and correct our deficiencies, (the Holy Spirit descending like a dove on Jesus following his baptism)
4. Ultimately not love our life so much as to shrink from death (the cross)

Jesus sought baptism not because He needed it as part of a post-repentance process, but to set an example for others (Matt. 3:14, 15)

Three important factors stand out concerning the baptism of Jesus:

1. **John 1:29** - The Baptist's proclamation, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"
2. The Holy Spirit's anointing Him for His mission ahead



3. The heavenly proclamation that Jesus is the Son of God, in whom the Father is well pleased.”

Luke 3:21,22 - All 3 of the trinity Godhead show up in this verse - Jesus, Holy Spirit and God's voice from heaven stating that Jesus was His son, and that he was pleased with Him.

God doesn't waste words, so why did he need to say, "with you I am well pleased?"

- Show the unity and mutual support of the Trinity Godhead
- Give Jesus authority in the eyes of the witnesses
- Demonstrate his stamp of approval

Why did the Spirit come down in the shape of a dove?

Gen 8:8-12: Noah sent out a dove 3 times to see if the water had subsided and new growth began.

Matt 10:16: I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

Why do we baptize each other?

Rom 6: 1-11: "What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live to it any longer, or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead, through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin...because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

TUESDAY

“In the wilderness, when the Savior was weak for 40 days of fasting, when the journey ahead looked bleak and wary, Satan took personal command in his attack against Jesus. ‘Satan saw that he must either conquer or be conquered. The issues of this conflict involved too much to be entrusted to his confederate angels. He must personally conduct the warfare’. E G White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 116”



Mathew 4: 1-3 says: That he was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. And that after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him...

Luke 4:1,2 says: “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days and at the end of them he was hungry”

So, let's see if we can understand why 40 days, rather than 30, 28, 15, etc

Research through the Bible came up these other instances of 40 days or years (in prophecy a day is counted as a year):

- **Gen. 7: 17-23** - flood 40 days - until everything with breath died
- **Gen. 50:1-3** - Joseph had his father embalmed for 40 days, as that is how long it takes to embalm someone
- **Ex. 16: 35** - Israelites ate manna for 40 years
- **Ex. 24: 18** - Moses on the mountain with God for 40 days and nights
- **Ex. 34:28** - Moses back up on the mountain with God for another 40 days and nights without eating or drinking.
- **Numbers 13:25** - at the end of 40 days, the spies came back from exploring the land of Canaan.
- **Numbers 40:33** - Israelites told by God that they will spend 40 years in the wilderness until all of the people of military age and above were dead, one year for each day the spies were checking out Canaan since they did not trust God. To humble and test them.
- **Deut 8:4** - the Israelites' clothes and sandals did not wear out or their feet swell for the 40 years
- **Joshua 14:6-9** - Caleb was 40 years old when he was sent out to spy the land of Canaan
- **Judges 3:7-11** - the land had rest for 40 years from after Othniel, the brother of Caleb, overcame the king of Aram until he died.
- **Judges 8:28** - the land had peace 40 years after Gideon subdued Midian
- **Judges 13:1** – Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lords, so the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for 40 years.
- **1 Samuel 4:18** – Eli had led Israel 40 years when he fell backward off his chair, broke his neck and died after hearing that his sons had been killed and the ark was captured.
- **1 Samuel 17:16** – David killed the Philistine Goliath after Goliath had come forward every morning and evening for 40 days to take his stand against Israel.
- **2 Samuel 5:4** – David reigned as king for 40 years
- **1 Kings 11:42** – Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel 40 years
- **1 Kings 19:8** – Elijah was fed by an angel, and strengthened by that food, he traveled 40 days and 40 nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.
- **2 Kings 12:1** – Joash reigned as king in Jerusalem 40 years.
- **Ezekiel 4:4-6** – God told Ezekiel to lie on one side 390 days, one day for each year of Israel's sin. Then lie down on the other side for 40 days, one day for each year of Judah's sin.



- **Ezekiel 29:9-16** – God said Egypt and her cities would be a desolate waste for 40 years and disperse the Egyptians among the nations because they said they made the Nile, and mistreated God’s people.. But after 40 years, he would gather the Egyptians and return them to Upper Egypt, where they will be the lowliest of kingdoms and never again exalt itself above the other nations. Israel will never have confidence in Egypt again and will be a reminder of their sin in turning to Egypt for help.
- **Jonah 3:4** – Jonah warned the people of Nineveh that in 40 days, Nineveh would be overthrown.
- **Acts 1:3** – Jesus appeared to his apostles over a 40 day period after his resurrection, speaking about the kingdom of God.
- **Acts 7:23** – When Moses was 40, he killed an Egyptian who was mistreating an Israelite, then fled to Midian to live as a foreigner
- **Acts 7:30** – After 40 years had passed, God appeared to Moses in a bush to begin his leadership of the Israelites.

In the Bible, often one day is symbolic of a year, for instructional purposes, as noted in some of the instances above.

Consider that 40 years is a useful adult lifespan – Israel counted adults from military age up, and priests retired at age 60.

Some quotes from one of the founders of the SDA Church, Ellen G. White:

“Moses was the prospective ruler of Egypt, but God could not take him from the king’s court to do the work appointed him. Only when he had been for forty years a faithful shepherd was he sent to be the deliverer of his people.” Gospel Workers, p. 332 **[My note – note year as a shepherd for each year leading Israel]**

“With Christ, as with the holy pair in Eden, appetite was the ground of the first great temptation. Just where the ruin began, the work of our redemption must begin. As by the indulgence of appetite Adam fell, so by the denial of appetite Christ must overcome.” And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungered”...From the time of Adam to that of Christ, self-indulgence had increased the power of the appetites and passions, until they had almost unlimited control. Thus men had become debased and diseased, and of themselves it was impossible for them to overcome. In man’s behalf, Christ conquered by enduring the severest test. For our sake He exercised a self-control stronger than hunger or death. And in this first victory were involved other issues that enter into all our conflicts with the powers of darkness.”

“Christ fought the battle upon the point of appetite, and came off victorious; and we also can conquer through strength derived from him. Who will enter in through the gates into the city? Not those who declare that they cannot break the force of appetite. Christ has resisted the power of him who would hold us in bondage; though weakened by his long fast of forty days,



he withstood temptation, and proved by this act that our cases are not hopeless. I know that we cannot obtain the victory alone; and how thankful we should be that we have a living Savior, who is ready and willing to aid us!" Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene 19.2

"In the wilderness of temptation, Christ was without food forty days. Moses had on especial occasions been thus long without food. But he felt not the pangs of hunger. He was not tempted and harassed by a vile and powerful foe as was the Son of God. He was elevated above the human, and especially sustained by the glory of God which enshrouded him." Confrontation 34.1

Why without food?

"When Jesus entered into the wilderness, He was shut in by the Father's glory⁷. Absorbed in communion with God, He was lifted above human weakness. But the glory departed, and He was left to battle with temptation. It was pressing upon Him every moment. His human nature shrank from the conflict that awaited Him. For forty days He fasted and prayed. Weak and emaciated from hunger, worn and haggard with mental agony, 'His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.' Now was Satan's opportunity. Now he supposed that he could overcome Christ."

"Christ entered upon the test upon the point of appetite, and for nearly six weeks resisted temptation in behalf of man. That long fast in the wilderness was to be a lesson to fallen man for all time. Christ was not overcome by the strong temptations of the enemy, and this is encouragement for every soul who is struggling against temptation. Christ has made it possible for every member of the human family to resist temptation. All who would live godly lives may overcome as Christ overcame, by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony. That long fast of the Saviour strengthened Him to endure. He gave evidence to man that He would begin the work of overcoming just where ruin began, on the point of appetite." Counsels on Diet and Foods, pages 185, 186.

In our sick state of the ebola of sin, it is hard to resist temptation to eat a snack if it has been a long while since a meal, for example; but if we miss several days of meals, we feel like we could gnaw our arm off! And we aren't the nicest folks to be around when we are "starved", are we? Yet we haven't gone anywhere near 40 days and 40 nights without eating.

It is humanity at its weakest point

The First Temptation:

Satan said to Christ: 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread' (Luke 4:3).

What is Satan trying to do in this account that reflects what he attempted to do in heaven?



Jesus had already been confirmed to be the Son of God by God's voice from heaven at his baptism. Bread making wasn't the issue (which would have been a simple thing for the Creator of the universe), it was:

- Doubt in that heavenly assurance. In heaven Satan challenged the authority of Jesus. He does so here as well.
- It was also an attempt to incite Jesus to "save himself"

Who looked more like the Son of God at that point?

Jesus doesn't give His opinion, or take the offensive to back Satan off, but quotes scripture, "It is written, Man does not live on bread alone" (Deut. 8:3).

Satan has no response to this.

WEDNESDAY

The Second Temptation:

Luke 4:4-8: "The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, 'I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So IF you worship me, it will all be yours.'

Satan offers all the reward of ownership of the earth, with none of the self sacrifice to get it.

"One of the issues in Lucifer's rebellion against God in heaven is that of worship; well summarized by **Isaiah 14: 13, 14:** 'to ascend to heaven, to exalt his throne above the stars of heaven, to be like the Most High.'

"Satan was trying to divert Christ's perspective from His divine priority and to entice Him with pomp and glory for no greater price than just a bow. He was trying to get the authority and worship that he failed to get in heaven."

Shows Satan has no idea what the Most High is really like, or how to be like the Most High or what real worship is.

Once again, Jesus doesn't give His opinion, or argue, but quotes scripture: Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Worship the Lord your God and serve him only." (Deut. 6:13)

Matthew 4:10 indicates that Jesus also said, "Away from me, Satan" during this temptation, clearly showing that Jesus knew exactly who He was dealing with.

Satan has no response to this.



THURSDAY

The Third Temptation

Satan finally decides to quote scripture himself and see if that will work. He knows the scripture, but misinterprets it.

Luke 4:9-12: The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “IF you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’ (Ps 91:11, 12)

Here is Jesus on the very temple where God dwells among His people and where they worship Him as God.

OK, if you aren’t going to save your self from starvation or take the world for yourself with just a bow rather than self sacrifice, let God/the angels save you.

Jesus again answered with only scripture: ”It says, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” (**Deut. 6:16**)

Satan had no answer for this.

“God has indeed promised the protection of his angels, but only in the context of doing His will, such as in the case of Daniel and his companions.”

Is this always the case?

What about good people, God’s people who are killed, raped, tortured, abused in all different ways? Where are the angels protecting them?

Luke 4: 13: “When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left Him until an opportune time.”

Did Satan ever give up tempting Jesus?

Note four major biblical teachings on temptation:

1. No one is free from temptations
2. When God allows temptations to come to us, He also provides grace to resist and strength to overcome
3. Temptations do not come the same way every time
4. No one is tempted beyond his or her strength to bear (**1 Cor. 10:13**)”



FRIDAY

Is temptation sin?

James 1:12-15: “Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who live him. When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”

In what ways can idolatry be much more subtle than bowing down and worshiping something other than the Lord?

If a person has something or someone else they are passionate about, would you say that thing or person “has their heart?”

Referring to the time when Joseph and Mary headed home from Jerusalem and didn’t realize Jesus was not with them:

“If Joseph and Mary had stayed their minds upon God by meditation and prayer, they would have realized the sacredness of their trust, and would not have lost sight of Jesus. By one day’s neglect, they lost the Saviour; but it cost them three days of anxious search to find Him. So with us; by idle talk, evil speaking, or neglect of prayer, we may in one day lose the Saviour’s presence, and it may take many days of sorrowful search to find him, and regain the peace that we have lost.” EG White, *The Desire of Ages*, p 83

The Book of Luke 2Q 2015 Lesson 3

Who Is Jesus Christ?

How do you answer this question?

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| • God | • Alpha and Omega
(Beginning and End) | • Lion of the Tribe of
Judah |
| • Son of God | • Bridegroom | • Lord of the Sabbath,
Hosts, Glory |
| • Son of Man | • Bread of Life | • Master |
| • Creator | • Chief Cornerstone | • Teacher |
| • Savior | • Lamb of God | • Doctor/Heavenly
Physician |
| • Messiah | • Emmanuel/Immanuel | • Resurrection and Life |
| • Deliverer | • El-Shaddai | • Righteous Judge |
| • Redeemer | • Elohim | • Rock of Salvation |
| • Bright Morning Star –
Light Bearer | • Joshua | • Root of Jesse, Seed of
Abraham, Seed of
David |
| • High Priest | • I Am | • Vine |
| • The Almighty | • Good Shepherd | • The Word |
| • Everlasting Father | • Jehovah | |
| • Wonderful Counselor | • The Just One | |
| • Prince of Peace | • King of Kings | |
| • Ancient of Days | • Lord of Lords | |

Who is Jesus Christ? He is our Creator, Savior, Friend. Jesus is a being of supreme love, kindness, grace, gentleness, goodness, yet all powerful, with life original in himself, underived from another.

What are some of the other views of Jesus and what problems do these other views present to the plan of salvation?

- Jesus is a prophet – not the Son of God
 - The war started in heaven over God trustworthiness, His character, His law, and the position of Christ in heaven
 - If Jesus was a prophet we learn nothing about God, other than God was willing to sacrifice one of His creatures, but not sacrifice Himself
 - Additionally, Jesus brings nothing to the equation, to our situation, to the problem other than what was inherited from Adam and what all humans inherit, thus, if just a prophet, He has nothing with which to remedy our terminal, sinful, condition.
 - This teaching leaves man hopeless – further it makes the problem of sin a defect in God, His wrath or anger and the plan of salvation based on some work of the worshipper, claiming the blood payment etc.
 - Finally, the idea of Jesus being only a prophet is based on misunderstanding God, His law, the nature of sin as being somehow a breaking of the rules, being in trouble with the one in charge, and thus needing to do something to God or change God. It fails to realize the

condition of humanity was changed when Adam sinned and needed fixing.

- Jesus is a created being, but Son of God
 - Again, we learn nothing about God's character other than His willingness to sacrifice one of His creatures to save Himself.
 - If this were true Jesus would not be the source of life, so He does not have life to give to those who are terminal in sin.
 - It makes God out to be arbitrary and legalistic as Jesus becomes nothing more than a legal payment to an offended God.
- Jesus is the divine offspring of God, second to God, but of the same substance and not created like other created beings.
 - Undermines God's character of love because teaches there was a time in eternity past in which there was a singularity, a single supreme being, with no other in existence, thus no object to love or sacrifice self for. Thus, the teaching that God is love and His character is constantly and always love is undermined.
 - Jesus becomes sacrificed to protect the Father – even though those who take this approach suggest it is a bigger sacrifice for a father to sacrifice their child than to sacrifice themselves.
 - But such a conclusion is predicated on the character of the father who is sacrificing his son. If God is love, then sacrificing his son would be harder than sacrificing himself. But, if God is the kind of being Satan alleges, i.e. selfish, then this would not be true. Many selfish parents sacrifice their children to protect themselves.
 - Thus, the sacrifice of a son, less than Himself, doesn't reveal whether the Father is love or not. It reveals the Son loves us, but we still don't know about the Father. Only, if the Son is fully God in all ways, can we accurately and confidently know God is love, for Jesus said, "If you've seen me you've seen the Father." Thus, we can know it was a great sacrifice for God to surrender His Son.
 - And because in this view the Son is less than God, we don't actually learn about God, we learn about the Son. But, when we accept Jesus is fully God, then we not only learn about the Son, we also learn about the Father and Jesus' words, "if you seen me you've seen the Father" have deeper meaning.
- Jesus was not born of a fallen human woman, but of a sinless human woman
 - First, how did Mary become sinless without Jesus? And who were her parents? From where did she get her sinless humanity? And if Mary could somehow obtain sinlessness without Jesus, then why not the rest of humanity, what was the reason for Jesus at all, if one could become sinless without Him?
 - Second, if this is true then we cannot be saved – why? Because, in this view, Jesus didn't partake of the human nature that needed to be cured, so whatever He did on earth did not procure a remedy for our situation.
 - This theory is based on accepting a false law construct, i.e. God's law is imposed, and that sin is breaking the rules and is offensive to God, so offensive that sin cannot exist in God's presence, so Mary had to be without sin in order to carry Jesus. And the problem is God is offended and God needs to be propitiated. This view denies that Christ came to cure the

human condition. This entire theory is based on accepting a lie about God's law.

- Jesus was not born of humanity, but merely appeared to do His mission at age 30
 - Again, this leaves us without remedy because Jesus, in this view, didn't partake of our condition and thus didn't overcome and cure it. He didn't develop throughout his life, by the exercise of His human brain, a perfect human character. So no remedy exists.
 - It is also based on the idea that God's law is imposed and what was needed was to reveal the truth about God and pay a legal penalty, but not actually cure the human condition by developing a perfect human character while being tempted in every way just like us, as the Scripture teaches.

So who is Jesus? God the Son who became human, and overcame sin as a human being, by the exercise of His human brain, developing a perfect humanity and eliminating from the humanity He partook, the infection of fear and selfishness. Thus Jesus is the Vine, the source, the conduit, through which God's perfect character of love flows back into the species human. All who trust Him receive His victory reproduced in them, such that "it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me." We actually get new desires, motives, longings, insights, and make new choices to live in harmony with God and His design of love!

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read Luke 7:17-22, let's read through vs. 23, here is from *The Remedy*:

After this, news about Jesus spread like wildfire throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

¹⁸John's students told him everything Jesus was doing. He called two of them ¹⁹and sent them to Jesus to ask, "Are you the one who God promised to send, or should we look for another?"

²⁰When the students came to Jesus, they said to him, "John the Baptist sent us to ask you, 'Are you the one who God promised to send, or should we look for another?'" ²¹As they stood watching, Jesus demonstrated God's methods; he cured many people of disease, infections, and mental oppression, and to those who were blind he gave sight. ²²Then he turned to John's students and said, "Go back and tell John what you have witnessed here. The blind see, the paralyzed walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Remedy is given freely to the poor." ²³Happy and healthy is person who doesn't reject me."

Why did John ask? What type of coming did the Jews expect? Was Jesus coming fulfilling their expectations? How did Jesus respond to John's question? He gave evidence – and what did His evidence reveal?

Level 1-4 – God has power and Jesus is from God because He has power.

Levels 5-7 – God not only has power, but God is love. He uses His power only to bless, to heal, to dispel evil, to cure. He gives of Himself for our good. God is compassionate, forgiving, gracious, trustworthy and His purpose is to restore this creation to a love relationship with Him, not establish authority in order

to rule in dominance like earthly governments.

What do people expect today about the second coming of Christ?

- Secret coming
- Vengeful coming with powerful destruction of enemies and infliction of punishment

Will Jesus come in either of these ways? Did people miss out on Jesus' first coming because they had false expectations? Is there risk of the same problem today?

What caused the people to have false expectations about His first coming?

They didn't understand God's law and character. They viewed God through the lens of human imposed laws and governments, and thought God's justice looked like our own. They therefore expected Him to come, use power and might to destroy His enemies and inflict punishment upon them.

What about today – do many good people misunderstand God and His law, and thus His character? Do many people believe God's law is no different in quality to sinful humans, imposed rules requiring external enforcement and thus it seems only just to them that God should come and inflict pain, suffering and death for disobedience?

This is Satan's goal, to set the world up to accept him as Jesus, and only those who have come back to the truth about God's character of love, and worship Him who is the Designer, the Creator and understand His law as Design law will recognize the fraud.

So what will Christ's coming be like?

- The protective hand of God, which has shielded sinful earth from the full reality of God and His universe is removed and earth is brought out of its shielded position and enters into the fullness of God's presence? And what happens? The righteous living are transformed, the righteous dead are raised to eternal life, and the wicked on earth are so overwhelmed with truth and love that their fearful and selfish minds can handle it and they shut down, go into sleep mode, awaiting resurrection at the end of the 1000 years.

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, "In Luke 1:31, 32... What throne did Lucifer want to usurp? Was it merely a piece of furniture?

Did Lucifer want to sit upon a particular chair? No, Lucifer wanted to enthrone himself in the minds of intelligent creatures as the one most loved, adored, worshipped, admired, and to whom beings were loyal.

Satan wanted to dethrone God, not from a chair or building, but from the hearts and minds of intelligent beings. And if this was his goal, what is the method to achieve this? To lie about God such that trust, love

and admiration of God is replaced with fear, selfishness and loathing of God.

Jesus would defeat Satan and this strategy – how? What method did Jesus use to defeat Satan?

Hebrews 2:14, “by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death that is the devil.”

How did Jesus destroy Satan and his power?

Here is a great historical quote that says it very nicely, understanding the war, as it says in 2Cor 10:3-5 is over the knowledge of God being fought out in the minds of intelligent beings:

"In the atonement the character of God is revealed....In the contest between Christ and Satan, during the Saviors earthly ministry, the character of the great deceiver was unmasked. Nothing could so effectually have uprooted Satan from the affections of the heavenly angels and the whole loyal universe as did his cruel warfare upon the worlds redeemer.GC.493.

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. **By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted.** Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. **The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken.** {DA 761.2}

What caused Satan's movements to be restricted? Was it some imposition of power on God's part, or the minds of heavenly beings closing to the influence of Satan?

What will it take to restrict Satan's influence on earth, the use of some imposition of power from God, or the minds of humans being so settled into the truth about God that they are closed to Satan's lies and influence?

What do you see happening in the world, is Satan's power being more and more restricted because minds are closing to his lies? Or, are more and more people accepting Satan's method of rulership, and teaching God is like Satan in character, a being who must inflict punishment? How many people believe justice is killing one's enemy? This is Satan's view of justice, not God's.

And what is happening in the world? People are being drawn more and more into a worldview in which they believe it is right and just to inflict pain, suffering and death on one's enemies.

Read fourth paragraph, “Yet, the relationship...” In His pre-incarnate state, Jesus did interact with the Father as equal. But, during His 33 years on earth, did Jesus maintain the close tie with the Father through His divinity?

Jesus was fully divine, but did He use His divinity to maintain the connection, or did He maintain His connection with the Father as a human being would, by faith and trust in the Father?

- Jesus said He did nothing on His own –
- He was tempted in all points like us, but divinity cannot be tempted, so this was His humanity being tempted.
- His humanity needed to exercise faith/trust in the Father, and exercise perfect decision making in that relationship with His Father, thus He maintained His connection with His Father with His human nature.
- He was tempted to use His divine power, but He never did, instead keeping His humanity connected by a faith/trust relationship with His Father

It is true He was always divine, and therefore was always still connected to the Father, but in some way we cannot fully understand, His human nature did not benefit from His own divine abilities or connection, but stayed connected to the Father as a human would. In fact, His divine nature caused His trials and ordeal on earth to be more severe. He was tempted to use divine powers we are never tempted to use – and the intensity of the breaking up of His relationship with the Father at Gethsemane and Calvary was infinitely more severe because of His connection with the Father than anything any human being will ever experience.

Here are a couple of historic quotes:

But He humbled Himself, and took mortality upon Him. As a member of the human family, He was mortal; but as a God, He was the fountain of life to the world. **He could, in His divine person, ever have withstood the advances of death**, and refused to come under its dominion; but **He voluntarily laid down His life**, that in so doing He might give life and bring immortality to light. **He bore the sins of the world, and endured the penalty, which rolled like a mountain upon His divine soul.** He yielded up His life a sacrifice, that man should not eternally die. **He died, not through being compelled to die, but by His own free will.** {FLB 46.7}

As a remedy for the terrible consequences into which selfishness led the human race, God gave His only begotten Son to die for mankind. How could He have given more? In this gift He gave Himself. "I and My Father are one," said Christ. By the gift of His Son, God has made it possible for man to **be redeemed and restored to oneness with Him.** "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." **Love is the great principle that actuates unfallen beings.** With amazement the angels behold the indifference that those who have light and knowledge manifest toward a world unsaved. **The heavenly host are filled with an intense desire to work through human agencies to restore in man the image of God.** They are ready and waiting to do this work. The combined power of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost is pledged to uplift man from his fallen state. Every attribute, every power of divinity has been placed at the command of those who unite with the Saviour in winning men to God. O, that all would appreciate the truth as it is in Jesus. O, that all would love God in return for the love wherewith He has loved them. {Worker's Bulletin, September 9, 1902 par. 4}

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “The humanity...” Why is it essential that Christ was fully God and fully man?

Read sixth paragraph, “Fourth, note how complete...” What do you think about His foreknowledge? Did Jesus have foreknowledge or only predictions and hopes, like any other human and then went on to fulfill His predictions. Like a ball player pointing to center field to hit a homerun, and then hits the home run to center field?

Does God have real foreknowledge or only educated guesses?

This issue, every time I discuss it, gets some real intense feedback from a few people. Let me put those people in the best light – those whom I have talked to who reject God has foreknowledge, do so because they want to protect God’s reputation as a being of love. In their view, they believe that if God knows our decisions before we make them, then we are not free, and if we are not free then there is no love. So, their motive is to present God as a being of supreme love.

I respect that, and most of the people who hold to Open Theism, would agree with us on many of the major points we teach, because they truly believe in a God who is love and gives us real freedom, just as we do.

As far as I can tell, thus far in my understanding, the divergence comes on the question of whether knowing the future causes the future, i.e. takes away freedom or not. If it were true, that to know the future would be a preprogramming of choices, in which we were all simply carrying out computer programmed operations from a supreme programmer, then I would also reject the idea of God’s foreknowledge. So to view foreknowledge like this would result in a need to reject the idea of foreknowledge.

However, I believe such a construct is extremely restrictive and is evidence of a finite mind trying to force an infinite God into a construct of its own devising.

In my understanding, foreknowledge does not equal causality. To foreknow something doesn’t cause the being making the decision to make that decision. But this is philosophical, we should look at evidence of history and Scripture to weigh in on our conclusions.

Since we are talking about Jesus we will look at His life today.

- Did Jesus know what Judas would do i.e. betray Him, before Judas betrayed Him? Did Jesus foretell it? Did Jesus cause Judas to betray Him or was Judas’ choice freely made?
 - Jesus own words: “I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: ‘He who shared my bread has turned against me.’ “I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am. Jn 13:18,19

- Does it sound like Jesus is guessing?
 - Does it sound like Jesus is acting like a fortune teller?
 - When Jesus revealed the future of Judas' actions, did Jesus make the decision for Judas? Or was Judas still free to make his own decision?
 - Did Jesus in fact try and reach Judas and convert him to loyalty?
- Here is an historic quote, "But **Judas did not come to the point of surrendering himself fully to Christ**. He did not give up his worldly ambition or his love of money. While he accepted the position of a minister of Christ, **he did not bring himself under the divine molding. He felt that he could retain his own judgment** and opinions, and he cultivated a disposition to criticize and accuse." {DA 716.4}
 - Does this sound like someone who Christ was controlling?
 - How could Jesus know what choices Judas would make unless He had foreknowledge? Or do we suggest Jesus was guessing?
- Did Jesus predict He would be crucified?
 - How did Jesus know they would crucify Him?
 - They had dragged him out to throw Him off a cliff at one point, they wanted to stone Him at another point.
 - They did stone Stephen without permission of the Romans, so how did Jesus know they would put Him on trial, turn Him over the Romans and crucify Him?
 - Could He actually know all these decisions so accurately without foreknowledge?
 - And did Jesus' foreknowledge cause them to do this?
- Did God (Jesus before incarnation) predict He would be crucified between two thieves and have his clothes gambled over?
 - How could He know this if He didn't know the choices men would make before they made them?
 - And was an angel there forcing the soldiers to put Jesus in the middle and then gamble over his clothing? Or were these choices made by those people?

There are multiple more examples that demonstrate God does know the future, but we are still free. It gives me confidence to trust a God who respects my choices, but isn't caught by surprise.

Here is another historic quote:

He that rules in the heavens is the one who sees the end from the beginning--the one before whom **the mysteries of the past and the future are alike outspread**, and who, beyond the woe and darkness and ruin that sin has wrought, beholds the accomplishment of His own purposes of love and blessing. Though "clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the foundation of His throne." Psalm 97:2, R.V. And this the inhabitants of the universe, both loyal and disloyal, will one day understand. "His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He." Deuteronomy 32:4. {PP 43.1}

WEDNESDAY

The lesson asks us to read Luke 9:18-27, this is from *The Remedy*:

¹⁸When Jesus was again alone with his interns, he asked them, "Who do the people say that I am?"

¹⁹"Some say you are John the Baptist;" they told him, "others say you are Elijah who went to heaven in a chariot of fire. Still others say you are one of God's old time spokespersons who has risen from the dead."

²⁰"What do you think? Who do you say I am?" Jesus asked them. Peter immediately blurted out, "The Messiah, the Savior of all humanity sent from God."

²¹Jesus gave them strict warning not to tell this to anyone else at this time.²²Then he told them what would transpire. "The Son of Man must bear the hostility, abuse, mistreatment, and rejection of the church leaders, elders, chief priests, theologians who teach a legal religion, and then be killed, and on the third day raised back to life."

²³Then Jesus said to them all, "If anyone wants to follow me into unity with my Father, he must surrender his life, willingly choose to die to selfishness and follow me in love."²⁴Whoever follows the survival-of-the-fittest instinct and seeks to save his or her life will lose it because the infection of selfishness will not be eliminated, but whoever loses his life in love for me will find eternal life for he or she will have been restored back to God's design for life, selfless other-centered love.²⁵What good does it do to selfishly hoard all the treasures of the world only to die eternally, consumed by selfishness?²⁶If anyone is ashamed of me and my methods of truth and love, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him or her, ashamed they are not healed and able to live in his presence when he comes in his unveiled splendor and in the fullness of his Father's glory with his holy angels.²⁷I tell you the plain truth; some of you right here will not sleep in death before you see the Son of Man glorified in his kingdom of love."

THURSDAY

The Transfiguration – what was its purpose? Why do you think Moses and Elijah were sent to speak with Jesus? Who did they represent?

It is the second coming, the glorification of Christ in miniature, Moses represents the saved raised from the dead, and Elijah those translated without seeing death, and Christ glorified.

What might they have spoken about? Here is a description from the book *The Desire of Ages*:

Bearing the weakness of humanity, and burdened with its sorrow and sin, Jesus walked alone in the midst of men. As the darkness of the coming trial pressed upon Him, He was in loneliness of spirit, in a world that knew Him not. Even His loved disciples, absorbed in their own doubt and sorrow and ambitious hopes, had not comprehended the mystery of His mission. He had dwelt amid the love and fellowship of heaven; but in the world that He had created, He was in solitude. **Now heaven had sent its messengers to Jesus; not angels, but men who had endured suffering**

and sorrow, and who could sympathize with the Saviour in the trial of His earthly life. Moses and Elijah had been colaborers with Christ. They had shared His longing for the salvation of men... Elijah had known loneliness of spirit, as for three years and a half of famine he had borne the burden of the nation's hatred and its woe. Alone he had stood for God upon Mount Carmel. Alone he had fled to the desert in anguish and despair. These men, chosen above every angel around the throne, had come to commune with Jesus concerning the scenes of His suffering, and to comfort Him with the assurance of the sympathy of heaven. The hope of the world, the salvation of every human being, was the burden of their interview. {DA 425}

Do you think they also mentioned, how they had stumbled, but had confidence Jesus would succeed?

Bottom pink section, states, “Thus, even Jesus Himself, who had comforted so many others, sought solace and comfort for Himself. What should that tell us about how even the strongest spiritually among us, even our leaders, teachers, and guides, can at times need solace, encouragement, and help from others?”

How many fear seeking comfort, solace, encouragement? Should we?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 2, 3

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase is now available on our website, and the app for android devices is in the Google play store. The IOS version will be available shortly.

- This is a **FREE** app
- Please read the preface to understand the approach to this paraphrase
- We have cards available to share with others and will ship them at no cost
- Also, if you find typos please email those to us so we can fix any missed typos

CARDS – If you have any of our ministry business cards please check to see if they have our current address: PO Box 28266 Chattanooga, TN 37424. If they are the old ones please discard them. We will be happy to send new ones, just email us. Thanks!

Opportunity to Share:

The General Conference of SDA will have its meeting (which occurs every five years) in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. 50,000-70,000 Adventist from all over the world are expected to attend. This presents an opportunity to share this healing message about God in a most impactful way.

We plan on giving away our DVDs, Dr. Jennings’ Book *Could It Be This Simple?* and other materials. This will be an enormous project. If you would like to share in this opportunity, you can do so by making donations to *Come and Reason Ministries* either via Paypal, or check mailed to our address below.

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And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

April 23, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Faith and Mental Health Board in Goshen Indiana.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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2nd Quarter 2015 Lesson 4 – The Call to Discipleship

SABBATH

“Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me’ ” (Luke 9:23, NKJV).

I like the definition of Disciple = Pupil, from the lesson. Since Christ is the source of infinite knowledge, we will always be learning [see the 1st Commandment].

“God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, will quicken all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfill the requirements of God. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual devotion establishes so close a relation between Jesus and His disciple that the Christian becomes like Him in mind and character.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 251.

It’s reassuring that God “takes men as they are, ...” It’s clear that we need to be teachable to be true disciples.

SUNDAY

Fishers of Men

What can we learn from the miracle of Luke 5: 1-11?

1. Nature obeys it’s Creator.
2. When God gives, He gives abundantly.
3. We need to be willing to follow, even if we don’t know the outcome.
4. We may be called to give up what we have become accustomed to.
5. We see the presentation of Truth [Christ’s teaching from the boat], the application of His Truth [“nevertheless, at Your word.”], evidence of Trustworthiness [boatloads of fish], recognition of God’s Holiness / our sickness [“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.”], the beginnings of the eradication of fear/selfishness [“Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.”], and strengthened faith / works [leaving the boats / catch and following Jesus].
6. Anything else?

I like the lessons observation in the bottom section about Peter’s sinfulness prompting him to want to be separated from Jesus. It wasn’t “The Lamb’s” wrath wanting Peter gone, was it? “What is it about sin ... that pushes us away from God?” Thoughts? Which Law lens are we looking through?

MONDAY

Selection of the Twelve



Why twelve apostles? Why were none of them “church leaders”? What were their names?

When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. Luke 6: 13-16.

I forgot there were 2 Judases. Also, interesting that He included a “Zealot” in the bunch.

Is there a significance in the number 12? 12 months, 12 hours AM/PM, 12 sons of Jacob [including Joseph’s Ephraim and Manasseh] leading to the 12 tribes of Israel, Christ was 12 years old when he is first recorded as speaking [teaching the church leaders], Rev 12:1 mentions a woman [symbolic Bride of Christ] wearing a crown of 12 stars, and the 144,00 [12 X 12 X 1,000], 12 layers of the Holy City’s foundation, 12 gates in to the Holy City, the City, itself, being a 12, 000 furlong [1500 miles] cube. Any other 12’s you can think of?

What is common to the twelve apostles? What is different about them?

TUESDAY

Commissioning of the Apostles

What insights can we glean from Christ giving the 12 power and authority to cast out all demons, and to cure disease? To proclaim the Kingdom of God, and heal the sick? Why take nothing with them, save the clothes on their backs? Why stay only in one house?

This is a wonderful EGW quote from the lesson:

“As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings.”—
Ellen G. White, Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 333.

All His biddings are enablings. Does this give us any additional insights on the Ten Commandments?

They were to preach “the Kingdom of God” and its nearness. What is the Kingdom of God that they were to preach? Is it sensible that this was done in concert with the healing of the sick?

WEDNESDAY

Sending the Seventy

Luke Ch. 10 states that Christ prepared seventy-two to precede Him to the towns He was to travel. Was this just good marketing or something else? Why not greet anyone on the road? Note in v. 16: “Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me.”



Also, in v. 18: “I saw Satan fall like lightning from Heaven.” Why did Jesus use this simile? Was He talking about a past or future event? or both?

The lesson makes an excellent point in the last part of the 2nd paragraph:

“But what is important is that Jesus, as a trainer of leaders for the church, has left a strategy not to concentrate power and responsibility in a few but to spread it across the spectrum of disciples.”

Has Protestant Christianity followed this model, or have we followed the Imperial Roman model?

The lesson asks a great question in the bottom section. “What are some of the things that we have seen that prophets and kings wanted to see, but didn’t?”

THURSDAY

The Cost of Discipleship

Here’s another EGW quote from PP 599, 600 [emphasis supplied]:

All things in nature testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God and to His desire to make His children happy. His prohibitions and injunctions are not intended merely to display His authority, but in all that He does He has the well-being of His children in view. He does not require them to give up anything that it would be for their best interest to retain.

Note that God does not arbitrarily “just throw His weight around”. Does this give us some better perspective and understanding on the Ten Commandments? Especially the 4th one?

If God does not require us to give up anything beneficial, then what is the real cost of discipleship?

From Friday’s Lesson:

“Lifting the cross cuts away self from the soul, and places man where he learns how to bear Christ’s burdens. We cannot follow Christ without wearing His yoke, without lifting the cross and bearing it after Him. If our will is not in accord with the divine requirements, we are to deny our inclinations, give up our darling desires, and step in Christ’s footsteps.”—Ellen G. White, *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 69.

Look at Luke 9: 23-27.

23 Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. 25 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? 26 Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. 27 “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.”

What does He mean “take up their cross daily and follow me”? How do we lose our life if we want to save it, and save it if we lose it for Him? Also, what did He mean by “..., some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Kingdom of God.” ?

The Book of Luke 2Q 2015 Lesson 3

Christ as the Lord of the Sabbath

I received this email recently:

First and foremost, thank you for The Remedy Bible, understanding made easy.

I have been following your classes since 2009 and been most blessed person. I have tremendously grown from glory to glory as I have learnt not to reflect attitudes of other men, and have learnt the art of being fully persuaded in my own mind before I can adapt or pass on anything to the next person.

I have been appointed to lead a Sabbath School Teachers' lesson whereby I would facilitate among Sabbath school teachers! I normally contribute from the terraces so to speak, so this appointment most probably was a result of the quality of discussions I contribute -they are REASONABLE and integrated - scripture, science and experience. My first reaction was to decline as I knew I would be at tangent between the long held fables and tradition as standard belief with my view premised on a God who designed the universe according to His design template of natural law. However, I overcame fear and it is during the Sabbath School lessons that I have the opportunity to share the good news about God. I ask for prayers to be able to witness for God without fear of rejection.

If you will note too, that the Lesson 12 of the quarter on Proverbs used your book as resource material, I feel so so encouraged that we are indeed unmasking the devil.

May God continue to bless you, and I know one day God will allow an opportunity to open a Theology University, may I be amongst the first to enroll at your bible school. I actually encourage you to, as this will be a sure way to undo what has been held for 500 years about God. I am 50 years and with the way you share the truth about God, feel I have a brand new mind that can easily process anything in that regard.

Thank you once more Dr. Jennings.

SABBATH

Read memory text – Mark 2:27,28, from *The Remedy*:

After a moment to let them think he said, "The Sabbath was created as a gift for humanity, to be a blessing for human beings. Human beings were not created as a gift for the Sabbath.²⁸ Understand this clearly, the Son of Man doesn't serve the Sabbath, it serves him."

What does it mean the Sabbath was made for man? How is the Sabbath for man?

Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy – which day of the week has more “worldly” activity, partying, etc.? Could it be Friday night and Sabbath? Does all the wickedness done by humans make the Sabbath

less holy?

Can anything you do make the Sabbath less holy? Then what does it mean to keep the Sabbath holy? Are we keeping the Sabbath holy, or are we keeping ourselves holy?

And, can you keep yourself holy only one day a week? Or, to be holy one must be holy every day of the week?

Read second paragraph Friday's lesson:

No other institution which was committed to the Jews tended so fully to distinguish them from surrounding nations as did the Sabbath. God designed that its observance should designate them as His worshipers. It was to be a token of their separation from idolatry, and their connection with the true God. **But in order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy.** Through faith they must become partakers of the righteousness of Christ. DA 283

So, then what is the purpose of the Sabbath and what does it mean to “keep it holy”?

What does it mean to be holy?

“It is not enough for us to know and respect the words of the Scriptures. We must enter into the **understanding of them**, studying them earnestly. . . . Christians will reveal the degree to which they do this by the healthiness of their **spiritual character**. We must know the **practical application of the Word to our own individual character-building**. **We are to be holy temples, in which God can live and walk and work.**” {LHU 105.5}

“**Holiness is not rapture: it is an entire surrender of the will to God**; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; **it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting God in trial**, in darkness as well as in the light; it is walking by faith and not by sight; **it is relying on God with unquestioning confidence, and resting in His love.**” {AA 51.2}

“**True holiness is wholeness in the service of God.** This is the condition of true Christian living. Christ asks for an unreserved consecration, for undivided service. **He demands the heart, the mind, the soul, the strength...**

Why does Christ demand this? Because it is His right? Because He has paid the price? Because He is Creator? Because He is Sovereign? No, He demands this because He is the source of life, health, happiness, and only in a surrendered relationship with Him can we have life and health and happiness. It is for our good, not His need. Anything else and we cut ourselves off from life.

“... Self is not to be cherished. **He who lives to himself is not a Christian.**

“Love must be the principle of action. Love is the underlying principle of God's government in heaven and earth, and it must be the foundation of the Christian's character. This alone can make and keep him steadfast. This alone can enable him to withstand trial and temptation...”

“This is the religion of Christ. Anything short of it is a deception. **No mere theory of truth or profession of discipleship will save any soul** [Jennings - no mere legal accounting]. We do not belong to Christ unless we are His wholly. It is by halfheartedness in the Christian life that men become feeble in purpose and changeable in desire. The effort to serve both self and Christ makes one a stony-ground hearer, and he will not endure when the test comes upon him.” {COL 48-50}

Read second paragraph, “Indeed, ‘Christ, during... What are the “binding claims of the Sabbath”?”

What does this mean? How do you hear it? Does it mean some legal restriction? Some legal command, and if you break the legal command to cease and desist you will be punished?

Which law lens do you understand the “binding claims of the Sabbath” through? Do you view it through human law, impose rules requiring external enforcement, or Design Law, protocols upon which reality functions?

If we think Design Law what does “binding claims” mean?

What does the word claim mean? An assertion of fact – what fact does the Sabbath assert?

- God is Creator
- God's law is Design Law
- God's methods are Truth presented in Love leaving us Free
- The Sabbath claims God does not impose rules and threaten us with imposed punishments. That God presents evidence in love, and leaves us free and this wins us to loyalty to Him.

What does binding mean?

- Anyone ski or snowboard? What are the fasteners that fasten the boots to the ski or board called? Bindings – and what is their function? To hold or bind the ski and boot together
- What are the “binding” claims of the Sabbath?
- The truths about God, evidenced by the Sabbath, His character of truth, love and freedom, embodied in its creation, that when understood and recognized, “bind” us to Him.
- Thus, the Sabbath is a sign that God sanctifies, or heals and restores us to righteousness. How?
- Lies believed break the circle of love and trust –
- Truth believed destroys lies and wins to trust, and in trust we open the heart to receive the HS who heals and restores us in righteousness
- The Sabbath, when rightly understood, claims God is a God of love, truth and freedom, these claims when realized and internalized into the heart as reality bind in love and trust to God and result in our opening the heart and being sanctified or renewed by His Spirit.

Thus, in the quote, the author noted, that the Jews perverted the Sabbath so that the character of God was obstructed by their rules and restrictions.

Presenting the Sabbath as a legal requirement, filled with legal restrictions, an arbitrary test of obedience, one distorts the claims of the Sabbath and presents the Sabbath to claim God is a dictator and thus the Sabbath becomes a tool to harden hearts and turn people away from God.

The true claims of the Sabbath is that God is love who presents truth in love leaving us free; those who accept these claims find their hearts bound to God in loyalty, trust and love.

But, those who reject these claims, and instead teach God's law is not Design Law upon which creation operates, but are imposed rules like created beings make, distort God's character to be like fallen human beings, regardless of which day they go to church, and thus are not Sabbath keepers. They would be like the Jews who crucified Christ and wanted Him off the cross in time to observe the right day of the week.

Here is an historic quote from one of the founders of the SDA church:

"In presenting the binding claims of the law, many have failed to portray the infinite love of Christ. Those who have so great truths, so weighty reforms to present to the people, have not had a realization of the value of the **atonement Sacrifice as an expression of God's great love to man. Love for Jesus, and Jesus' love for sinners,** have been dropped out of the religious experience of those who have been commissioned to preach the gospel, and self has been exalted instead of the Redeemer of mankind. The **law** is to be presented to its transgressors, **not as something apart from God, but rather as an exponent of His mind and character. As the sunlight cannot be separated from the sun, so God's law cannot be rightly presented to man apart from the divine Author...**

Which is closer to the sun/sunlight analogy, Imposed law – God making up rules, or Design law, God creating reality to operate in harmony with Him and He is the constant source of life energy that sustains it all? So when we present imposed law constructs we separate the law from God's character of love.

"The messenger should be able to say, **"In the law is God's will;** come, see for yourselves that the law is what Paul declared it to be--'holy, and just, and good.' "It reproves sin, it condemns the sinner, but it shows him his need of Christ, with whom is plenteous mercy and goodness and truth. **Though the law cannot remit the penalty for sin,** but charges the sinner with all his debt, Christ has promised abundant pardon to all who repent, and believe in His mercy...

Why can the law not remit the penalty of sin? Why can the law of health not remit the penalty of drinking poison? What can remit the penalty of drinking poison? What does charge the sinner with all his debt mean? It means diagnosis him accurately with all his defectiveness and deviations from God's design. And the abundant pardon, what does it mean? It is to those who repent, they receive transformation and renewal to be restored to God's design, thus the cancer of sin remits, the character remits back to God's original intent.

“...The love of God is extended in abundance to the repenting, believing soul. The brand of sin upon the soul can be effaced only through the blood of the atoning Sacrifice...”

What does this mean? The love of God is poured out upon those who turn to God in trust. Sin marred or branded the character of humanity to look like Satan, selfish and fearful. The blood is metaphor for the life, and only Christ destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness and perfectly restored God’s character into the human species, thus only through Christ’s life, of which we are privileged to partake by trust, do we experience rebirth, with new heart motives of love and trust.

“... No less an offering was required than the sacrifice of Him who was equal with the Father. The work of Christ--His life, humiliation, death, and intercession for lost man--magnifies the law, and makes it honorable.” {1SM 371.1}

What binds us to God? Love and the law rightly understood is an expression of God’s love, and is the protocol upon which all life is built

SUNDAY

The lesson points out that it was Jesus’ custom to go to the synagogue on Sabbath – why?

Was Jesus going to the synagogue on Sabbath because the law required going to the synagogue on Sabbath?

Why did He go? Where would He find those whom He came to save on Sabbath? At the synagogues, thus He went to reach them with the truth. If they were having an outdoor revival meeting on Sabbath, and the synagogue was closed, would Jesus have gone to the synagogue and sat by Himself on Sabbath?

Sabbath “observance” is not about being at a particular physical location, but having a particular heart and mindset with God. And in that heart and mindset carrying out and fulfilling God’s purpose for your life, every day of the week, including on the Sabbath day.

The lesson asks, “Why should we make it our custom to go to church on the Sabbath, as Jesus went to the synagogue on the Sabbath?”

Does it matter to which church one is going?

- Are there places in the world where there are no churches to attend?
- Are there churches in the world that are so unhealthy it would be damaging to attend? Didn’t Christ tell His apostles that in some circumstances shake the dust off your feet and leave?
- I say this because church attendance should not be from level four and below, rules that we must keep and if we don’t go to church on Sabbath we are sinning.
- But, assuming there is a church to attend, and that church is not a destructive place to be, why

attend church on Sabbath?

- To fellowship together
- To encourage others and be encouraged by others
- To learn from each other
- To minister to others
- To share together the love of God
- To celebrate God with people who love Him and appreciate Him as you do
- To coordinate and work together for ministry and mission
- To pool resources to sharing the gospel message
- other reasons?

What would be a immature, childish reason to attend church on Sabbath? Because God commanded us to be here... this is like your adult child telling their friends they brush their teeth because mommy commands it.

Read bottom pink section, “Those who accuse...” I have many patients who are burned out and exhausted. They work full time and have families and home responsibilities. They go to church on Sunday morning, but as soon as church is over they are busy with the problems of life again, laundry, housecleaning, yard work etc. And the thought of taking one day in seven off, results in guilt, feeling as if they are not fulfilling their duties. Understanding the truth about the Sabbath, that it is a gift for mankind, that it provides an oasis in time to come away from responsibilities, work without guilt for leaving other duties undone, and immerse oneself in the larger reality of God, His kingdom of love and community.

MONDAY

The first paragraph points out one of the main reasons it was important for people to attend synagogue was that it was a place to hear God’s Word. And this doesn’t mean hear a sermon; it means to actually hear the Scripture read. People didn’t have Bibles in their own possession, so going to synagogue was essential to be able to hear the Word of God read each week.

Read Luke 4:18-21

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

What does it mean? What did Christ come to do? Christ’s mission was to:

- Reveal the truth about God to those poor in spiritual wisdom and understanding –
 - Why was this needed? And what is this revelation supposed to accomplish?
- Bring freedom to those in bondage
 - From what bondage was Jesus coming to free them?
 - Fear of death Heb 2:14
 - Lies about God (Jn 8:32)
 - Their own carnal nature (1Jn 4:8)
- Provide insight, wisdom and discernment to those in the darkness of superstition and legal views of God
 - Was this needed?
 - What is the problem with viewing God through legal lenses?
- Free those oppressed by sin
 - How does sin oppress today and how does Jesus free?
 - Disease – freed through ultimate restoration at the second coming, and sometimes physical healing here, but comfort while suffering here.
 - Abuse – healing of heart and mind, the gift of forgiveness – how is being able to forgive those who do us wrong a gift to us?
 - Freedom from guilt and shame – how? By partaking of Christ and experiencing a new heart and right spirit, repentance and rebirth
 - Others?

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “On this single...” What gave Jesus’ teaching authority?

- Was it the weight of his office?
- Was it the charisma of His voice and personality?
- Was it the grandeur of His appearance?
- Was it His personal testimony?

What gave His teaching authority?

It was the authority of truth itself, that He presented the truth of Scripture evidenced in nature and tied to real life experiences, so that all could see how reality actually works. His words made sense and actually worked in the real world.

He didn’t teach fable and superstition and religious dogma based only on tradition or human interpretations.

Here is an historic quote:

“The King of glory stooped low to take humanity. Rude and forbidding were His earthly surroundings. **His glory was veiled**, that the majesty of His outward form might not become an object of attraction. **He shunned all outward display**. Riches, worldly honor, and human

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

Do we present truth in ways that makes sense and actually works in the real world?

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “While walking through a field...” At what level were the Pharisees operating? Level four and below, law and order, legal religion, imposed law constructs.

At what level was Christ operating? Design law, God’s design for His creation, thus it was better to provide what was necessary for human health and welfare, than to keep a rule which injured God’s Spirit Temple.

The Pharisees, would rather keep a rule in order to honor the little theater, the object lesson, the shadow, the stage play, the physical building built out of inanimate material, but Jesus pointed out that these are just shadows of a larger reality and David did not sin by taking the bread used in the play only by priests, and using it to provide sustenance to the true temple of God.

Are there any examples today where people get confused between metaphor, stage play, simile, analogy, parable, and reality and are injured by staying stuck in the metaphor?

- Viewing God’s Sovereignty through human authority models
 - Sees God imposing, rather than God ruling through His character of love.
 - Romans 9 – Paul makes the point God has mercy on who He has mercy... The point, the Jews were jealous that Gentiles were being included in salvation and Paul argues, who are you to argue with God’s Sovereignty, God’s way is the way of love, inclusion, healing.
 - But, some view these passages through human authority models and view God as imposing and predetermining some for salvation and some for damnation – in other words interpret it as God being restrictive.
- Viewing Jesus’ victory at the cross through legal metaphor
- Thinking there is some power to cleanse from sin in religious ritual, whether baptism, communion, or foot washing.
- Thinking the “name” of Jesus means the syllables used when speaking rather than the character of God – thus think if they put a tagline at the end of a prayer, “in Jesus name” they have prayed in Jesus name.
- Others?

Read last paragraph, “Although all the...” Why is it “lawful” to do good on the Sabbath? Because good is love and the Sabbath is the evidence of God’s character of love, so living in harmony with the law of love is how life is constructed to operate and to which the Sabbath is evidence.

The problem with legal Sabbath keeping is that it moves the focus away from love for God and others, to self. “Am I breaking the Sabbath? Am I sinning? Am I doing what I am supposed to do? Am I... Am I... Am I?”

True Sabbath keeping doesn't focus on self, it focuses on God and others, seeking to celebrate God and be a blessing to our fellow human beings.

Read bottom pink question, “Think how...” What can we do to ensure we don't fall into the same trap?

- Move away from imposed law construct to design law, thinking how things are designed by God to actually work and living in harmony with God and His design.

THURSDAY

Why did Jesus heal on the Sabbath over and over again? Were His healings on Sabbath emergency cases? Could they have waited until after the Sabbath? Why would He cure chronic medical conditions on Sabbath?

From the book *The Desire of Ages*:

“Jesus had come to “magnify the law, and make it honorable...” He had come to **free the Sabbath from those burdensome requirements that had made it a curse instead of a blessing.**

“**For this reason He had chosen the Sabbath upon which to perform the act of healing at Bethesda.** He could have healed the sick man as well on any other day of the week; or He might simply have cured him, without bidding him bear away his bed. **But this would not have given Him the opportunity He desired.** A wise purpose underlay every act of Christ's life on earth. Everything He did was important in itself and in its teaching. Among the afflicted ones at the pool He selected the worst case upon whom to exercise His healing power, and bade the man carry his bed through the city in order to publish the great work that had been wrought upon him. This would raise the question of what it was lawful to do on the Sabbath, and would open the way for Him **to denounce the restrictions of the Jews** in regard to the Lord's day, and to declare their traditions void.

“**Jesus stated to them that the work of relieving the afflicted was in harmony with the Sabbath law.** It was in harmony with the work of God's angels, who are ever descending and ascending between heaven and earth to minister to suffering humanity...”

“Should God forbid the sun to perform its office upon the Sabbath, cut off its genial rays from warming the earth and nourishing vegetation? Must the system of worlds stand still through that holy day? Should He command the brooks to stay from watering the fields and forests, and bid the waves of the sea still their ceaseless ebbing and flowing? Must the wheat and corn stop growing,

and the ripening cluster defer its purple bloom? Must the trees and flowers put forth no bud nor blossom on the Sabbath?

“In such a case, men would miss the fruits of the earth, and the blessings that make life desirable. Nature must continue her unvarying course. God could not for a moment stay His hand, or man would faint and die. **And man also has a work to perform on this day. The necessities of life must be attended to, the sick must be cared for, the wants of the needy must be supplied. He will not be held guiltless who neglects to relieve suffering on the Sabbath.** God's holy rest day was made for man, and acts of mercy are in perfect harmony with its intent. **God does not desire His creatures to suffer an hour's pain that may be relieved upon the Sabbath or any other day.** {DA 206 - 207}

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 1 – who are deceived about God's law? How about those who wanted Christ off the cross so they could keep the Sabbath? Are there people today who might know which day of the week is the Sabbath of the Bible, avoid work and go to church on that day, but are still deceived about the Sabbath? How so? By believing it is an arbitrary test, in an imposed law construct by a dictator God who must inflict punishment for disobedience!

Read and discuss question 2 – it is evidence that Satan lied, and reveals the truth about God's character of truth, love and freedom.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase is now available on our website, and the app for android devices is in the Google play store. The IOS version will be available shortly; It was submitted SUNDAY for review by APPLE, so any day!

- This is a **FREE** app
- Please read the preface to understand the approach to this paraphrase
- We have cards available to share with others and will ship them at no cost
- Also, if you find typos please email those to us so we can fix any missed typos

CARDS – If you have any of our ministry business cards please check to see if they have our current address: PO Box 28266 Chattanooga, TN 37424. If they are the old ones please discard them. We will be happy to send new ones, just email us. Thanks!

Opportunity to Share:

The General Conference of SDA will have its meeting (which occurs every five years) in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. 50,000-70,000 Adventist from all over the world are expected to attend. This presents an opportunity to share this healing message about God in a most impactful way.

We plan on giving away our DVDs, Dr. Jennings’ Book *Could It Be This Simple?* and other materials. This will be an enormous project. If you would like to share in this opportunity, you can do so by making donations to *Come and Reason Ministries* either via Paypal, or check mailed to our address below.

New Mailing Address: PLEASE UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS BOOK:

Come and Reason Ministries
PO Box 28266
Chattanooga, TN 37424

The Journal of the Watcher: *The Journal of the Watcher* is an illustrated ebook available

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Come and Reason Ministries FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

April 23, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Faith and Mental Health Board in Goshen Indiana.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May 17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support a charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered Charity. So, you can select us, and whenever you shop in their smile.amazon.com site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called “Come Reason Ministries” and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN.**

The Book of Luke 2Q 2015 Lesson 6

Women in the Ministry of Jesus

I received this email recently:

I write this to you from The Netherlands. My wife and I watch your ministries every Friday (one day before Sabbath). I got to know you through my wife. I met my wife in The Netherlands in the summer of 2013. She is an American. We fell in love and married last year in Houston, Texas. For the first time in my life, I gave my whole heart to a woman and decided to drop myself in to the unknown.

When I met my wife, I was an atheist. As a man of science I could not believe in metaphysics. I considered people who believed in God, as morons who did not have enough education to understand the world and those who believed in God were afraid of life. You have to understand Dr. Jennings: I have written a book where I even advocate being an atheist.

Meeting the love of your love changes a man. How could it be, that at that moment in time in The Hague that we could meet and fall in love? Does coincidence exist? Leap of faith?

Couple of days after we met, we were walking in The Hague and I am not quite sure, but religion became a topic. I said to her: " religion is an opium for the people to stay stupid". At that moment, I didn't know she was Seventh day Adventist. She responded: " well, I don't agree with you because I have felt that God exists...

I started to get interested. Not because I didn't know what is written in the Bible or anything else. No, I started to get interested because here she was: an intelligent lady, who had an academic background that believed in God.

After that, she went back to US and through modern technology (Skype and Whatsapp), we kept in touch and my love for her grew every day. She went to church and because time difference, I had to stay up bit late, otherwise, I wouldn't talk or see her. She told me every week about the topic of the church.

Well, to keep the story short, I got baptized in the church and got married with the love of my life. I did that at first because the parents of my wife did not want her to marry a guy who wasn't a Seventh day Adventist. So, I did that, because I loved her and there isn't a thing I wouldn't do for her.

Since summer last year, we watch your ministries in The Netherlands. My wife really respects you a lot! At first I didn't like watching your ministries, to be honest. But after a while, I understood what Christianity is. Your words corresponded with my brain. I went from an atheist to a Seventh day Adventist. For that, I am grateful. The process of how and why is to long to write. I could write a book about this! We will keep watching you and perhaps we see you on

YouTube talking about this email.

SABBATH

Read memory text, Galatians 3:26-28: “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus... There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

What does this text mean?

Paul cites three major divisions of society, three areas that in his day caused division, discrimination, and conflict. Do you notice anything about these three divisions? They are representative of all types of divisions:

- Slave and Free – are divisions caused by the choices of sinful human beings to act in selfishness
- Jew and Greek – are the divisions caused by sin affecting nature and the changes over time of genetic expression and language evolution, i.e. the changes in race and culture
- Male and Female – are the divisions created by God into the creation to start with, which were intended for mutual benefit, but which have been exploited because of sin. In the beginning there were two, but the two were to be one. This unity of the two, male/female was broken by sin, but in Christ is to be restored.

Other examples of divisions that impact humanity and in which category to they fall?

- Religious division – manmade (slave and free category)
- Age divisions – manmade biases to a biological reality
- Political division – manmade
- Sports team division – manmade
- National division – manmade
- Sexual identity division – mixed category, some manmade as Paul speaks about in Romans, others a result of sin damaging God’s creation with genetic and biological defects.

What causes conflictual division? Fear and selfishness, which results from what? Believing lies about God that break the circle of love and trust. We see others, with differences, not as individuals to celebrate, love and promote, but as competition, threats, and objects to either own, control, exploit, or destroy.

When people don’t fit our mold we, rather than re-examining our beliefs and views to see if they are in harmony with God’s design, too often seek to find fault in what is different, devaluing others.

For instance:

In 1851, Samuel A. Cartwright, a Louisiana surgeon and psychologist, published a report in the *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* on what he deemed to be common diseases among black people in the South.¹ One of them was drapetomania, described as “the disease

causing slaves to run away.”

During the Civil Rights Movement, some doctors began diagnosing Black-Americans in the South who were advocating for civil rights with a subtype of schizophrenia, characterized as having a desire to advocate for their rights.²

Not to be outdone, after several racial killings, a group of Black psychiatrists sought to classify extreme bigotry as a mental disorder.³

1. Cartwright S. Report of the diseases and peculiarities of the Negro Race. *New Orleans Med Surg J.* 1851;691-715.
2. Metzl JM. *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease.* Boston: Beacon Press; 2011.
3. Bell C. Racism: a mental illness? *Psychiatr Serv.* 2004;55:1343.

But, back to the issue of women in society:

Are women morally equal to men? Are they treated equally in societies around the world?

- Until the 20th century, U.S. and English law observed the system of coverture, where "by marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law; that is the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage". (Blackstone, William. "Extracts from William Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England 1765-1769". Archived from the original on 5 October 2008. Retrieved 15 March 2015.)
- U.S. women were not legally defined as "persons" until 1875 (*Minor v. Happersett*, 88 U.S. 162). ("Legacy '98: Detailed Timeline". Legacy98.org. 2001-09-19. Retrieved 2010-11-20.)
- French married women obtained the right to work without their husband's permission in 1965, and in West Germany women obtained this right in 1977. During the Franco era, in Spain, a married woman required her husband's consent (called *permiso marital*) for employment, ownership of property and traveling away from home; the *permiso marital* was abolished in 1975.
- Women in parts of the world continue to lose legal rights at marriage. For example, Yemeni marriage regulations state that a wife must obey her husband and must not leave home without his permission.
- In Iraq, the law allows husbands to legally "punish" their wives.
- In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Family Code states that the husband is the head of the household; the wife owes her obedience to her husband; a wife has to live with her husband wherever he chooses to live; and wives must have their husbands' authorization to bring a case in court or to initiate other legal proceedings.
- In Afghanistan, a wife who leaves her marital home risks being imprisoned for "running away".

Do you think women were treated better in Christ's day?

A common prayer of Jewish men was “Blessed are you, Lord, our God, ruler of the universe who has not created me a woman.”

Why do you think men prayed thanks that they were not created a woman? Was it because they recognized how hard the lives of women were/are? How unfair the lives of women were/are?

What do you think it means that they didn’t pray, “Blessed are you, Lord, our God, ruler of the universe, help me bless and improve the lives of women.”?

Do you think it means that they thought the way women were treated was in harmony with God’s will? How could they think this? By viewing God’s law as imposed and God as a dictator, this is why God got blamed for so much in OT times and even today.

- The sovereignty of God is misconstrued through imposed law lenses to be God imposing outcomes and causes events
- So, people think if a person dies in an accident “God took them” or “What sin did they have that God didn’t protect them?”
- If a person gets a disease of sickness, “God is punishing them for some sin.”
- If a natural disaster happens, “God is punishing”
- When the prophet Micaiah spoke to Ahab he told the king that the false prophets were lying to him. (1Kings 22) But how? By telling him that God sent lying spirits into the mouth of the other prophets. Why did he say it this way? Because King Ahab viewed God as in control and causing events, causing outcomes.
- Any examples today?

What about the treatment of women today? Are women treated as equals in the church today?

Should we have women pastors? What about a female president of the local conference, union, division or General Conference?

Does God discriminate based on gender?

What is the only true, reliable, valid point of discrimination of people in general? Harmony or disharmony with God and His law of love! It is about character, not gender.

This is what Paul is saying in our memory text, when we are united in Christ, partaking of the divine nature, we have new hearts, selfishness is replaced by love and we live in unity with God and each other.

But selfishness in the heart causes damaging division, including religious division and division in the church, but argued on the basis of righteousness. It is some of the grossest misrepresentations about God. These types of arguments have been made about blacks, women and other groups.

It is and always has been about character thus the Bible only has two groups:

- Wheat and tares
- Fruitful vine and withered vine
- Sheep and goats
- Righteous and wicked
- Saved and lost
- Living and dead
- Christlike and Satan-like

So how did Christ treat women? As equally valuable, as human beings made in God's image with worth possessing minds that think and reason and understand.

There are some quantifiable differences between men and women:

- Physically women are smaller and less physically weaker
- Women can give birth men cannot
- Women have barr body in every cell, which is turned off randomly, some cells have X chromosome from father turned on, while others from mother. This can be one factor why women are more susceptible to autoimmune diseases.
- If a woman has given birth, some fetal stem cells transferred into her blood and will become part of her body, differentiating into various cells. Another potential reason for autoimmune diseases.
- Male and female brains are different.
 - Mathematical abilities. An area of the brain called the inferior-parietal lobule (IPL) is typically larger in men, especially on the left side, than in women. This section of the brain is thought to control mental mathematical ability, and probably explains why men frequently perform higher in mathematical tasks than do women. The IPL on the right side processes sensory information, and the larger right side in women allows them to focus on, "specific stimuli, such as a baby crying in the night."
 - Men process information more efficiently in their left hemisphere, women process information equally efficient in both hemispheres.
 - This contributes to women being more relationally oriented, empathic and more likely to want to comfort, while men are more task oriented.
 - Do we see this difference in the relationship between men and women in the life of Jesus?
 - Who stayed by the cross and who fled?
 - Reaction to stress. Men tend to have a "fight or flight" response to stress situations while women seem to approach these situations with a trying to befriend the person
 - Do we see this in the difference of men and women in the life of Christ?
 - Nicodemus sought Jesus out at night fearful of being seen
 - Mary came into the middle of a meeting to anoint Jesus' feet
 - Those who tended the swine ran from Jesus and their owners asked Jesus to

- leave the region
- The woman at the well asked Jesus into her heart and went to her town and told them all He had done bringing them to meet Jesus

Are we bound by our biological differences? Or can men and women both respond positively to Jesus, or reject Him, regardless of their gender?

SUNDAY

What do you think of Sunday's lesson? Women at the advent of Jesus? Elizabeth, Mary and Anna

Here are three faithful women who trusted God, and despite a culture of bigotry, discrimination, male domination, they didn't become embittered and were thus able to be part of God's team.

Do you think Elizabeth and Mary would have been useful to God's cause if they allowed the abuse and mistreatment done to women to fill them with anger, resentment and bitterness?

What about today, when we are done wrong, is it important to not allow the sins of others to infect our hearts and minds?

What is God's weapon for preventing the sins of others from infecting our minds? Forgiveness, loving others and having an attitude of forgiveness towards them – not making excuses for their wrongs, but refusing to have your own heart and mind poisoned by their wrongs.

MONDAY

The lesson points out, in Christ's healing of people, compassion was more important than ceremonies.

This is because Jesus was operating at level 6&7, the reality of God's kingdom of love, built upon the law of love, understanding humans are deviant from the design and in need of healing, restoration. Thus, His focus is about restoration and healing, not rule keeping.

We see this all through His ministry.

- In the Sermon on the Mt. He contrasted behavior from heart motive, "you say if you commit adultery..."
- He changes their level two thinking about eye for an eye and tells them to love your enemies, to give your coat, to walk an extra mile
- He tells them no merit in their legal fasting to get righteousness points in their legal accounting system, but to do the fast of self-denial and actually bless others, give to the needy, and that stores up treasure in heaven
- That it is the heart, the character that determines the fruit of the tree and the behaviors ultimately reveal what is in the heart

- Thus He says in Mt 5:17-20 that our righteousness must be more than the legal rule keeping of the Pharisees. Here is from *The Remedy*:
¹⁷ "And don't think that I have come to destroy what the Old Testament (Torah and Prophets) taught about God and his methods; I have not come to destroy them but to fulfill them."¹⁸ Here is the simple truth: heaven and earth would disappear if even the slightest change to God's design protocol for life, what you call his Law, were made. I am not here to destroy the Law, but accomplish everything it requires.¹⁹ Anyone who violates God's design (law) and teaches others to do so is out of harmony with heaven, but anyone who practices God's methods (law) and teaches others to do so is in harmony with the kingdom of heaven.²⁰ I tell you plainly, if your characters are not renewed with righteousness surpassing that of the Pharisees and lawyers, it simply won't be possible for you to enter the heavenly kingdom of love.

In last week's lesson on Wednesday the lesson pointed out how the Pharisees criticized Christ's disciples for picking heads of grain on Sabbath.

At what level were the Pharisees operating? Level four and below, law and order, legal religion, imposed law constructs.

At what level was Christ operating? Design law, God's design for His creation, thus it was better to provide what was necessary for human health and welfare, than to keep a rule which injured God's Spirit Temple.

The Pharisees, would rather keep a rule in order to honor the little theater, the object lesson, the shadow, the stage play, the physical building built out of inanimate material, but Jesus pointed out that these are just shadows of a larger reality and David did not sin by taking the bread used in the play only by priests, and using it to provide sustenance to the true temple of God.

Are there any examples today where people get confused between ceremony, metaphor, stage play, simile, analogy, parable, and reality and are injured by staying stuck in the metaphor?

- Viewing God's Sovereignty through human authority models
 - Sees God imposing, rather than God ruling through His Design of love.
 - Romans 9 – Paul makes the point God has mercy on who He has mercy... The point, the Jews were jealous that Gentiles were being included in salvation and Paul argues, who are you to argue with God's Sovereignty, God's way is the way of love, inclusion, healing.
 - But, some view these passages through human authority models and view God as imposing and predetermining some for salvation and some for damnation – in other words interpret it as God being restrictive.
- Viewing Jesus' victory at the cross through legal metaphor
- Thinking there is some power to cleanse from sin in religious ritual, whether baptism, communion, or foot washing.
- Thinking the "name" of Jesus means the syllables used when speaking rather than the character

of God – thus think if they put a tagline at the end of a prayer, “in Jesus name” they have prayed in Jesus name.

- Believing the OT feast days have some actual value other than a teaching object lesson and thus promote the idea they must be observed in order to experience salvation
- Others?

The bottom pink section states, “In these stories, it was the power of Jesus’ words that brought a dead son back to his mother and a dead daughter back to her father.”

What do you think the lesson authors mean?

If they mean, this was done at Jesus command, by the exercise of divine energy, without the use of CPR, ventilators, organ transplants, crash carts, defibrillators etc, then absolutely right.

But we MUST avoid the idea that the power was in the words. We must avoid going down the trail of searching for the right combination of words, incantations, mantras in order to harness supernatural power. It wasn’t the words that had power; it is God who stood there in human flesh that has power!

TUESDAY

The lesson points us to the story of the woman who anointed Jesus feet with expensive oil and how she was looked down upon by Simon the Pharisee and even the Apostles.

Some suggest this woman was Mary Magdalene, who was sexually exploited by her uncle Simon, who was the one hosting the feast as a way to try and compensate Jesus for healing him of leprosy. She was the sister of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, and the same woman caught in adultery and thrown down before Jesus. Jesus not only saved her life from the mob, but treated her with grace and dignity and for the first time since she was abused made her feel like a person, someone to be loved for who she was not exploited for her body and then criticized as a defiled sinner.

Now, considering all of this, knowing the biases against women, knowing the biases against prostitutes, do you think it took courage to go in and do what she did? What motivated her? Love! Love casts out all fear!

Do you think, if all these elements are true, or just some of them, she had great love for Jesus?

And how did Jesus respond to Simon? “He who is forgiven much loves much.” Which Simon took to mean what? But what was Simon missing? And thus Simon failed to love much.

Read bottom pink section, “It’s easy...” Is there a difference between judging others and understanding the reality of the character and condition of others, i.e. diagnosing others?

Judging comes from insecurity and a need to promote self by putting others down and faultfinding. It leads to discrimination, or actions of punishment, chastisement, shunning, expulsion etc.

Understanding reality, the actual condition of the other person, is motivated by love, and leads to wisdom in dealing with others, first not trusting the untrustworthy, but second, setting healthy boundaries designed to lead an untrustworthy person to Christ for healing and restoration.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson asks us to consider Martha and her concern for service and hospitality, to the point of criticizing Mary for not helping out in the kitchen.

THURSDAY

The lesson asks us to consider the story in Luke 1:1-8, from *The Remedy*:

¹Then Jesus told a parable to his interns to help them understand the importance of regular conversations with God and not to quit talking with him.²He said: "**There was a judge who** didn't believe in God or care about the welfare of people.³And a widow, who had been exploited, kept petitioning the judge to do what was right and restore what her adversary had taken.

⁴"The judge refused for a long time. But he finally said to himself, 'Even though I don't believe in God or care about people,⁵I am tired of this woman bothering me, so I will do what is right and she will finally leave me alone!' "

⁶Then the Lord explained, "Take a lesson from this unjust and godless judge.⁷If he, not caring about anyone but himself, finally did the right thing, won't God set all things right for his children who cry out to him constantly? Will he ignore them?⁸I tell you truly, he will set all things right, and quickly. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find any on earth who trust him to set things right?"

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 2

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Blood drives for Linda Jennings!

Hamilton Community SDA Church
May 2, 2015 Hours: 9-2 Blood mobile in parking lot
Call 756-0966 for appointment (or)
Sign up at church on May 25th

Collegedale SDA Church(on SAU Campus)
May 9, 2015 Hours 10-3
Sign up at church for appointment!
Note: This blood drive is the churches regular date for their
blood mobile but it will benefit Linda Jennings.

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase is now available on our website, BOTH the Android and Apple Version is not Available!

- This is a **FREE** app
- Please read the preface to understand the approach to this paraphrase
- We have cards available to share with others and will ship them at no cost
- Also, if you find typos please email those to us so we can fix any missed typos

CARDS – If you have any of our ministry business cards please check to see if they have our current address: PO Box 28266 Chattanooga, TN 37424. If they are the old ones please discard them. We will be happy to send new ones, just email us. Thanks!

Opportunity to Share:

The General Conference of SDA will have its meeting (which occurs every five years) in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. 50,000-70,000 Adventist from all over the world are expected to attend. This presents an opportunity to share this healing message about God in a most impactful way.

We plan on giving away our DVDs, Dr. Jennings’ Book *Could It Be This Simple?* and other materials. This will be an enormous project. If you would like to share in this opportunity, you can do so by making donations to *Come and Reason Ministries* either via Paypal, or check mailed to our address below.

New Mailing Address: PLEASE UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS BOOK:

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Chattanooga, TN 37424

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Come and Reason Ministries FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

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Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May 17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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The Book of Luke 2Q 2015 Lesson 7

Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and Prayer

"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." Luke 11:9, 10

First paragraph, pg 85 "Of the three synoptic Gospels, Luke speaks more often than do the others about Jesus' relationship to the Holy Spirit. While Matthew refers to the Spirit 12 times and Mark does so 6 times, Luke has 17 references in his Gospel and 57 in the book of Acts. From the conception of Jesus into humanity (Luke 1:35) to the directive establishing His global mission (Luke 24:44-49), Luke sees an operational link between Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The link is basic to understanding the ministry of our Savior. Likewise, Luke shows the importance of prayer in Jesus' life and mission. Fully divine, equal with the Father and the Spirit, Jesus in His humanity left us an example in regard to prayer."

- Why?
- Because He thought He was supposed to leave us a pattern?
- Was Jesus just play acting?
- Jesus called Himself the Son of Man (the human)
- Or, did he really have to maintain a connection with God to live His life successfully?
- He had to pray and maintain a connection with God the Father and the Holy Spirit because He was human. And that is how humans were created to function.
- If He needed to maintain a constant connection, we do too. He showed us what it truly is to be human.
- When we get to heaven in the earth made new, we will still be communing with our Father, Brother and Holy Spirit because that is how we are made.
- Our prayer life is learning to commune with God and becoming one in purpose, principle and motive with Him.

Second paragraph, pg 85 "If Jesus saw the need for prayer, how much more must we need it?"

- Do we need prayer and the Holy Spirit more than Christ did?
 - If so, why?
 - What is the difference?
 - If Jesus had an advantage, is the expectation of victorious Christian living a false hope?
- Look at Lesson 6 (last week's lesson): Monday - May 4
 - In the highlighted section at the bottom of the page it is referencing the two stories for that day's lesson: The story of the resurrection of the man at Nain and the story of Jairus daughter being raised from the dead.



- It says: “In these stories, it was the power of Jesus’ words that brought a dead son back to his mother and a dead daughter back to her father.”
- It was the power of God, the embodiment of Life. It wasn’t magic words. “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.” John 11:25, 26

MONDAY

The Prayer Life of Jesus

It lists 6 prayers of Christ for illustration

Baptism (Luke 3:21)

Before choosing His 12 Disciples (Luke 6:12, 13)

- Luke 5:27 call of Matthew
- Luke 5:29 Matthew’s feast for friends
- Luke 6:12, 13 Prayer of selection

Prayed for his disciples (Luke 9:18)

Before the transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36)

In Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-46)

Commission of His life on the cross (Luke 23:46)

What other prayers of Christ would you choose to illustrate Christ’s prayer life?

What does each instance say about

- God
- humanity?

My list

- John 17 (on the way to the garden)
- Luke 11:2 (“Lord’s prayer”)
- John 11:41, 42 (at the raising of Lazarus)
- John 12:28 at the last feast of Passover, Christ said, “Father, glorify Your name.”

If Jesus did not use any power that his followers cannot use, then were not all of his miracles a form of prayer?

Are we too busy to pray?

- No other life was ever so crowded with labor and responsibility as was that of Jesus; yet how often He was found in prayer! How constant was His communion with God! Again and again in the history of His earthly life are found records such as these: “Rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.” “Great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed.” “And it came to pass in those days, that

He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.” Mark 1:35;
Luke 5:15, 16; 6:12. {DA 362.3}

SUNDAY

Jesus and the Holy Spirit

Luke’s discussion of Christ and the Holy Spirit is much more widespread than the other gospels.

Could it be that the Holy Spirit was much more evident in the events of his other book, The Acts of the Apostles, and there was a connection there.

Paragraph #3: “The Spirit that ever linked Christ to His Father and the redemptive mission is the same Spirit that would strengthen the disciples in their journey of faith. Hence, the crucial importance of the Spirit in Christian life:”

“Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the gravest of all sins (Luke 12:10)

- Why?
- There have been several instances in which someone commits a very public suicide. In so doing, some individuals have been noted to turn off the two-way communication system to their base. The only communication for reversal of their path has been cut off. There is no hope at that point.

TUESDAY

The Model Prayer: Part 1

The model prayer Luke 11:1-4

- Father
- Hallowed be your name
- Your kingdom come
- Give us each day our daily bread
- Forgive us our sins
 - For we have a forgiving spirit and have forgiven
- Lead us not into temptation

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

- How is that done?
- Natural obedience
 - Law as a new concept to angels

“Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” Matthew 6:10.

The will of God is expressed in the precepts of His holy law, and the principles of this law are the principles of heaven. The angels of heaven attain unto no higher knowledge than to know the will of God, and to do His will is the highest service that can engage their powers.



But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re-echoed, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. {Pr 294.4}

The petition, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," is a prayer that the reign of evil on this earth may be ended, that sin may be forever destroyed, and the kingdom of righteousness be established. Then in earth as in heaven will be fulfilled "all the good pleasure of His goodness." 2 Thessalonians 1:11.

WEDNESDAY

The Model Prayer: Part 2

"Give us day by day our daily bread"

- Daily dependence upon God
- God as our creator and sustainer

"Forgive us our sins"

- God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart" TMB pg 114

Read Luke 11:9-13 out loud from Amplified Version.

9 So I say to you, Ask and keep on asking and it shall be given you; seek and keep on seeking and you shall find; knock and keep on knocking and the door shall be opened to you.

10 For everyone who asks and keeps on asking receives; and he who seeks and keeps on seeking finds; and to him who knocks and keeps on knocking, the door shall be opened.

11 What father among you, if his son asks for a loaf of bread, will give him a stone; or if he asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?

13 If you then, evil as you are, know how to give good gifts [gifts that are to their advantage] to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask and continue to ask Him!

THURSDAY

More Lessons on Prayer

Parable of Friend at Midnight

Second paragraph - "Prayer is the breath of the soul"



Excellent analogy

Second paragraph, last sentence

- “Such persistence is not to change God’s mind but to strengthen our trust.”
- Does persistent begging increase your trust?
- Don’t try this with someone you care about?
- Then why with God?
- Then is this begging? There must be something different in how we pray than how we often approach our petitions in prayer.
- It changes us, how?

Bottom half of page is the parable about the Pharisee and the Tax Collector at church praying.

- Why do people have to make themselves look good to God?
 - (He knows us and what we are like)
- We do not trust Him to be good

FRIDAY

Further Study

Read the first passage from Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing p 85

Teachers edition

Pg 96: The model prayer: the Lord’s Prayer recognizes the centrality of God. A prayer must begin there; otherwise, it ceases to be one. The prayer also take note of us - we are the other end of Prayer’s connecting link.

- For what purpose? It is for others.
- We are in the middle. A waypoint of God’s grace to others. Our prayers are not for us, but for us to help others.
- “In Christ the cry of humanity reached the Father of infinite pity. As a man He supplicated the throne of God till His humanity was charged with a heavenly current that should connect humanity with divinity. Through continual communion He received life from God, that He might impart life to the world. His experience is to be ours.” DA 363

A verse sent out to the Deaconesses this week

- 1 Corinthians 15:58 New Living Translation “So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.”



Additional References

To the consecrated worker there is wonderful consolation in the knowledge that even Christ during His life on earth sought His Father daily for fresh supplies of needed grace; and from this communion with God He went forth to strengthen and bless others. Behold the Son of God bowed in prayer to His Father! Though He is the Son of God, He strengthens His faith by prayer, and by communion with heaven gathers to Himself power to resist evil and to minister to the needs of men. As the Elder Brother of our race He knows the necessities of those who, compassed with infirmity and living in a world of sin and temptation, still desire to serve Him. He knows that the messengers whom He sees fit to send are weak, erring men; but to all who give themselves wholly to His service He promises divine aid. His own example is an assurance that earnest, persevering supplication to God in faith—faith that leads to entire dependence upon God, and unreserved consecration to His work—will avail to bring to men the Holy Spirit’s aid in the battle against sin. {AA 56.1}

Every worker who follows the example of Christ will be prepared to receive and use the power that God has promised to His church for the ripening of earth’s harvest. Morning by morning, as the heralds of the gospel kneel before the Lord and renew their vows of consecration to Him, He will grant them the presence of His Spirit, with its reviving, sanctifying power. As they go forth to the day’s duties, they have the assurance that the unseen agency of the Holy Spirit enables them to be “laborers together with God.”

Our Saviour showed perfect confidence that His heavenly Father would not suffer Him to be tempted above what He should give Him strength to endure, but would bring Him off conqueror if He patiently bore the test to which He was subjected. Christ had not of His own will placed Himself in danger. God had suffered Satan for the time being to have this power over His Son. Jesus knew that if He preserved His integrity in this extremely trying position an angel of God would be sent to relieve Him if there was no other way. He had taken humanity and was the representative of the race. {Con 51.2}



The Book of Luke 2015 Q2 Lesson 8

The Mission of Jesus.

SABBATH

“The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Luke 19:10.

Is this an adequate mission statement for Jesus’s mission? Was there more? [See 2 Tim. 1: 10, Heb. 2: 14, 1st John 3: 8.] What about those who don’t want to be “found” or “saved”?

I’ve seen several cars driving around with the bumper sticker stating “Born OK the First Time.” How do these folks fit in to Jesus’s mission?

How does the Law lens we view His Mission with make a difference?

The following are the first 2 results of a Google search of “Jesus’s Mission”.

“So we have to ask ourselves: do we have faith that the shed blood of Christ declares God’s right-ness? If so how was God right in allowing His son, who had done no sin to die? How was he right in raising him from the dead?

Well, it was right Jesus died because he was of “flesh”. He bore sin prone and mortal nature (the ‘diabolos’) – the source of human sin. Jesus’ sacrifice declared that God was right to execute His judgement on man because of sin and because man bears this nature. However, it was also right that God raised him from the dead because he had overcome that nature and offered himself as a sacrifice. It was right God changed his flesh nature and gave him spirit nature. It is belief in this “righteousness” of God which is the mechanism for being acceptable before God.” <http://www.the-gospel-truth.info/bible-teachings/jesus-christ-his-true-purpose-and-mission/>.

Many believers know that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, but we should also understand His mission, how He fulfilled it, and what that means to each of us. Christ had a twofold goal in coming to earth as a baby: to provide us with a tangible image of who God is, and to die in our place to pay our penalty for sin.

What an incredible plan! The omnipotent, omniscient Lord had existed since eternity past (John 1:14, John 1:14). And yet for a time, He set aside power and strength that were rightfully His, so that He could become like us. Because God-in-human-flesh lived His life before men, we can better understand our heavenly Father (Colossians 1:15).

Through Christ’s sacrifice, we are invited into an eternal relationship with God. You see,



Scripture finds every descendant of Adam guilty (Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23), and the punishment for sin is death (Romans 6:23). The penalty must be paid by the shedding of blood (Leviticus 17:11). Yet the Father can accept nothing less than a perfect sacrifice (Deuteronomy 17:1). The Savior - who was fully God, fully man, and 100 percent innocent - died a humiliating, excruciating death to pay the debt we couldn't afford. He is the only one who could lay down His life to save us and bridge the gap between each person and the Father.

There is no possible way for us to earn our salvation. It is an awesome gift that the Father freely offers to each one of us. The only "condition" is that we receive Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and follow Him. Have you chosen to accept this amazing blessing from the Father's hand?

<http://www.jesus.org/following-jesus/repentance-faith-and-salvation/jesus-came-on-a-mission.html>.

Imposed Law View

- Jesus came to pay the penalty for my sins [past, present, future].
- Jesus came to endure the Father's wrath.
- Jesus came to shed His blood so I can use it as "white-out" on my heavenly records, and He can plead with His Father to be merciful because I'm covered with the blood [save us IN our sin].
- Jesus came so His Father could kill Him.

Natural Law View

- Jesus came to take on my sinful *nature*, defeat the inherent selfishness in His human brain, develop a cure for our terminal condition, and offer the cure as a gift to all who freely choose to cooperate with the cure [save us FROM our sin].
- Jesus came to reveal the Father's character of Love, Truth, and Freedom, and to reveal what God's wrath really is [a letting go, giving up, "My God, why have you forsaken me?"].
- Jesus came to pour out His blood [life] because if He had used his divine power at any time to stop evil men from killing Him, Satan's allegations would have been correct. Our heavenly records accurately reveal healing interventions attempted, made, refused, and will correctly document our diagnosis of *healed* or *terminal*.
- Jesus came to exercise His free choice to lay down His life and to take it back up again.

SUNDAY

The Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin

With the illustrations of the lost sheep / coin, Jesus chose to appeal to His listeners *experiences*. He did not use the two other threads of *Scripture* or *Nature* [one could argue that the sheep would be part of Nature] this time. Why?



“The coin, though lying among dust and rubbish, is a piece of silver or gold still. Its owner seeks it because it is of value. So, every soul, however degraded by sin, is in God’s sight accounted precious. As the coin bears the image and superscription of the reigning power, so man at his creation bore the image and superscription of God; and though now marred and dim through the influence of sin, the traces of this inscription remain upon every soul.”—Ellen G. White, Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 194.

MONDAY

The Parable of the Lost Son: Part 1

The lesson does a great job of summing this up, so let’s take a look.

1. “Give Me.” Where is the focus in this demand? We have all been enticed by the “greener grass” of Sin. We have, at times, had a distorted concept of true Freedom [usually during our teen years]. This misunderstanding of the Law of Liberty is what led to 1/3 of the angels following Lucifer, and Eve’s downfall. TRUE Freedom only exists within the framework of God’s design laws. For example, are the heroin addict, smoker, alcoholic, glutton, gossip, or the manipulative free, or are they slaves to their issues?
2. “Why Me?” Where is the focus in this question? The son came to his senses after realizing that his “freedom” was actually slavery.
3. “Make Me.” Where is the focus in this statement? Even though the younger son is starting to realize his mistake[s], and begin the process of a return home, his focus is still on self.

TUESDAY

The Parable of the Lost Son: Part 2

4. The return home. This “was a journey of repentance.” God is ALWAYS forgiving, so the healing / restoration of our relationship must begin with our sincere repentance, and allowing God to transform our characters. The lesson lists *acknowledgement, confession, contrition, & petition*.
5. The Waiting Father. Our Heavenly Father is continually waiting on us to “return home” and he will always welcome us with open arms and binding up our wounds.
6. The Rejoicing Family. Scripture tells us ALL of Heaven rejoices with the healing of one sinner. [Luke 15: 7].
7. The Elder Son. Symbolic of the Church Leadership in Christ’s day [? and present day].

WEDNESDAY

Lost Opportunities



The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. First read Chapter 21 in Christ Object Lessons:

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Christ shows that in this life men decide their eternal destiny. During probationary time the grace of God is offered to every soul. But if men waste their opportunities in self-pleasing, they cut themselves off from everlasting life. No after probation will be granted them. By their own choice they have fixed an impassable gulf between them and their God.

This parable draws a contrast between the rich who have not made God their dependence, and the poor who have made God their dependence. Christ shows that the time is coming when the position of the two classes will be reversed. Those who are poor in this world's goods, yet who trust in God and are patient in suffering, will one day be exalted above those who now hold the highest positions the world can give but who have not surrendered their life to God.

"There was a certain rich man," Christ said, "which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table."

The rich man did not belong to the class represented by the unjust judge, who openly declared his disregard for God and man. He claimed to be a son of Abraham. He did not treat the beggar with violence or require him to go away because the sight of him was disagreeable. If the poor, loathsome specimen of humanity could be comforted by beholding him as he entered his gates, the rich man was willing that he should remain. But he was selfishly indifferent to the needs of his suffering brother.

There were then no hospitals in which the sick might be cared for. The suffering and needy were brought to the notice of those to whom the Lord had entrusted wealth, that they might receive help and sympathy. Thus it was with the beggar and the rich man. Lazarus was in great need of help; for he was without friends, home, money, or food. Yet he was allowed to remain in this condition day after day, while the wealthy nobleman had every want supplied. The one who was abundantly able to relieve the sufferings of his fellow creature, lived to himself, as many live today.

There are today close beside us many who are hungry, naked, and homeless. A neglect to impart of our means to these needy, suffering ones places upon us a burden of guilt which we shall one day fear to meet. All covetousness is condemned as idolatry. All selfish indulgence is an offense in God's sight.

God had made the rich man a steward of His means, and it was his duty to attend to just such cases as that of the beggar. The command had been given, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deuteronomy 6:5); and "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18). The rich man was a Jew, and he was acquainted with the command of God. But he forgot that he was accountable for the use of his entrusted means and capabilities. The Lord's blessings rested upon him abundantly, but he employed them selfishly, to honor himself, not his Maker. In proportion to his abundance was his obligation to use his gifts for the uplifting of humanity. This was the Lord's command, but the rich man had no thought of his obligation to God. He lent money, and took interest for what he loaned; but he returned no interest for what God had lent him. He had knowledge and talents, but did not improve them. Forgetful of his accountability to God, he devoted all his powers to pleasure. Everything with which he was surrounded, his round of amusements, the praise and flattery of his friends, ministered to his selfish enjoyment. So engrossed was he in the society of his friends that he lost all sense of his responsibility to co-operate with God in His ministry of mercy. He had opportunity to understand the word of God, and to practice its teachings; but the pleasure-loving society he chose so occupied his time that he forgot the God of eternity.

The time came when a change took place in the condition of the two men. The poor man had suffered day by day,



but he had patiently and quietly endured. In the course of time he died and was buried. There was no one to mourn for him; but by his patience in suffering he had witnessed for Christ, he had endured the test of his faith, and at his death he is represented as being carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

Lazarus represents the suffering poor who believe in Christ. When the trumpet sounds and all that are in the graves hear Christ's voice and come forth, they will receive their reward; for their faith in God was not a mere theory, but a reality.

"The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

In this parable Christ was meeting the people on their own ground. The doctrine of a conscious state of existence between death and the resurrection was held by many of those who were listening to Christ's words. The Saviour knew of their ideas, and He framed His parable so as to inculcate important truths through these preconceived opinions. He held up before His hearers a mirror wherein they might see themselves in their true relation to God. He used the prevailing opinion to convey the idea He wished to make prominent to all—that no man is valued for his possessions; for all he has belongs to him only as lent by the Lord. A misuse of these gifts will place him below the poorest and most afflicted man who loves God and trusts in Him.

Christ desires His hearers to understand that it is impossible for men to secure the salvation of the soul after death. "Son," Abraham is represented as answering, "remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you can not; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Thus Christ represented the hopelessness of looking for a second probation. This life is the only time given to man in which to prepare for eternity.

The rich man had not abandoned the idea that he was a child of Abraham, and in his distress he is represented as calling upon him for aid. "Father Abraham," he prayed, "have mercy on me." He did not pray to God, but to Abraham. Thus he showed that he placed Abraham above God, and that he relied on his relationship to Abraham for salvation. The thief on the cross offered his prayer to Christ. "Remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom," he said. (Luke 23:42.) And at once the response came, Verily I say unto thee today (as I hang on the cross in humiliation and suffering), thou shalt be with Me in Paradise. But the rich man prayed to Abraham, and his petition was not granted. Christ alone is exalted to be "a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Acts 5:31. "Neither is there salvation in any other." Acts 4:12.

The rich man had spent his life in self-pleasing, and too late he saw that he had made no provision for eternity. He realized his folly, and thought of his brothers, who would go on as he had gone, living to please themselves. Then he made the request, "I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him [Lazarus] to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." But "Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

When the rich man solicited additional evidence for his brothers, he was plainly told that should this evidence be given, they would not be persuaded. His request cast a reflection on God. It was as if the rich man had said, If you had more thoroughly warned me, I should not now be here. Abraham in his answer to this request is represented as saying, Your brothers have been sufficiently warned. Light has been given them, but they would not see; truth has been presented to them, but they would not hear.



“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” These words were proved true in the history of the Jewish nation. Christ’s last and crowning miracle was the raising of Lazarus of Bethany, after he had been dead four days. The Jews were given this wonderful evidence of the Saviour’s divinity, but they rejected it. Lazarus rose from the dead and bore his testimony before them, but they hardened their hearts against all evidence, and even sought to take his life. (John 12:9-11).

The law and the prophets are God’s appointed agencies for the salvation of men. Christ said, Let them give heed to these evidences. If they do not listen to the voice of God in His word, the testimony of a witness raised from the dead would not be heeded.

Those who heed Moses and the prophets will require no greater light than God has given; but if men reject the light, and fail to appreciate the opportunities granted them, they would not hear if one from the dead should come to them with a message. They would not be convinced even by this evidence; for those who reject the law and the prophets so harden their hearts that they will reject all light.

The conversation between Abraham and the once-rich man is figurative. The lesson to be gathered from it is that every man is given sufficient light for the discharge of the duties required of him. Man’s responsibilities are proportionate to his opportunities and privileges. God gives to every one sufficient light and grace to do the work He has given him to do. If man fails to do that which a little light shows to be his duty, greater light would only reveal unfaithfulness, neglect to improve the blessings given. “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.” Luke 16:10. Those who refuse to be enlightened by Moses and the prophets and ask for some wonderful miracle to be performed would not be convinced if their wish were granted.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus shows how the two classes represented by these men are estimated in the unseen world. There is no sin in being rich if riches are not acquired by injustice. A rich man is not condemned for having riches, but condemnation rests upon him if the means entrusted to him is spent in selfishness. Far better might he lay up his money beside the throne of God, by using it to do good. Death cannot make any man poor who thus devotes himself to seeking eternal riches. But the man who hoards his treasure for self can not take any of it to heaven. He has proved himself to be an unfaithful steward. During his lifetime he had his good things, but he was forgetful of his obligation to God. He failed of securing the heavenly treasure.

The rich man who had so many privileges is represented to us as one who should have cultivated his gifts, so that his works should reach to the great beyond, carrying with them improved spiritual advantages. It is the purpose of redemption, not only to blot out sin, but to give back to man those spiritual gifts lost because of sin’s dwarfing power. Money cannot be carried into the next life; it is not needed there; but the good deeds done in winning souls to Christ are carried to the heavenly courts. But those who selfishly spend the Lord’s gifts on themselves, leaving their needy fellow creatures without aid and doing nothing to advance God’s work in the world, dishonor their Maker. Robbery of God is written opposite their names in the books of heaven.

The rich man had all that money could procure, but he did not possess the riches that would have kept his account right with God. He had lived as if all that he possessed were his own. He had neglected the call of God and the claims of the suffering poor. But at length there comes a call which he cannot neglect. By a power which he cannot question or resist he is commanded to quit the premises of which he is no longer steward. The once-rich man is reduced to hopeless poverty. The robe of Christ’s righteousness, woven in the loom of heaven, can never cover him. He who once wore the richest purple, the finest linen, is reduced to nakedness. His probation is ended. He brought nothing into the world, and he can take nothing out of it.

Christ lifted the curtain and presented this picture before priests and rulers, scribes and Pharisees. Look at it, you who are rich in this world’s goods and are not rich toward God. Will you not contemplate this scene? That which



is highly esteemed among men is abhorrent in the sight of God. Christ asks, “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Mark 8:36, 37.

Application to the Jewish Nation

When Christ gave the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, there were many in the Jewish nation in the pitiable condition of the rich man, using the Lord’s goods for selfish gratification, preparing themselves to hear the sentence, “Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.” Daniel 5:27. The rich man was favored with every temporal and spiritual blessing, but he refused to cooperate with God in the use of these blessings. Thus it was with the Jewish nation. The Lord had made the Jews the depositaries of sacred truth. He had appointed them stewards of His grace. He had given them every spiritual and temporal advantage, and He called upon them to impart these blessings. Special instruction had been given them in regard to their treatment of their brethren who had fallen into decay, of the stranger within their gates, and of the poor among them. They were not to seek to gain everything for their own advantage, but were to remember those in need and share with them. And God promised to bless them in accordance with their deeds of love and mercy. But like the rich man, they put forth no helping hand to relieve the temporal or spiritual necessities of suffering humanity. Filled with pride, they regarded themselves as the chosen and favored people of God; yet they did not serve or worship God. They put their dependence in the fact that they were children of Abraham. “We be Abraham’s seed,” they said proudly. (John 8:33.) When the crisis came, it was revealed that they had divorced themselves from God, and had placed their trust in Abraham, as if he were God.

Christ longed to let light shine into the darkened minds of the Jewish people. He said to them, “If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill Me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God. This did not Abraham.” John 8:39, 40.

Christ recognized no virtue in lineage. He taught that spiritual connection supersedes all natural connection. The Jews claimed to have descended from Abraham; but by failing to do the works of Abraham, they proved that they were not his true children. Only those who prove themselves to be spiritually in harmony with Abraham by obeying the voice of God, are reckoned as of true descent. Although the beggar belonged to the class looked upon by men as inferior, Christ recognized him as one whom Abraham would take into the very closest friendship.

The rich man though surrounded with all the luxuries of life was so ignorant that he put Abraham where God should have been. If he had appreciated his exalted privileges and had allowed God’s Spirit to mold his mind and heart, he would have had an altogether different position. So with the nation he represented. If they had responded to the divine call, their future would have been wholly different. They would have shown true spiritual discernment. They had means which God would have increased, making it sufficient to bless and enlighten the whole world. But they had so far separated from the Lord’s arrangement that their whole life was perverted. They failed to use their gifts as God’s stewards in accordance with truth and righteousness. Eternity was not brought into their reckoning, and the result of their unfaithfulness was ruin to the whole nation.

Christ knew that at the destruction of Jerusalem the Jews would remember His warning. And it was so. When calamity came upon Jerusalem, when starvation and suffering of every kind came upon the people, they remembered these words of Christ and understood the parable. They had brought their suffering upon themselves by their neglect to let their God-given light shine forth to the world.

In the Last Days

The closing scenes of this earth’s history are portrayed in the closing of the rich man’s history. The rich man claimed to be a son of Abraham, but he was separated from Abraham by an impassable gulf—a character wrongly developed. Abraham served God, following His word in faith and obedience. But the rich man was unmindful of



God and of the needs of suffering humanity. The great gulf fixed between him and Abraham was the gulf of disobedience. There are many today who are following the same course. Though church members, they are unconverted. They may take part in the church service, they may chant the psalm, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God" (Psalm 42:1); but they testify to a falsehood. They are no more righteous in God's sight than is the veriest sinner. The soul that longs after the excitement of worldly pleasure, the mind that is full of love for display, cannot serve God. Like the rich man in the parable, such a one has no inclination to war against the lust of the flesh. He longs to indulge appetite. He chooses the atmosphere of sin. He is suddenly snatched away by death, and he goes down to the grave with the character formed during his lifetime in copartnership with Satanic agencies. In the grave he has no power to choose anything, be it good or evil; for in the day when a man dies, his thoughts perish. (Psalm 146:4; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6).

When the voice of God awakes the dead, he will come from the grave with the same appetites and passions, the same likes and dislikes, that he cherished when living. God works no miracle to re-create a man who would not be re-created when he was granted every opportunity and provided with every facility. During his lifetime he took no delight in God, nor found pleasure in His service. His character is not in harmony with God, and he could not be happy in the heavenly family.

Today there is a class in our world who are self-righteous. They are not gluttons, they are not drunkards, they are not infidels; but they desire to live for themselves, not for God. He is not in their thoughts; therefore they are classed with unbelievers. Were it possible for them to enter the gates of the city of God, they could have no right to the tree of life, for when God's commandments were laid before them with all their binding claims they said, No. They have not served God here; therefore they would not serve Him hereafter. They could not live in His presence, and they would feel that any place was preferable to heaven.

To learn of Christ means to receive His grace, which is His character. But those who do not appreciate and utilize the precious opportunities and sacred influences granted them on earth, are not fitted to take part in the pure devotion of heaven. Their characters are not molded according to the divine similitude. By their own neglect they have formed a chasm which nothing can bridge. Between them and the righteous there is a great gulf fixed.

Christ's Object Lessons, Ellen White, pp 260-271

THURSDAY

Was Blind but Now I See.

Among the publicans there was a confederacy, so that they could oppress the people, and sustain one another in their fraudulent practices. In their extortion they were but carrying out what had become an almost universal custom. Even the priests and rabbis who despised them were guilty of enriching themselves by dishonest practices under cover of their sacred calling. But no sooner did Zacchaeus yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit than he cast aside every practice contrary to integrity.

No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct. Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven. {DA 555.6}



The Book of Luke 2015 Q2 Lesson 9

Jesus the Master Teacher

Any thoughts on why Jesus took on this role of “master teacher” during his earthly ministry? Is this ownership of this title limited only to his 30 or so years on this earth...or has always been and will forever be our master teacher?

- Unfallen beings/Lucifer?
- Creation?
- Adam and Even in the Garden of Eden?
- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob...the Israelites?

We just finished an amazing study of Tim’s first book, CIBTS, at Hamilton Community Church...Russell really did a great job...and I left there marveling even more at how fearfully and wonderfully we are made – particularly our minds and our brains. And I left there even more firmly convinced that an integral part of our healing, our character development, our being set right...is the healing of our minds and setting those back in harmony with how they were originally designed. If the new covenant experience is to have the law of love written on our hearts and minds, I know at least for me, my mind is going to have to be healed in order for that to happen! The very name of this class and this ministry speaks to the importance and value that comes from reasoning out and wrestling through these issues with a teachable spirit. One of the founders of our church agrees:

“The agency of the Spirit of God does not remove from us the necessity of exercising our faculties and talents, but teaches us how to use every power to the glory of God. The human faculties when under the special direction of the grace of God, are capable of being used to the best purpose on earth, and will be exercised in the future immortal life. Ignorance will not increase the humility or spirituality of any professed follower of Christ. The truths of the divine word can be best appreciated by an intellectual Christian. Christ can be best glorified by those who serve him intelligently. The great object of education is to enable us to use the powers which God has given us in such a manner as will best represent the religion of the Bible and promote the glory of God. We are indebted to Him who gave us existence for all the talents which have been intrusted to us; and it is a duty we owe to our Creator to cultivate and improve upon the talents he has committed to our trust. Education will discipline the mind, develop its powers, and understandingly direct them, that we may be useful in advancing the glory of God.” – {CE 203.2}

So in Saturday’s lesson, the quarterly describes the desperate conditions on the earth at the time Christ came over 2000 years ago. Did you read this?

“Humanity seemed to be fast reaching its lowest point. The very foundations of society were undermined. Life had become false and artificial. Disgusted with fable and falsehood, seeking to drown thought, men turned to infidelity and materialism. Leaving eternity out of their reckoning, they lived for the present.”



I mean, is this a description of BC Rome...or yesterday's headlines? It says that understanding this background will help us better understand why Jesus taught the things he did...thoughts? Perhaps Christ taught the things he did...because we have gotten so out of harmony with who and how he made us to be. And would he teach different things if He came back today?

Much of the quarterly's Saturday lesson content came from Chapter 8 in the book of Education – entitled The Teacher Sent From God...but it is the rest of that chapter I think is so insightful and so profound...it's kind of long, but I want to read it to you, if you don't mind. I hope I can make it through the whole quote because it really speaks to my soul. I believe it also speaks so powerfully to what we teach and to the concepts that inspired this ministry...and it goes a long way toward explaining Christ as the Master Teacher.

“There was but one hope for the human race—that into this mass of discordant and corrupting elements might be introduced a new leaven; that there might be brought to humankind the power of a new life; that the knowledge of God might be restored to the world. Christ came to restore this knowledge. He came to set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented Him. He came to manifest the nature of His law, to reveal in His own character the beauty of holiness. Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. He showed that the law of God is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of everyone, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. God's law is given as a hedge, a shield. Whoever accepts its principles is preserved from evil. Fidelity to God involves fidelity to humans. Thus the law guards the rights, the individuality, of every human being. It ensures their well-being, both for this world and for the world to come. To the obedient it is the pledge of eternal life, for it expresses the principles that endure forever. Christ came to demonstrate the value of the divine principles by revealing their power for the **regeneration of humanity**. With the people of that age the value of all things was determined by outward show. As religion declined in power, it increased in pomp. The educators of the time sought to command respect by display and ostentation. To all this, the life of Jesus presented a marked contrast. His life demonstrated the worthlessness of those things that most people regarded as life's great essentials. His education was gained directly from the Heaven-appointed sources—from useful work, from the study of the Scriptures and of nature, and from the experiences of life. [Hopefully those sound really familiar to you!] “The Child grew, and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.” Luke 2:40. Thus prepared, Jesus went forth to His mission, exerting upon men, women, and children an influence to bless, a power to transform, such as the world had never witnessed. **Anyone who seeks to transform humanity must understand humanity**. Only through sympathy, faith, and love can people be reached and uplifted. **Here Christ stands revealed as the Master Teacher**. He alone has perfect understanding of the human soul. Christ alone had experience in all the sorrows and temptations that befall human beings. Never was another so fiercely beset by temptation. Never another bore so heavy a burden of the world's sin and pain. Never was there another whose sympathies were so broad or so tender. **A sharer in all the experiences of humanity, He could feel not only for, but with, every burdened and tempted and struggling one...**[what does it mean to you to know the God of the universe feels for you and



with you when you are burdened and tempted and struggling?] What He taught, He lived. “I have given you an example,” He said to His disciples, “that you should do as I have done to you.” “I have kept My Father’s commandments.” John 13:15; 15:10. Thus, in His life, Christ’s words had perfect illustration and support. And more than this; what He taught, He was. His words were the expression not only of His own life experience but of His own character.” – {Ted 49.3}

Have you ever had that kind of amazing teacher? The one who could motivate you...the one who could explain inexplicable concepts in a way you could understand...the one who gave you those light bulb a-ha moments. If, in our degenerated state, we can still produce incredible teachers like that...can you even imagine what kind of teacher Christ was? Have you ever registered for a class...headed off to the campus bookshop...only to discover that your professor **wrote** – literally authored the textbook?? A whole different level of learning takes place in those classes...I’m wondering if this was the disciples experience – learning from the author of the law of love...from the designer and creator of humanity!

SUNDAY

The Authority of Jesus

This week’s memory text from Luke 4:32 says, “And they were **astonished** at His teaching, for His word was with authority.” The Greek word translated as “astonished” in this text literally means “blown away”...those who were listening to or seeing Jesus act with authority were “blown away” and “dumbfounded”...such was the power of his authority.

Now Luke was acquainted with the role of authority – all types of authority – he was a physician, he was a scholar, he traveled with Paul and witnessed his ecclesiastical authority. He had rubbed shoulders with all kinds of authority...at all levels of authority, but he repeatedly emphasized in his writings that Jesus and his authority were unmatched. Why?

Jesus was born in the piddly...some some might say little hick town...of Nazareth, he grew up in a humble carpenter’s home, he was not rich, we do not have Biblical evidence that he went to university or seminary, he held no position of power. So, what is it that people were seeing? Where did he get this authority from to confront virtually everyone – Roman rulers, Jewish scholars, rabbis, secular & religious leaders, and ordinary folks? Why were these folks all so blown away? Why was His authority so noticeable and so in contrast to what folks were accustomed to?

The scribes and religious leaders spoke **BY** authority – quoting those who preceded them – but Jesus spoke **WITH** authority. With authority as the Creator, with the authority of the Father who sent Him, with the authority of His perfect life, Jesus spoke and acted so that even his enemies had to admit that “no man ever spoke like this Man!” Not just in words and works, but in life as well, Jesus spoke with absolute certainty, without contradiction or confusion. Christ’s authority derives from the fact that He was the very embodiment of truth. From the previous Education quote, “What He taught, He was...Not only did He teach the truth, but **He was truth**. It was this that gave His teaching, power.”



Sunday's lesson gives these Biblical examples from Luke of Christ's authority being recognized. Let's have some folks look up Luke 4:31-37, Luke 5:24-26, and Luke 8:22-25.

- Luke 4:31-37 – teaching people in Capernaum on Sabbath. “They were surprised and impressed – His teaching was so forthright, so confident, so authoritative, not the quibbling and quoting they were used to.” Not to mention that His voice spoke demons into submission...He was “the talk of the town.”
- Luke 8:22-25 is the familiar story of the disciples in the boat that night during the awful storm, when Christ commanded “Peace be still”...and the awestruck disciples said “Who is He anyway, that even the winds and the waves obey Him?”
- Luke 5:24-26 – familiar story of the paralyzed man who was lowered down through the room by his friends. “Which is simpler to say, ‘I forgive your sins’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? Just so it’s clear that I’m the Son of Man and am authorized to do either, or both, ‘Get up. Take your bed and go walk.’”

“Christ spoke with authority. Every truth essential for the people to know He proclaimed with the unfaltering assurance of certain knowledge. He uttered nothing fanciful or sentimental. He presented no sophistries, no human opinions. No idle tales, no false theories clothed in beautiful language, came from His lips. The statements that He made were truths established by personal knowledge. He foresaw the delusive doctrines that would fill the world, but He did not unfold them. In His teachings He dwelt upon the unchangeable principles of God’s word. He magnified the simple, practical truths that the common people could understand and bring into the daily experience. Christ might have opened to men the deepest truths of science. He might have unlocked mysteries that have required centuries of toil and study to penetrate. He might have made suggestions in scientific lines that would have afforded food for thought and stimulus for invention to the close of time. But He did not do this. He said nothing to gratify curiosity or to satisfy man’s ambitions by opening doors to worldly greatness. In all His teaching, Christ brought the minds of men in contact with the Infinite Mind. He did not direct the people to study men’s theories about God, His word, or His works. He taught them to behold God as manifested in His works, in His word, and by His providences.” – {8T 201.3}

Does doing things in God’s name...saying, “God led me to this” automatically give us or our actions authority? How do we know?

- Integrative-evidence based approach
- Prayer for wisdom, discernment, investigation, practice
- Investigation of Doctrine --

“There is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. We are living in perilous times, and it does not become us to accept everything claimed to be truth without examining it thoroughly; neither can we afford to reject anything that bears the fruits of the Spirit of God; but we should be teachable, meek and lowly of heart. There



are those who oppose everything that is not in accordance with their own ideas, and by so doing they endanger their eternal interest as verily as did the Jewish nation in their rejection of Christ. The Lord designs that our opinions shall be put to the test, that we may see the necessity of closely examining the living oracles to see whether or not we are in the faith. Many who claim to believe the truth have settled down at their ease, saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing."—The Review and Herald, December 20, 1892. – {CW 36.1}

MONDAY

Christ's Greatest Sermon

The quarterly states that Christ's Sermon on the Mount, including the golden rule, is often hailed in literature as "the essence of Christianity." Has anyone ever heard referred to like that? Oh, that it were true! It is also referred to as the "ordination charge to the 12", since it appears to take place chronologically immediately after the 12 disciples were chosen. Luke's account is found in Luke 6:20-49...and the first part of this sermon is commonly referred to as "the Beatitudes". This story is only recounted in two of the gospels, and it seems that Luke (or Luke's translators) kept his interpretation much more literal and temporal. So let's take a look at some of the backwards upside-down math at work in God's kingdom. What traits are declared as blessed?

- Poor/poverty (poor in spirit)
- Hungry (hunger and thirst for righteousness)
- Weeping/mourning
- Hated/excluded/insulted/rejected/persecuted for righteousness sake

And then the "woe untos":

- Rich/self-satisfied
- Well-fed
- Laugh/everything is fun and games
- Popular/flattered/concerned with what others think

Can you imagine how strange and crazy and illogical and backwards these concepts must have sounded to the new disciples? His Kingdom is nothing like worldly kingdoms, his government operates nothing like earthly governments, and I would submit that his natural design laws are nothing like human imposed laws. Well, then it probably got even weirder in verses 27-38. The Message reads like this:

"To you who are ready for the truth, I say this: Love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer for that person. If someone slaps you in the face, stand there and take it. If someone grabs your shirt, giftwrap your best coat and make a present of it. If someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life. No more tit-for-tat stuff. Live generously. Here is a simple rule of thumb for behavior: Ask yourself what you want people to



do for you; then grab the initiative and do it for them! If you only love the lovable, do you expect a pat on the back? Run-of-the-mill sinners do that. If you only help those who help you, do you expect a medal? Garden-variety sinners do that. If you only give for what you hope to get out of it, do you think that's charity? The stingiest of pawnbrokers does that. I tell you, love your enemies. Help and give without expecting a return. I promise—you will never regret it. Live out this God-created identity the way our Father lives toward us, generously and graciously, even when we're at our worst. Our Father is kind; you be kind. Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults—unless, of course, you want the same treatment. Don't condemn those who are down; that hardness can boomerang. Be easy on people; you'll find life a lot easier. Give away your life; you'll find life given back, but not merely given back—given back with bonus and blessing. Giving, not getting, is the way. Generosity begets generosity." Luke 6:27-38 - The Message

Isn't it tough to get your mind around these concepts on some days?

Mrs. White says this about the Sermon on the Mount in Testimonies Volume 7:

"The Sermon on the Mount is heaven's benediction to the world, a voice from the throne of God. It was given to mankind to be to them the law of duty and the light of heaven, their hope and consolation in despondency. Here the Prince of preachers, the Master Teacher, utters the words that the Father gave Him to speak. The Beatitudes are Christ's greeting, not only to those who believe, but to the whole human family. He seems to have forgotten for a moment that He is in the world, not in heaven; and He uses the familiar salutation of the world of light. Blessings flow from His lips as the gushing forth of a long-sealed current of rich life. Christ leaves us in no doubt as to the traits of character that He will always recognize and bless. From the ambitious favorites of the world He turns to those whom they disown, pronouncing all blessed who receive His light and life. To the poor in spirit, the meek, the lowly, the sorrowful, the despised, the persecuted, He opens His arms of refuge, saying: "Come unto Me,... and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. ***Christ can look on the misery of the world without a shade of sorrow for having created man.*** In the human heart He sees more than sin, more than misery. In His infinite wisdom and love He sees man's possibilities, the height to which he may attain. He knows that, even though human beings have abused their mercies and destroyed their God-given dignity, yet the Creator is to be glorified in their redemption. The Sermon on the Mount is an example of how we are to teach. What pains Christ has taken to make mysteries no longer mysteries, but plain, simple truths! There is in His instruction nothing vague, nothing hard to understand. "He opened His mouth, and taught them." Matthew 5:2. His words were spoken in no whispered tones, nor was His utterance harsh and disagreeable. He spoke with clearness and emphasis, with solemn, convincing force. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Matthew 7:28, 29. — {7T 269.6}

Quarterly states: "The golden rule of love – no other command of Jesus is more debated and considered more difficult to keep." Agree?



Quarterly states: “Note Christ’s insistence on Forgiveness, liberal giving, exemplary living, and tolerance.” Why the *insistence* on these?

TUESDAY

A New Family

Jesus introduced a new concept of neighbor, a new concept of family – not defined by the usual exclusivity of caste, color, language, tribe, or religion. There was no division. Under the banner of agape love – unmerited, nonexclusive, universal, and sacrificial – Christ created a new family, ***one in harmony with His original design***. This family reflects the original, universal, and ideal concept enshrined in the Genesis creation, which attests that every human being is created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27) and, therefore, equal before Him.

What are some of the typical walls and divisions that Christ tore down in His ministry?

- Profession/reputation – tax collectors, prostitutes, “sinners”
- Dead/unclean, lepers, demon possessed, disfigured
- Poor, maimed, lame, blind

The family of Christian discipleship ought to be no less close and binding than the ties of having common parents. To Jesus the true test of family is not blood relationships but doing the will of God. It seems like we are not quite there, are we? In this world? In this country? In this denomination?

WEDNESDAY

Love Defined: The Parable of the Good Samaritan: Part 1

Only Luke records the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). This parable illustrates the horizontal dimension-the kind of love that should characterize human life – refusing to acknowledge any barrier between humans but living instead within Jesus' definition of a neighbor: that all human beings are children of God, and deserve to be loved and treated equally.

When Jesus asked the lawyer, “What is written in the law?” what did he say? So he ***knew*** God’s law of love, at least he knew enough to recite it. During the time of Jesus, it was the customary for prominent Jews, such as this lawyer, to wear a phylactery on their wrist. It was a little leather pouch containing large portions of the Torah, including the one that would answer Jesus' question. Jesus’ question directed the lawyer to what was written in Deuteronomy (Deut. 6:5) and Leviticus (Lev. 19:18) – the very thing he was likely carrying in his phylactery. He had the answer on his wrist and on his lips, but not in his heart. Jesus directed the lawyer to a great truth: eternal life is not a matter of keeping rules but calls for loving God absolutely and unreservedly and likewise all God's creation-our neighbor, to be precise. And when the lawyer pushes further, either out of ignorance or out of arrogance, and asks: Who is my neighbor? Christ responds with the familiar parable of the Good Samaritan.

Did you know that this story really happened? Mrs. White tells us in the Desire of Ages that the parable of the good Samaritan is not an “imaginary scene, but an actual occurrence, which was known



to be exactly as represented. The priest and the Levite who passed by on the other side were in the company that listened to Christ's words (499).

Why is it significant that the priest and the Levite did not stop and help the man in need? By all appearances, they were the ones you would expect to do it! They were just like the attorney – they knew what was written in the law, they could recite it from memory, they were probably wearing it on their arm. But there had been no conversion, no heart change. The Samaritan had perhaps never heard “the law”, and yet his heart had obviously been transformed by the Holy Spirit to operate in compassion and unselfish love.

What is important to remember, is that this parable does not say anything about what we can do to be saved. Its emphasis is on how a converted person on the path to healing (or a “saved” person) ought to live.

“In His life and lessons, Christ has given a perfect exemplification of the unselfish ministry which has its origin in God. God does not live for Himself. By creating the world, and by upholding all things, He is constantly ministering for others...This ideal of ministry God has committed to His Son. Jesus was given to stand at the head of humanity, that by His example He might teach what it means to minister. His whole life was under a law of service. He served all, ministered to all. Thus He lived the law of God, and by His example showed how we are to obey it.” {DOA 649}

“In His teaching He ever presented the law as a divine unity, showing that it is impossible to keep one precept and break another; for the same principle runs through all. Man's destiny will be determined by his obedience to the whole law. It is not possible for the heart in which Christ abides to be destitute of love. If we love God because He first loved us, we shall love all for whom Christ died. We cannot come in touch with divinity without coming in touch with humanity; for in Him who sits upon the throne of the universe, divinity and humanity are combined. Connected with Christ, we are connected with our fellow men by the golden links of the chain of love. Then the pity and compassion of Christ will be manifest in our life. We shall not wait to have the needy and unfortunate brought to us. We shall not need to be entreated to feel for the woes of others. It will be as natural for us to minister to the needy and suffering as it was for Christ to go about doing good...Wherever there is an impulse of love and sympathy, wherever the heart reaches out to bless and uplift others, there is revealed the working of God's Holy Spirit. **In the depths of heathenism, men who have had no knowledge of the written law of God, who have never even heard the name of Christ, have been kind to His servants, protecting them at the risk of their own lives.** Their acts show the working of a divine power. The Holy Spirit has implanted the grace of Christ in the heart of the savage, quickening his sympathies contrary to his nature, contrary to his education. The “Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9), is shining in his soul; and this light, if heeded, will guide his feet to the kingdom of God.” – {COL 385.1}

The Book of Luke 2Q 2015 Lesson 10

Following Jesus in Everyday Life

Report from Australia / New Zealand Trip:

First, thanks to Wendell Moses, Russell Atkins and Lori Atkins for teaching class while I was away. People came up and told me in Australia what a great job all three of you are doing!

Thanks to this class for your support. It is you, this core class who has come to love this message about God, and who has stuck together over the past five years – yes it has been five years since we founded Come and Reason Ministries. And it is because of your love for this message that the trip to Australia, New Zealand and so many other places, along with all our materials to share has been made possible!

And Thanks! To all our online family and friends, who as you have heard this message, have joined with us and share it in your community, keep us in your prayers and financially support in creating all the materials we give away. All of you are part of this movement which is having a HUGE impact on Christianity. I can't tell you the number of places this message is now being taught – schools, doctors, nurses, churches of multiple denominations – people coming back to church who have left, people accepting God who never had before. So thank you each and everyone for your support, for the experiences I am about to share from our trip would not have been possible without all of you!

We want to express our **overwhelming appreciation** for Simon Harrison, our manager in Australia who has worked tirelessly to bring off this entire event. I wish all of you could meet Simon. He is an amazing Christian gentleman, humble, gentle, faithful, diligent, immaculate attention to detail, seeks only to give glory to God, a great father to four beautiful children. He just does a fantastic job of representing us and this message down under. For those going to the GC in July you will get a chance to meet Simon as he will be helping us out at our booth.

We flew into Brisbane Friday May 1, and were scheduled to speak that evening, but Brisbane experienced extreme rain of over 3 inches per hour, causing flooding so we had to cancel the Friday evening meeting. But, it all worked out because we did that program Sabbath morning and during our Sabbath program had over 700 people, standing room only at the Springwood SDA church.

We met so many wonderful people. The message was enthusiastically received. We want to tell our new friends hello:

Pastor Kendal Cobbin and his lovely wife Lenelle
Pastor Cara Dale
Don & Deanna Pitchford
Pastor Mike Brownhill

The Big added bonus was that Louis Johnson, who did all the artwork and music score for *Journal of the Watcher* flew in from Dubai to spend the weekend with us. Louis is such an amazing talent and uses his abilities to bring glory to God and share this message of God's character of love. We are truly blessed to have Louis as part of our international family.

We presented Sunday at an Anglican Church in Brisbane, and one of the conference officers for the Anglican church, Ralph Bowles introduced me telling his audience he had read *The God-Shaped Brain* and he really loved the view of God it presented. There were multiple priests and educators present who all expressed appreciation for the message and we gave away our DVDs which were enthusiastically received.

We drove to Toowoomba and spoke to the community, which was overwhelmingly positively received. And really

enjoyed ourselves with our new friends there:

Arlagene and Daryl Groves
Adrian Fitzpatrick (Darling Down Christian School Principal)

We next flew to Perth, the other side of the country, where I presented to an inter-denomination group of Christian counselors, doing an all day seminar. Again, overwhelming positive response and they have already invited me back. I also spoke at Livingston and Freemantle SDA church, again with very positive responses. We gave away our DVDs at every one of these events.

Hello and a big thanks to:

Christian Counselors Assoc. Team & Keren Masters
Pastor Paul Goltz (Livingston SDA)
Pastor Clem & Julie Van Ballegooyen (Fremantle SDA)
Jan Chapman
Nathaniel Harrison
Jeanelle and Keith Hockley

We were blessed to get to spend some time with Simon's children, Maddie, Christian, Kyra and Daniel, and his mother Shirley and her husband John, brother Nat & Julie and their children. And a BIG thanks to Wendy for her friendship, time, energy and support!

On Sunday we flew to Melbourne where we held a three day seminar for a inter-denominational group of Christian counselors. Again extremely well received. Want to say a big thank you to Tamara Auora for all her help in organizing the Melbourne event.

And thanks to Emanuel & Nada Millen and Emanuel's parents, and William and his wife and daughter!

Thursday we flew to Sydney where we did a TV interview for Adventist media, thanks Kent Kingston (Adventist Media Centre) which is to be broadcast on the Hope channel in Australia and USA. Then on to the San, which is the Adventist Hospital in Sydney. We presented the God Shaped Brain lecture and it was very enthusiastically received, and was given a tour of their new facility – amazing new hospital. Thanks to Dr. Alex Currie (SAH) and Suzanne Hadfield.

Thursday and Friday we presented at Avondale College, then an all day seminar in Maitland. We really appreciate Wayne French, chaplain at Avondale who helped coordinate the event and picked us up from the airport. And Rick and Darlene Sharp, the pastor at Maitland who has been such a big supporter of this picture about God. Also, we are thankful to Brenden Wooley, who has loved this message and purchased given away over 200 of *The God-Shaped Brain* he was kind enough to drive us from Maitland to Sydney, a two hour drive.

We also want to thank:

Matt & Heidi Thompson so enthusiastic in sharing this message with young people
Pastor Bradley Rea (Interview for You Tube Channel)
Brad Horne (Who helped organize our resources)

Our final Sunday we flew to Auckland, NZ and spoke at the *Our Feet on the Rock* Australian/New Zealand SDA Education Summit. We had such a wonderful reception and fellowship with the teachers and church leaders there. We want to especially thank:

Daryl Mudoch, National Director Adventist Schools Australia

Rosalie MCFarlane, Director Education New Zealand Pacific Union Conference
Lyndon Chapman, Associate Director Education Adventist Schools Australia
Ken Weslake Director for Education Pacific Division
And all the wonderful teachers, principals, church officials who made our reception so wonderful.

And a special thanks to Stephen Davies, who took us in his private plane for a flight over Auckland and the surrounding countryside.

And on Tuesday evening we spoke to the community in New Zealand, who filled the auditorium and just loved this message about God. Thanks to Terry and Richard Marsters who love this message and worked for weeks organizing the event and then showed us around New Zealand before we flew home yesterday.

And, if I forgot to mention someone – please forgive me as I am still jet-lagged as I write this just getting home after 29 hours of travel.

SABBATH

Read memory text: “And the apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith’” (Luke 17:5, NKJV).

What does this mean? When you hear the word faith what comes to mind? Does it mean: a religious organization such as a system of belief or confidence and trust?

I think the text is speaking of confidence and trust. How would Jesus do this? From where does faith originate?

From what is faith based and what increases it?

- Evidence (truth)
- Experience
- Trials that put the truth/evidence to test and results in confirming outcomes and strengthen our confidence i.e. our faith

Is this how you have been taught to experience faith, through experience and evidence? How much of Christianity is declarative – believe, why? Because I said so, the Bible says so, the church says so, God says so...? Trust the Bible because it is inspired...

Does God want us to believe on declarations? On the road to Emmaus what method did Christ use?

We give our children didactic education, i.e. education on stories in the Bible, memory texts, doctrines and supposed rationales for those doctrines, but do we, after didactic education, have specified applications, in which the children go out and practice applying what they were taught in lecture?

Isn't this what Christ did? He taught them, then demonstrated in action what He taught, and then sent them out to get experience relying upon Him, practicing His methods, teaching His truths.



In the military soldiers are given lectures, and then taken out into the field and given opportunity to practice, whether it be with a weapon, or how to navigate using a compass, or how to stop a wound from bleeding or how to apply a field dressing, or how to load and unload a stretcher onto a jeep, or helicopter etc.

In nursing school, medical school, dental school, students are given lectures and then given opportunity to practice applying what they have learned in real life.

What would happen if soldiers or health care providers only got lectures, no hands on application of what they heard in lecture and then found themselves dealing with real world problems?

Do our children struggle to apply God's truth in real life because it has been didactic, theoretical, without real world application?

We met some wonderful people in Australia who have developed an entire new Biblical educational plan for children in Adventist Education, (Lenelle Cobbin was one of a group who helped develop this) which is now being implemented in North American schools. It focuses on Head, Heart, Hands, Feet, meaning, after teaching a concept they focus on making that truth about God real in the experience of the child, then applying that truth in action with doing for others and then sharing that truth with others. And the overwhelming emphasis is on God's character of love!

Read first paragraph, "Though a great teacher..."

If Jesus didn't establish a school of theology and philosophy, what did He establish? A Remedy! Which consisted of what?

- The truth about God & Himself to win us to trust them
- The truth about sin to reveal it is the deviation from God's design law of love and causes death
- The truth about Satan to sever trust in him
- A new perfect humanity, a human character perfected by the choices made with a human brain – The human brain of Jesus Christ!

As the lesson states, He did reveal the truth about God's character, why was this necessary?

What is meant by the language, "He also paid the penalty for sin so that human beings, despite their fallen nature, could be redeemed."?

Do you see a contradiction in the statement? Note how the lesson rightly identifies our problem, our "fallen nature," but then confuses the solution with some legal payment. That would be like saying, He paid our speeding fine so that despite having leukemia we could be redeemed.

It is the confusion that comes from accepting Imperial Rome's change to God's law that Daniel



prophesied about and thus failing to diagnose properly our condition.

It would be better to leave out the legal language, or clarify it. God and Christ paid a high price to fix the damage Adam's sin did to humanity. That price is what was needed to reveal the truth, destroy death, restore humanity back to God's ideal and expose Satan as liar and fraud.

Read the third paragraph, "The call to be part..." thoughts? What is the point the lesson is trying to teach in this paragraph?

It on the surface almost sounds right and good, but perhaps weaves a subtle message that Christ would not prefer be sent. It sounds, like the lesson is suggesting as we surrender to Christ we stop thinking for ourselves, we become mindless slaves living to hear what He says so we can do it, no questions. If that is what is being suggested, do you think Jesus wants that?

What does it mean, "what He says becomes the disciple's law of life." What do you think of this phrase "law of life"? What is the law of life? It is the law of love. And is it the law of life because Jesus says it, or does He say it because that is the way life actually works?

When they use the word law and law of life, what do you hear being described? A law that is the protocol upon which God constructed reality to operate, or do you hear something that sounds more like a ruler dictating rules and requiring obedience from subjects. Is this God's desire for us, or does God want friends, who when they don't understand will actually question Him?

In the OT who are the two people identified as God's friends?

Moses and Abraham – and what did both of them do? Both questioned God. When God sounded as if He was going to destroy Israel, Moses questioned Him, and God didn't destroy them. And when God told Abraham He was going to destroy Sodom and the cities on the plain, Abraham questioned Him, and negotiated what Abraham thought was a sure deal that would avoid the cities being destroyed.

God didn't get offended by this, but was quite pleased to have thinking friends, who loved Him and loved their fellow human beings and wanted to protect and save others. This is God's heart. God is love and He always wants to heal and save.

What is allegiance to Christ and His will? Is it allegiance to power? To position? What is our allegiance to Christ to be based upon, power, force, threat, coercion or love?

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read Luke 11:37-54, from *The Remedy*:



³⁷When Jesus had finished speaking, a legal theologian of the Pharisee sect invited him home to eat; so Jesus went and reclined at the table.³⁸ But when Jesus didn't first do a ceremonial washing of his hands before the meal, the Pharisee was shocked.

³⁹So the Master tried to enlighten him and said, "You legal and behaviorally focused Pharisees work so hard to make yourselves look good on the outside, but the inside, the heart, is full of selfishness, arrogance, and greed."⁴⁰You really don't understand God's kingdom of love! Did not God, who crafted your outside in his image, also design your inside, your heart and character, to be like him?⁴¹So give from your inside, your hearts, to help the less fortunate, and then everything about you will be clean.

⁴²"Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you Pharisees! You proudly pay a pre-tax tithe and even give a tenth of the herbs in your garden. But you fail to do what actually matters, to do what is right because it is right and live in harmony with God's law of love, his design for life. You should have lived lives of love for others without neglecting the simple instructions of God.

⁴³"Misery is yours, you legal theologians, you Pharisees, because you love to put yourselves at the center. You seek the most important places, and crave adoration, whether at church or the marketplace.

⁴⁴"Misery is yours, you legal theologians, Pharisees; you're like unmarked graves, appearing inviting like a lawn but beneath the surface is death and decay."

⁴⁵One of the Supreme Court lawyers challenged him. "But Doctor, don't you realize what you're saying is rude and offensive? You insult us."

⁴⁶Jesus answered him, "And misery is yours, you lawyers, because you create a false legal religious system with so many imposed rules. You burden people needlessly with guilt and fear, and you won't make any effort to help them.

⁴⁷"Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion. You build tombs and memorials to God's spokespersons, but it was your ancestors who killed them."⁴⁸Thus the memorials you build are a witness against you for your hearts are no different than those who killed them."⁴⁹Because of your false remedy and penal legal trickery, God in his wisdom said, 'I will send them my spokespersons, instructors and Bible scholars; some they will execute, others they will persecute.'⁵⁰Understand then, this generation is responsible for rejecting the witness of every prophet who has been killed since the creation of the world,⁵¹from the murder of Abel to that of Zechariah, who was killed in church right at the altar. I tell you truly, this generation is responsible for rejecting all the evidence those righteous witnesses gave.

⁵²"Misery is yours, you lawyers and legal theologians. You have the Scriptures, the keys to the knowledge of God's kingdom of love. But you have refused to understand it and have created a false legal interpretation that prevents others from understanding it."

⁵³When Jesus left that place, the legal theologians of the Pharisee sect and the lawyers aggressively opposed him and followed him berating him with questions, ⁵⁴trying to trick him into saying something they could use against him.

Read third paragraph, “For example, while tithing...”

- What are the demands of love and justice?
- Are love and justice different?
- What does love demand?
- What does justice demand?
- What is justice?
- Do you get a different justice if you change the law?
- What does justice look like if the law is the law of love, the protocols upon which life is designed to operate?
- If someone breaks design law protocols, like hanging themselves, what is the justice action to take when dealing with them?
- What does justice look like when one thinks through imposed law constructs?
- What is God’s justice?
- What was the justice God taught in the OT?
- What does it mean then when we hear justice requires God inflict death?

Seventh paragraph states, “Meanwhile, the Pharisees honored the prophets no longer alive but worked against the living ones.”

Do we have this problem today, honor God’s dead spokespersons but working against those who are carrying His message forward today?

What is the reason?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Fear God and give glory to Him...”

What does this mean? I am genuinely unsure of what the authors are trying to convey? If they are trying to convey admiration, awe, overwhelming humility at the wisdom of God and the awareness of His infinite goodness and knowledge, then yes, I agree, this leads us to trust Him and want to following Him and stand with Him.

But, if they are suggesting that God is powerful, and is our rightful owner and thus claims our loyalty to Him because of this, and that having fear of God involves mindless loyalty and blind acceptance of His decrees then I would disagree.

How would you state the first of the three angel's messages?

Read second paragraph, "The passage..." It seems very much like a contradiction from the first paragraph, in the first paragraph they said "fearing God is not being afraid." Rightly so, but in this paragraph, they say "We need not fear forces that can only affect our body in the present world. Instead, we must fear and obey God because in His hands is our eternal destiny."

Any concerns about this?

Does it sound like terror-based theology? Be afraid of God because He can not only hurt your body but also destroy your soul?

But is this what Scripture actually teaches? Is our eternal destiny decided by God? No! God has already chosen us. He has chosen every human being for salvation in Jesus; the determination of our salvation is now up to us whether we will choose Him!

This smacks of the penal/legal theologies, which put God in role of arbiter and imposer of punishments and leads people to be more afraid of God who is trying to save them than sin that is destroying them.

Read third paragraph, "While Jesus refuses..." Why is the 10th Commandment relevant? What makes it relevant?

Why is it perhaps the most relevant of all the commandments?

Romans 7:7-12 from *The Remedy*:

⁷What shall we say then? Is the law evil and selfish because it increases the amount of evil and selfishness we see? Absolutely not! I would not have known what evil and selfishness looked like if it wasn't for the diagnostic efficacy of the law. I would not have realized that coveting was evil and selfish if the law didn't say, "Don't covet."⁸ But selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the law is only a diagnostic instrument and not a Remedy, magnified every covetous desire within me. For apart from the diagnostic ability of the law, sin is unrecognizable.⁹ Once I thought I was healthy and free from the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness, but then the commandment examined me, exposed how utterly infected I was and diagnosed me as terminal.¹⁰ I discovered that the very commandment given only to diagnose my condition I had unwittingly attempted to use as a cure, and thus my condition only worsened.¹¹ For selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the commandment could only diagnose and not cure, deceived me into thinking I could be cured by working to keep the commandments, but instead my terminal state only worsened.¹² So understand this: the law diagnoses perfectly, and the commandment is the standard of what is right and good, set apart by God to reveal what is evil and destructive.



Why is the commandment not to covet relevant? Because it is the only one of the 10 Commandments that cannot be done behaviorally, it is the one that makes it clear that all 10 Commandments are diagnostic and intended to reveal the condition of the heart and are not a remedy to be applied to behavior.

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read Luke 12:35-53, let's read it from the NIV first, discuss it and then from *The Remedy*.

35“Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, 36like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. 37It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. 38It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. 39But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. 40You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

41Peter asked, “Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?”

42The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? 43It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. 44Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 45But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. 46The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

47“The servant who knows the master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. 48But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.



49“I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! 50But I have a baptism to undergo, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! 51Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. 52From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. 53They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

What is the lesson? What does it mean beaten with many blows or few blows? This is often used by those who want to teach God is the source of inflicted suffering and punishment.

The lesson states, “An neglect of faithfulness on the pretext that ‘My master is delaying his coming’ is placing oneself under the severest form of God’s judgment.”

What does this mean? Do you understand these passages through imposed law models and then teach God will make the severest judicial finding against you and inflict the severest punishment on you?

Does such a teaching reduce fear of God and instill trust? No, it destroys trust, destroys love and incites rebellion. This is a subtle lie about God, based on accepting lies about God’s law, which people put forth in the guise of sounding righteous but which actually obstructs the work of God in people’s lives.

Here is from the Remedy, design law lens, expanded paraphrase, see if this changes our understanding to see God as love:

³⁵“Be dressed and prepared to serve; keep your minds alert and your hearts burning with the desire to help, ³⁶like people eagerly anticipating their lord's return from a wedding reception, who, when he knocks, they instantly open the door for him. ³⁷It will be a joyful day for those servants who are prepared and watching for their lord to return. The truth is, he will have them sit at the banquet table and he will serve them. ³⁸It will be a joyful day for those servants who are prepared and ready when their master arrives, even if he arrives in the middle of the night. ³⁹Understand the importance be being ready: if a homeowner knew the exact time a thief was coming, he would not have been unaware and his house would not have been burglarized. ⁴⁰You must live in a state of readiness because the Son of Man will return at a time you don't expect.”

⁴¹Peter asked, "Lord, did you tell this parable for us, or for everyone?"

⁴²Jesus gave this answer. "Who then is an intelligent and wise manager, one qualified to share the Remedy effectively in order to nurture the master's staff? ⁴³It will be the most awesome experience for that aide when the master returns to find him or her reliably doing so. ⁴⁴Truly, that aide will be trusted with all the master possesses. ⁴⁵But what if the master's aide is self-centered and says to him or herself, 'The master has been gone a long time, who



knows when he will return,' and rather than nurturing the staff, he berates, abuses and misleads them and then goes and uses the master's resources to party with gluttons and drunkards.⁴⁶ That aide will be totally surprised, caught completely unaware, on the day his master returns. The master will let that wicked servant go, cutting their relationship and casting him out with all the other counterfeits and frauds who have peddled false remedies.

⁴⁷"The aide who understands the Master, his design, the problem being addressed, how to apply the Remedy, and either doesn't do so or applies a false remedy, will suffer many blows - a guilty conscience, warped character, damaged reason, broken relationships and ultimately a destroyed soul.⁴⁸ But the one who doesn't know about the Remedy or how to apply it and therefore doesn't do so or applies a false remedy will suffer few blows - regret, disappointment, and grief. The more you are given, the more you have to share with others; the greater your abilities, the more you have to give away.

⁴⁹"I have come to ignite the fire of truth and love upon the earth, and oh how I wished it was already an inferno!⁵⁰ But I have a mission to complete, and the pressure on me to complete it is overwhelming.⁵¹ Do you think I have come to make peace with this selfish world? Absolutely not! I have not come to make peace with selfishness but to cut selfishness out of the hearts of men.⁵² From now on, those who choose the Remedy will cut dysfunctional family ties, and a family of five will be divided two against three and three against two.⁵³ Love will free a son from selfish loyalty to his father's ambitions and feuds, and a father from the selfish exploits of his son; love will sever a daughter from the control of an oppressive and manipulative mother, and a mother from the selfish demands of her daughter; love will cut through the fear and hostility a daughter-in-law has toward her mother-in-law, and mother-in-law toward daughter-in-law."

Read the last paragraph, "The ancient prophet's..." What kind of war are we in? Where is the battlefield? The mind, what are the weapons of God, truth, love, freedom, forgiveness, repentance, prayer, God's Word...

What do you think of the last sentence, "Only by continual faith in the Christ of the cross can one win the final victory."

True – yet can even the Christ of the cross be misunderstood and misrepresented? Can even Christ be represented as being killed by His Father, to appease His Father's wrath and thus is in heaven pleading to His Father to protect us from Him? If we worship such a God is our faith strengthened or undermined? Is love built up or fear?

Yes, we must come back to the Christ of the cross, but only when rightly understood through the lens of design law. Christ fulfilling God's purpose to restore this creation back to His design of love! Christ is not working on God, but working for God, to reveal God and accomplish God's purpose of healing and saving this creation.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “The Father, the Son...” Can the cross be presented in a way that is actually bad news rather than good news?

How so? And what underlies such views?

The second paragraph says we are to be Jesus’ witnesses, to witness what?

So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. Rev 12:17

What does this mean? The answer is found in Rev 19:10:

Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Well what is the spirit of prophecy? It is the spirit that inspired the prophets. In other words, the testimony of Jesus is the truth about His Father that Jesus Himself revealed, and is the same truth the Spirit inspired the prophets to tell. Those who are the remnant, that Satan hates, are those who live in harmony with God’s design law, and tell the truth about God’s character of love as Jesus did.

Thus, Rev 12:17 from *The Remedy*:

Then the dragon was frantic with hate and rage at the woman and went off to make war against the remnant of her children, the end-time people who still embrace and practice God's methods of love and hold true to Jesus' testimony about his Father.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Jesus’ answer is unique in the history...” Do we believe Jesus? Do we believe Jesus does not rule by coercion, by threat, by intimidation, by the infliction of pain, suffering, punishment?

Then why does almost all of Christianity teach that Jesus is coming back with a rod of iron to take vengeance on His enemies?

Will the exercise of power get God what He wants? First, what does God want from us? Our love and trust, which causes us to open our hearts and then our healing and transformation back to His design in order to prevent us from dying from the terminal condition with which we were born.



Can God get love and trust by the exercise of might and power? Zech 4:6 “not by might nor by power but by my Spirit says the Lord.”

And how does the Spirit work? Love and truth.

Do we have evidence to support this declaration of Scripture?

What happened in history when God used power?

- An angel with flaming sword barred the way to the tree of life
 - They rebelled into violence
- The flood
 - Built tower of Babel
- Sodom
 - Moabites and Ammonites
- 10 Plagues of Egypt
 - Worship golden calf
 - Murmur against God
- Thunder at Sinai
 - Grumble against Moses
 - Complain about the diet want meat
 - Hardened hearts 40 years in desert
- Mt. Carmel
 - Persistent rebellion and idol worship
 - Eventual captivity

Love and trust cannot be commanded or engendered with threat, use of power or punishment. Thus the entire penal presentation of God is *proved* to be false.

Even someone as corrupt as Napoleon Bonaparte understood this:

I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creation of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded His empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1, 3, 4

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase is now available on our website, BOTH the Android and Apple Version is not Available! First update for Apple Version now available – most glitches fixed, but if not let me know.

- This is a **FREE** app
- Please read the preface to understand the approach to this paraphrase
- We have cards available to share with others and will ship them at no cost
- Also, if you find typos please email those to us so we can fix any missed typos

CARDS – If you have any of our ministry business cards please check to see if they have our current address: PO Box 28266 Chattanooga, TN 37424. If they are the old ones please discard them. We will be happy to send new ones, just email us. Thanks!

Prayer Request:

Please Pray God will bless our efforts to share this beautiful message about Him at The General Conference of SDA in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. Our booth is A481 and we are giving away DVDs and books. Pray God will make this an amazing event for the advancement of the truth about Him!

New Mailing Address: PLEASE UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS BOOK:

Come and Reason Ministries
PO Box 28266
Chattanooga, TN 37424

The Journal of the Watcher:

The Journal of the Watcher is an illustrated ebook available

For ANDROID in the APP

For APPLE in the iBooks store and in the APP Store – your choice slightly different controls and features.

We are also having it rendered as a “movie” for itunes, for all those people who don’t have smart devices or Apple computers. Will let you know when it is available in itunes.

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Come and Reason Ministries FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under.

June 20, 2015: JFEST, Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth at JFEST to give away our materials. JFEST is at Camp Jordan. We will have class at our normal time on June 20. We need some volunteers to work our booth that day – please let us know if

you are local and can help out.

July 1-12: GC session at San Antonio. Come and Reason will have a booth in the exhibit hall, booth A481. Please come by and see us if you are there. We will have class at our regular times here in Collegedale.

August 1: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Petaluma, CA SDA church.

September 3,4: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Baptist Boomer's Conference in San Antonio, TX.

September 12: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr., CA SDA church.

September 23-26: American Association of Christian Counselors World Convention at Gaylord Opryland Hotel, Nashville TN. Come and Reason will have a booth in the exhibit hall, and Dr. Jennings will be doing a preconference workshop and regular conference presentation, as well as commencement speaker for Light University graduation.

October 24: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Puyallup, WA.

AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support a charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered Charity. So, you can select us, and whenever you shop in their **smile.amazon.com** site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN.**



The Book of Luke 2Q 2015 Lesson 11

The Kingdom of God

I received this email this week:

May 27, 2015

Dear Dr. Jennings,

As an introduction, I'm the one who has a supply of your books and dvd's in my studio to give out to my clients here in Montrose, Colorado! ☺

The reason I am writing is that I wanted to share with you an essay that our daughter, Sami, wrote for her final bible assignment. She just completed the 6th grade. I had requested from the Principal of [her Christian school] to teach her bible class at home 1st hour then bring her to school for all the other classes. He agreed! ☺ (That was an answer to prayer!) The entire year, he never asked anything about her bible class, what we were doing, etc. We listened primarily to bible study lectures by Dr. Brad Cole from godscharacter.com. and to your bible study class at church Sabbaths. (Orchard Valley Christian Fellowship) We also used the Fundamental Focus booklet and listened to Dr. Randy Robert's podcasts from lluc.com. We learned so much together!

I prayed for wisdom to know what to do for Sami's last bible assignment. I was impressed to have her write an essay coming from the perspective of Jesus asking his disciples, **"Who do you say that I am?" from Mark 8:29**. She completed her essay with cover illustration and title Thursday, the day before her last day of school. We prayed to God for an indication if it would be a good idea to share her essay with her Principal or not. Well, the very next day, Friday morning, in chapel, **her Principal read the very same scripture!**

Sami described chapel that morning like this in regards to his reading the question, "Who do you say that I am?": *"[The Principal] read the disciple's answers and didn't answer the question really. He said that there is nothing about you that can make God love you. (Sami said her mouth dropped open.) He said that we are not acceptable in God's sight and only by what Jesus did can God accept us."*

We did deliver her essay to her Principal. We are praying that his mind be open, that he be willing to investigate further after reading her essay. I have attached the essay with this letter in the email.

Enjoy!

Many Blessings to you and staff! Thanks for your wonderful ministry!

Rhonda Hodges

"Who Am I?"

My mom gave me two simple questions to answer for my End-of-the-Year Bible project. My project is to summarize all of the things I have learned with an essay. These questions were coming from the perspective of Jesus, saying, Who do you think I am?, and, What is the Gospel to you? Of all the questions I have answered, these two were the simplest, but yet the most complicated. Here is my answer: There are a lot of different beliefs out there such as what people think of Jesus, but this particular question is addressing one person, which is me. I support my answer with evidence based on Scripture 100%. Jesus is the very begotten Son of God. (John 3:16) The answer is plain and simple. But could there be more under the obvious answer? Jesus is the exact representation of His Father. Meaning that His Character is the same as God the Father. God sent His Son into



this world that He might free us from the bondage of sin and its destructive grip that it has on us. Jesus said, "If you have seen me you have seen the Father." (John 14:9)

I have a question also: If God gets so angry over our sins, and if Jesus is exactly like His Father, then at the cross, wouldn't Jesus kill his enemies and punish those who were torturing Him? If you look through the judgmental perspective, that would make sense, but if you look at the bigger picture, from Genesis to Revelation, you will see that God isn't mad at anyone. I often see God as a Great Physician who wants us to take the remedy for our sins. This is having the likeness of Christ in you. I also see God as a perfect Father who wants us to trust Him with our lives. God does not punish His wicked children in Hell forever. He loves us too much for that to even cross His mind! His "wrath" is just plainly letting us go. (Romans 1:18,24,26,28) I personally think wrath should be replaced with some other words such as pity, or sadness. (Hosea 11) The word wrath makes people form a totally different view of God because on this earth, wrath in our dictionary means anger of some sort. God's world is different than ours and sometimes words He used to represent something, got misused, misunderstood, and formed false images of God in people's minds. Like a father, though, God does discipline His children if He has to. (Heb. 12:111)

There was yet another part of the question. It asks "What is the Gospel?" My understanding is that God is not the kind of person His enemies have portrayed Him to be. He is not the liar Satan had said God was in the Garden, (Rev 12:9, Gen 2:1617, 3:14) and He isn't the wrathful, arbitrary, and severe Judge in the end either. (Jn 12:44-50) His Judgment is based on love (1 Cor. 13) and is WAY BEYOND our level of thinking.

This is my understanding of Jesus and the Gospel. This is the larger view to me and I am proud to know such a loving knowledge about God's true character. I really hope that such knowledge will spread to the people around me.

*God Bless,
Sami*

SABBATH

When you hear this title, *The Kingdom of God*, what comes to mind? What is the kingdom of God?

The lesson in the first paragraph states, "the kingdom of God is an expression of what God had done in history for the human race as He deals with the problem of sin and brings the great controversy with Satan to an ultimate and decisive end."

Thoughts about this? I don't disagree with this statement, but find it without substance, without definition, and thus too easily misunderstood as God using might and power to bring about His kingdom.

What is the kingdom of God like?

What references, evidence, do you use to inform you as to the meaning of this phrase, *The Kingdom of God*?



Let's look at some Scripture and see what we discover:

- He also said, "This is what the **kingdom of God** is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head." MK 4:26-28
- Again he said, "What shall we say the **kingdom of God** is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed you plant in the ground. ³² Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade." MK 4:30-32
- ²⁰ Again he asked, "What shall I compare the **kingdom of God** to? ²¹ It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough." LK 13:20,21

What is being described in these passages? In these passages how is the kingdom of God functioning? What kind of law is involved?

Jesus is describing Design law, laws upon which reality is constructed to operate; NOT arbitrary rules like created beings impose. Keep this in mind as we examine other texts.

- But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the **kingdom of God** has come upon you. MT 12:28
 - What do you learn about the kingdom of God from this passage?
 - What is the kingdom of God doing in this passage? It frees, it heals, it restores, it delivers
 - How does the Spirit of God work to achieve freedom?
 - Not by might nor by power but by the Spirit says the Lord. Zech 4:6
 - Does God drive out demons by force or some other method?
 - The Spirit is the Spirit of truth and love – what is the character of Satan and demons? Selfishness and lies – and what does truth and love do to those solidified in selfishness and lies?
 - Is the battle between Christ and Satan a battle of might and power?
 - Can God win the war by using coercive power? Why not?
 - What does a win look like for God? What is it that constitutes success on God's part? That His intelligent beings love and trust Him and operate in harmony with His character and law of love. Can love and trust be achieved by threat, coercion and force?
 - So what do we learn about the kingdom of God from this passage?
 - God's kingdom is the kingdom of love, which life is built upon, and the kingdom of truth; and God's kingdom heals, frees and delivers. Those solidified in opposition can't stand to be a part of it and flee from the presence of God.
- Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter **the kingdom of God.**" MT 19:24
 - What is being taught about God's kingdom in this passage?



- In Christ's day, the religious establishment taught that health and wealth were signs of being right with God. Thus a rich man, not only found earthly comfort and financial security in his wealth, but also found a false spiritual security taking his wealth as evidence he was right with God.
- The eye of the needle is not speaking of a tool used to sew clothing, but of a gate in the walls of cities. After sunset the gates of a city would be closed and a small passage would be available to enter the city after dark. It was large enough for only a man to walk through and was called the eye of the needle. Camels would have to kneel down and crawl through to enter and this was difficult, but not impossible.
- Putting both these facts together, Jesus is saying it is easier to get a camel to kneel down and go through the eye of the needle, than to get a rich man to kneel down, humble himself and acknowledge his wealth means nothing, but only a true change of character matters.
- Again, what type of kingdom? A kingdom of heart change, a kingdom of love – actual state of being, not rules.
- “What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’²⁹ “ ‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.³⁰ “Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go.³¹ “Which of the two did what his father wanted?” “The first,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the **kingdom of God** ahead of you.³² For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him. MT 21:28-32
 - What do you learn about the kingdom of God from this passage?
 - God's kingdom is about reality, what actually is, not what one declares, claims, proclaims, or names. In other words, one may call themselves Christian, but if the heart is not changed it doesn't matter.
 - *Proclaiming* loyalty to God means nothing, being renewed in heart and character to be like Jesus, loving God and others more than self is what matters, no matter what one proclaims. Like Paul, one may proclaim they are the greatest of all sinners, and proclaim they are unworthy of salvation, but if the heart is renewed they are in unity with God.
 - This again, is Design Law, not imposed rules! It is fixing what is actually wrong in the character of human beings.
- “Therefore I tell you that the **kingdom of God** will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. MT 21:43
 - What is being taught by this passage?
 - Why is the kingdom of God removed from them?
 - Because they rejected God's kingdom
 - Why was the kingdom of God given to others?



- Because they accepted it!
 - To whom does God offer His kingdom?
 - What determines whether a person is part of God's kingdom or not? Their choice in accepting or rejecting it!
- After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ "The time has come," he said. "The **kingdom of God** is near. Repent and believe the good news!" MK 1:14,15
 - What kingdom was near?
 - What is the text referring to? The arrival of Jesus!
 - Was John referring to a kingdom of might and power?
 - What kind of kingdom were the religious leaders looking for?
 - Did their view of God's kingdom, i.e. believing it was to be like a human kingdom, ruled by might and power and infliction of punishment, impair their ability to be part of God's kingdom?
 - What is taught today, by the majority of Christianity, about what to expect at the second coming? What kind of kingdom is taught? What do most Christians teach God will do to the wicked and unrepentant? What do you think such teaching does in the hearts of people, prepare them to be part of God's kingdom, or separate them from God's kingdom?
- When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the **kingdom of God** belongs to such as these. ¹⁵ I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." MK 10:14,15
 - What is being taught about God's kingdom here?
 - One must be teachable like children, open to learn and to love and trust just like children in order to enter God's kingdom.
 - Is entering God's kingdom about understanding the correct doctrines, adhering to the right rituals, getting the correct interpretation of Bible prophecies? Do children enter this way?
 - It is about entering into a love and trust relationship with God. Thus our doctrines are important as they inform us about God. If our doctrines are erroneous they can cause us to believe lies about God, thus undermining love and trust.
- One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" ²⁹ "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' ³¹ The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." ³² "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. ³³ To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." ³⁴ When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the



kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions. MK 12:28-34

- What do you learn of God’s kingdom?
- What kind of law is described?
- From where does such motive originate?
- Read last paragraph in Sabbath’s lesson, “The kingdom of God...”
- ¹⁶ “The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the **kingdom of God** is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. ¹⁷ It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law. LK 16:16,17
 - What is being taught?
 - Why is it easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the law of God to be changed?
 - What kind of law is God’s law?
 - Design law, the protocols upon which reality exists, the fabric of the cosmos is built upon this law, which has its origins in God. To change the law would be to change God and that is harder to do than to destroy the universe.
 - There was a time in eternity past before God created matter and life – God’s law of love still existed but there was no heaven or earth – thus it is easier to go back in time to a point before God created anything, i.e. for heaven and earth to disappear, than to destroy God, which would be required to change the law!
 - But this is only true when one realizes God’s law is Design law, the protocols upon which reality is built. If one believes God’s law is functionally like human law, rules imposed, then one reads Jesus’ words differently. One believes God’s law could change if God were willing to give new edicts, but God is uncompromising and would rather destroy His universe than change His rules, and thus it is taught that God will destroy those who break His rules as punishment.
 - Here is the passage from *The Remedy*: “The symbols and metaphors of the Old Testament were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of what it all means, the reality of the true Remedy from God’s kingdom of love is being made known, and it is compelling all who understand to partake and enter.”¹⁷ It is easier to erase heaven and earth and start again than to change in the slightest God’s design protocol for life, what you call his Law.”
- ²⁰ Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the **kingdom of God** would come, Jesus replied, “The **kingdom of God** does not come with your careful observation, ²¹ nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the **kingdom of God** is within you.” LK 17:20,21
 - What do we learn about God’s kingdom from this passage?
 - It is not about rule keeping, and never can be why?
 - Because God’s kingdom is the reality of how He built life to operate, love in all spheres of action. This is having selfishness removed and love written in. It is



coming back into unity with God, an actual change in the state of being. Love acts differently in different situations, and one cannot make up a rule for all situations.

Rule keeping invariably end up focused on self and failing to love!

- Penal legal theologies deny reality and make salvation about rule keeping, focusing on self, our sins, our condemnation, our deserved punishment and legal loopholes to avoid what is taught we legally deserve. Often, it is taught that Jesus' rule keeping in our behalf is necessary for our salvation and then our careful observations of the right ways to accept His legal payment etc.
- ³ In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the **kingdom of God** unless he is born again." (JN 3:3)
 - What does this tell us about God's kingdom?
 - Keep in mind that the Bible teaches, every eye shall see him, including those who pierced him, but Jesus said only those born again can see the kingdom of God – what does it mean?
 - The unrepentant, the wicked, those who rise to march on God's city under Satan's banner, seeking to overthrow Jesus – see Jesus in His glory, high and lifted up. They see the splendor, the brightness, the power – but this is NOT the kingdom of God. They see all these things through the lens of Satan's lies about God and believe God and Jesus are beings of great power and might, but also anger and wrath and are coming to punish them. They cry, like the demons who met Jesus, have you come to punish us?
 - Thus, they see the physical aspects of God's kingdom, but don't see God's kingdom because God's kingdom is not about the physical, it is about the true character of God and this they do NOT see.
- For the **kingdom of God** is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit... Rom 14:17
 - What do you hear about God's kingdom from this?
 - It is about the heart renewed in love, living in harmony with God's design for life.
 - Such transformation of character cannot be achieved by getting on a vegan diet, or drinking organic juices,
 - But, can a person violate God's design laws with a wrong diet and thus damage their brain and inflame passions and impulses and make it harder to experience God's kingdom of love?
 - Can a person ingest drugs that inflame selfishness and markedly increase the cravings and desires to seek to please self? Does such actions make it harder to experience the kingdom of love?
 - Can this happen with food and drink?
 - What kind of law is being causing such problems?
- For the **kingdom of God** is not a matter of talk but of power. 1Cor 4:20
 - What is being described about God's kingdom here?
 - Again, it isn't about what one claims, proclaims or names, but about what one experiences



- God's kingdom has the power to heal and transform beings from fear based, self-centered beings seeking to gratify self, into beacons of truth, love and compassion emanating goodness, mercy and love!
- Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the **kingdom of our God**, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.¹¹ They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Rev 12:10,11
 - What is taught in this passage?
 - Why do they have salvation?
 - What is the power and the kingdom of God?
 - How are these saved individuals described?
 - What is the blood of the Lamb?
 - What is the word of their testimony?

SUNDAY

Read Luke 1:32, 33 "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

Read last paragraph, "The passage..." What do you understand this passage is teaching? How did Jesus defeat Satan?

- By revealing the truth about God and Himself He defeated Satan's lies about God
- By choosing with His human brain to love perfectly, to never act selfishly, to develop a perfect character, He defeated Satan's goal to destroy God's image in man and defeated Satan's attempt to make humanity like Satan in character
- By choosing to surrender to death, and refusing to exercise His power to stop death from taking Him, Jesus defeated death and brought life and immortality to light
- By all of this Jesus established a healed and perfected humanity and became the second Adam, the true Sovereign of humanity

MONDAY

Read Luke 18:29, 30: "I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God³⁰ will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life."

Read last paragraph, "Read again, Luke..." What is being described? What is the issue? Is Jesus telling us to leave family behind?

What is being taught?



That we are terminal, all of us, and only by partaking the Remedy Jesus has procured can any of us live. Imagine, you and your entire family are infected with a terminal infection but there is a remedy. You love your family and want to help them, but you have no remedy, if you want to help them what must you do? Do you stay with them, or go get the remedy? You cannot get well until you partake the remedy, but you also cannot share the remedy with your family until you partake it yourself! Thus, if we refuse to leave our families to partake of Jesus, we remain terminal and incapable of ministering God's healing love and truth to others. Why? Because we don't possess it!

Further, without partaking of Jesus, without the Spirit, we don't even recognize what is wrong with us and have nothing to offer others.

Thus, it is necessary to put Jesus first, in order to connect to the only source of life, and then be a conduit of truth and love to our family members.

TUESDAY

Read Luke 4:16-21:

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. ¹⁷ The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me,

because he has anointed me

to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners

and recovery of sight for the blind,

to release the oppressed,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, ²¹ and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

What does the prophecy mean? How did Jesus fulfill it?

Who are the poor to whom Jesus has good news? Poor in what? Remember the beatitudes – blessed are the poor in spirit – meaning what? He brings good news to those who recognize their spiritual need, their sickness of heart and mind, their defectiveness of character, who are humble and know they need a cure.

What is the good news He brings to the poor? The truth about God which frees them from the lies and wins them to trust, and a new heart/right spirit built upon love and trust, which casts out fear and selfishness and recreates those who partake into God's image.



Who are the prisoners that Jesus frees, and from what does He free them?

We are held in the bondage of sin, by what? Lies we believe about God that prevent us from genuinely surrendering to Him, and our own selfish natures.

How does He free us? By revealing the truth to win us to trust, and by developing a perfect character that He offers freely to us, thus when we trust we become “partakers of the divine nature” and “it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me.”

What does recovery of sight to the blind mean? Is it primarily physical blindness, or spiritual blindness, failing to see God and reality (self, sin, Satan, universe, Great Controversy) as it really is?

WEDNESDAY

The Kingdom of God and the Second Coming – how do you understand the events of the second coming? Does your current understanding fit with the kingdom of love as Jesus revealed?

How is the second coming taught that actually denies the kingdom of God?

- Christ coming with vengeance, rod of iron, to crush His enemies and punish the wicked
- Christ uses power to enforce His rule over the nations
- Others?

How can we present the Second Coming in harmony with God’s kingdom of love, yet be true to Scripture regarding the fate of the unrepentant?

THURSDAY

The lesson states, “God must always be God; to probe His mind, to predict the preciseness of His plans, to penetrate His secrets is not the task of flesh and blood. He knows when the kingdom of glory should come, and He will bring it to pass in His own time...”

What do you hear? A sovereign God who is in control and will do what He wants when He wants and we have no right to ask questions or expect understanding, “God said it, I believe it, that settles it”?

Let’s break down these multiple claims and examine each for accuracy and truth.

- God must always be God... which means what? God will be Himself, true to His own nature and character and cannot be otherwise. True!
- to probe His mind is not the task of flesh and blood – can finite beings enter infinity? No, God lives in unapproachable light, unapproachable because He is infinite and we are



finite, and thus it is true we are not capable of probing the mind of God, but it is not because God is selfish, restrictive, elite, dominate, secretive, or in anyway uses authority, position, power to demand such lower beings never presume to probe His mind. He actually invites us to know Him, as far as we are capable of knowing Him.

- to predict the preciseness of His plans... Is God random, chaotic, unpredictable? Are God's laws arbitrary, changing, unpredictable? Or, if one knows God and God's laws, can they actually predict certain actions because those actions are the only outcome possible? For instance, can we predict God will always act in love? Now, the precise action in each circumstance we may not predict, but can we predict it will always be in love? Can we predict His plan to destroy sin and selfishness and restore the universe to unity with Him? Why? How certain? But if one has an arbitrary God, with imposed law, then His actions become unpredictable, it all depends on His whims, not His character.
- to penetrate His secrets? No, we cannot penetrate His secrets, only those which He reveals

God does know the future and when the kingdom of glory will come, but does that mean it is happening on a particular date because God preset a date and says, "Ready or not hear I come" Or is the date set by events God knows will transpire, yet God does not impose those events? Thus God waits to for those events to happen in the lives and hearts of people? In other words, God wants love and trust, which must be freely chosen, and thus waits for humans to choose to accept or reject Him and His methods?

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph, "We are now..." What is this metaphor of being rough stones taken from? What is the point or lesson?

Read and discuss the questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase is now available on our website, BOTH the Android and Apple Version is not Available! First update for Apple Version now available – most glitches fixed, but if not let me know.

- This is a **FREE** app
- Please read the preface to understand the approach to this paraphrase
- We have cards available to share with others and will ship them at no cost
- Also, if you find typos please email those to us so we can fix any missed typos

CARDS – If you have any of our ministry business cards please check to see if they have our current address: PO Box 28266 Chattanooga, TN 37424. If they are the old ones please discard them. We will be happy to send new ones, just email us. Thanks!

Prayer Request:

Please Pray God will bless our efforts to share this beautiful message about Him at The General Conference of SDA in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. Our booth is A481 and we are giving away DVDs and books. Pray God will make this an amazing event for the advancement of the truth about Him!

The Journal of the Watcher:

The Journal of the Watcher is an illustrated ebook available

For ANDROID in the APP

For APPLE in the iBooks store and in the APP Store – your choice slightly different controls and features.

We are also having it rendered as a “movie” for itunes, for all those people who don’t have smart devices or Apple computers. Will let you know when it is available in itunes.

Come and Reason Ministries FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under.

June 20, 2015: JFEST, Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth at JFEST to give away our materials. JFEST is at Camp Jordan. We will have class at our normal time on June 20. We need some volunteers to work our booth that day – please let us know if you are local and can help out.

July 1-12: GC session at San Antonio. Come and Reason will have a booth in the exhibit hall, booth A481. Please come by and see us if you are there. We will have class at our regular times here in Collegedale.

August 1: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Petaluma, CA SDA church.

September 3,4: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Baptist Boomer’s Conference in San Antonio, TX.

September 12: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr., CA SDA church.

September 23-26: American Association of Christian Counselors World Convention at Gaylord Opryland Hotel, Nashville TN. Come and Reason will have a booth in the exhibit hall, and Dr. Jennings will be doing a preconference workshop and regular conference presentation, as well as commencement speaker for Light University graduation.

October 24: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Puyallup, WA.



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AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support a charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered Charity. So, you can select us, and whenever you shop in their **smile.amazon.com** site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called “Come Reason Ministries” and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN.**



The Book of Luke 2Q 2015 Lesson 12

Jesus in Jerusalem

SABBATH

When you think of Jerusalem what comes to mind? What do you know about Jerusalem?

- Jerusalem is on a plateau in the Mountains of Judea between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea.
- One of the oldest cities in the world
- Founded around the 4th millennium BCE
- First settled most likely by Canaanites, then was part of the Egyptian empire, then the Jebusites and David conquered it from the Jebusites
- Has been destroyed twice
- Besieged 23 times
- Attacked 52 times
- Captured and recaptured 44 times
- It is considered holy by three major religions
- The Dead Sea Scrolls (1QapGen 22:13) equates Jerusalem with the earlier "Salem" (שֶׁלֶם), said to be the kingdom of Melchizedek in Genesis 14:18.
- The Bible sometimes refers to Jerusalem as Salem:
His tent is in Salem, his dwelling place in Zion. Ps 76:2

The following description is consistent with several historical references I checked:

As soon as David was established on the throne of Israel he began to seek a more appropriate location for the capital of his realm. Twenty miles from Hebron a place was selected as the future metropolis of the kingdom. Before Joshua had led the armies of Israel over Jordan it had been called Salem. Near this place Abraham had proved his loyalty to God. Eight hundred years before the coronation of David it had been the home of Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God. It held a central and elevated position in the country and was protected by an environment of hills. Being on the border between Benjamin and Judah, it was in close proximity to Ephraim and was easy of access to the other tribes. {PP 703.1}

In order to secure this location the Hebrews must dispossess a remnant of the Canaanites, who held a fortified position on the mountains of Zion and Moriah. This stronghold was called Jebus, and its inhabitants were known as Jebusites. For centuries Jebus had been looked upon as impregnable; but it was besieged and taken by the Hebrews under the command of Joab, who, as the reward of his valor, was made commander-in-chief of the armies of Israel. Jebus now became the national capital, and its heathen name was changed to Jerusalem. {PP 703.2}



The name Jerusalem has several possible derivations, but the one most likely is:

The form *Yerushalem* or *Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem) first appears in the book of Joshua and is thought to be a combination of Yhwh and Shalem, or Salem—God’s City of Peace.

What is the significance of Jerusalem today? Does it matter?

Does John 4:19-24 apply? Here it is from *The Remedy*:

Shocked and somewhat uncomfortable with such a personal revelation, the woman said, "Sir, to know such things you must certainly be a prophet.²⁰ So please help me with a problem. Our people have always worshiped God here on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place we must worship God is in Jerusalem; which is it?"

²¹Jesus declared, "Believe me, dear woman, the place where one worships God is not important; it is the condition of the heart of the worshiper that matters. Very soon you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.²² You Samaritans worship a confusing tradition of rituals that does not enlighten the mind and have no ability to heal the worshiper; we worship the Creator God and our minds are enlightened and healed by him because all he asks of us is sensible and reasonable. The plan to heal humanity from the infection of selfishness and sin is provided through the Jews.²³ The time has now come that all true worshipers will worship the Father with an intelligent reasonable understanding of who he is - loving, admiring and respecting the truth about his nature, character, and methods; these understanding worshipers are the kind the Father seeks.²⁴ God is intelligent and reasonable, and his worshipers must worship him intelligently and reasonably, appreciating and valuing the truth of God's methods and principles."

What do you think of the idea that geographic location in worship is important? Is it?

How do you compare the Jerusalem on earth today with the New Jerusalem?

What was the foundation of the Old Jerusalem, in other words, how did it get established?

- Violence, war, conquest, coercion

What is the foundation of the New Jerusalem, how does it get established?

- A different kind of war – a war with divine weapons to demolish strongholds – what are the weapons the new Jerusalem is founded upon?
- Love, truth, freedom

What type of worship happened in the Temple of the Old Jerusalem? Why did Jesus “cleanse” it twice?



- At its best it was shadowy, symbolic, ritualistic enactments
- At its worst it was penal, legal worship, in which sins must be punished and payments made to propitiate sin

What type of worship happens in the New Jerusalem?

- Open face to face relationship of love and trust in which beings damaged by defective thinking, selfish motives, are healed and restored to truth, love and freedom, genuine unity of the being with God. Living in reality as God designed it, no more hiding behind shadows and symbols.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “He was born...” How does the death of Jesus reconcile us to God?

- Does it do something to God?
- Does it do something to God’s law?
- Does it do something in the species human?
- What is the problem that sin caused the plan of salvation is designed to fix?
- How does Christ’s death fix this problem?

Read last two paragraphs, “This amazing...” What happened that was according to God’s amazing plan?

- Was it God’s plan that Satan rebel?
- Was it God’s plan that Adam sin?
- Was it God’s plan that Judas betray Jesus?
- Was it God’s plan that the disciples run away and Peter deny Jesus?
- Was it God’s plan the Jews reject Jesus and crucify Him?
- What was God’s plan?
- Was it God’s plan to love always?
- Was it God’s plan to heal and save?
- Was it God’s plan to send Christ to fix that which Adam broke?
- Did God’s plan take into account what Satan, Adam, Judas, the disciples, the Jewish nation and others did?
- Does taking into account what others do, and thus plan accordingly what God, through Christ, does, mean God wanted the others to do as they did?

MONDAY

Read Luke 19:46, “It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but you have made it a den of thieves.”

What was the problem happening in God’s house?



What was it about what was happening that caused Jesus to be offended? How do we understand the story and Jesus' actions?

If we answer from the 7 levels note the responses:

1. Jesus is mad and seeking to punish them with a whip because they are not doing what God says.
2. They are breaking the deal they made with God by going off script, thus justice requires that Jesus, acting for God, must punish them.
3. All nations recognize the absolute power of its rulers. Jesus is ruler of God's house and thus he is demonstrating his right to rule.
4. They are breaking God's law and breaking the law requires punishment. Jesus as judge is stepping in to judge them and inflict just punishment.
5. Jesus is overcome with love for the people. He understands human beings are terminal in sin, and the Temple was designed to be a teaching tool leading people to God for healing. But, the religious leaders were doing the opposite; they were making it harder for people to come to God for healing. Thus, Jesus revealed God loves. Love refuses to collude with lies and always seeks to free us from falsehood and lead us back to him for healing. Love notes Christ never hit people, only furniture, and his demeanor was so full of grace, love and compassion that the children were not frightened, but stayed behind, along with the sick.
6. He contrasted God's law of love versus selfishness – the worldly system of selfishness was demonstrated by the moneychangers, and resulted in turmoil, anxiety, fear, stress, and division. He drove them out and then gave freely of himself to heal and restore—without charging the people, demonstrating how love works.
7. Understanding God's creation is built to operate upon love, and selfishness infects the heart of humans breaking the design resulting in death, Jesus used the object lesson of the Temple, filled with selfish, greedy people to demonstrate his purpose to cleanse the hearts of men from fear and selfishness.

Here is one view, from the book *The Desire of Ages*:

In the cleansing of the **temple**, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. **That temple**, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an **object lesson** for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was God's purpose that **every created being**, from the bright and holy seraph to **man**, **should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator**. Because of **sin**, **humanity ceased to be a temple for God**. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, **the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled**. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the **heart of man becomes again His temple**. God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high **destiny open to every soul**. But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield **themselves** as holy



temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. In **cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,—from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul.** "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His **temple**, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall **purify the sons of Levi**, and purge them as gold and silver." Malachi 3:1-3. {DA 161.1}

What is the lesson? What was Jesus announcing? What kind of law is being described in Jesus true mission?

What do you think of when you think of cleansing the sanctuary? Do you think of cleansing the hearts and minds of people from sin, or something else? Here is another historic reference from the book *The Great Controversy*.

The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the **cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of Days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by Malachi, are descriptions of the same event;** and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25. {GC 426.1}

What does this mean? What is it Christ does when He comes to His temple as described by Malachi? He cleanses – what? The Levites, and who are they? The believers in Christ, the priesthood of believers—thus cleansing the sanctuary is the work of cleansing the hearts, minds, characters of God's people of lies about him and from fear and selfishness, establishing Spirit temples where God again dwells.

This requires, while God is searching us to find any wicked way in us, so that He might create in us a clean heart and right spirit, i.e. investigating our characters to accurately diagnose, we are to be investigating the truth about Him, to be won back to trust, so that we will open the heart and allow Him in, in order to be healed by the Spirit, who takes what Christ achieved and reproduces it in us. Metaphorically speaking, it is the application of the blood to the temple to cleanse it from sin....

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "The parable of the wicked..." What happens to the wicked? What is it the



owner does to them?

A week or so ago I was listening to local Christian radio in the car when the DJ read the following, in all seriousness. It is from *When Christ Comes* by Max Lacado:

Does hell serve a purpose? As much as we resist the idea, isn't the absence of hell even worse? Remove it from the Bible and, at the same time, remove any notion of a just God and a trustworthy Scripture. Let me explain.

If there is not hell, God is not just. If there is no punishment of sin, heaven is apathetic toward the rapists and pillagers and mass murderers of society. If there is no hell, God is blind toward victims and has turned his back on those who pray for relief. If there is no wrath toward evil, then God is not love, for love hates that which is evil.

To say there is no hell is also to say God is a liar and his Scripture is untrue. The Bible repeatedly and stoutly affirms the dualistic outcome of history. Some will be saved. Some will be lost... p. 117

Upon what moral level of development is this argument based? This is level four thinking – and what is the foundation of level four thinking? What type of law construct?

This is human law construct. This is the theology one gets when one rejects God's law of love, the protocols reality is built upon and instead teaches God's law functions no differently that what fallen human beings make, rules without inherent consequence.

Remember, God is the Creator, His law is the law upon which reality is built to exist, upon which the fabric of the cosmos operates. His law is Design law, and deviations from His law is incompatible with life. But, created beings cannot build reality, we cannot create – thus we make up rules without inherent consequence for breaking, and thus we use power over to enforce those rules and punish rule breakers.

Satan is setting the world up to accept his impersonation of Christ. How? By getting people to believe God functions like we do, and God's law and justice is like our own. When the false Christ comes he will ultimately say, if you won't obey me, justice requires I punish you. And those who accept the god like this will say, "This is our god we have waited for him."

WEDNESDAY

Some of the Jews in Christ's day believed that paying taxes was betrayal of their loyalty to God, thus they resented taxes and tried to trap Jesus with the question, should they pay taxes to Caesar.

Read last paragraph, "Christ's reply..." Do we find ourselves today torn between God and Caesar,



God and the government? How and where?

- Service in the armed forces?
- Use of violence in law enforcement?
- Removing headdress for passport and driver's license photos?
- Government laws requiring insurance companies to provide birth control pills?
- Governments requiring parents to get medical care, i.e. medications and/or vaccines for their children?

What is the balance in dealing with laws that impact a person's beliefs and conscience?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "Jesus founded the Lord's Supper..." First, was Jesus founding a ritual, a sacrament, a new festival to be observed annually instead of the Passover? Did they, that night, have food/drink that was somehow different than what could be found in any home on any day of the week?

- The bread in the sanctuary, the loaves in the Holy Place, were different in recipe and with incense sprinkled upon them, that made them different than the bread one could get in the market. What about the bread for this last supper in the upper room?
- Was Christ instituting a ritual, a meal with special implements, or was Christ saying: "Whenever you get together and break bread and drink wine, remember me, think of me, think of my broken body, my shed blood, and think of why, think of what I am accomplishing for you."

What do you think about this sentence: "It was as impossible for Israel to free itself from Egyptian bondage as it is for us to free ourselves from the consequences of sin."?

Any concerns?

Why do you think they said, "free ourselves from the consequences of sin" rather than "free ourselves from sin"?

When one holds to the imposed law model, the problem with sin is the inflicted punishment, the consequences, thus it is falsely taught we must be freed from the consequences of sin. But, the Bible teaches something different, that Jesus is the Lamb of God that takes away the SIN of the world, not the consequences of the sin of the world.

In fact, will the consequences of sin ever be taken away?

- Why is there first death experience? because of sin – will that experience be taken away from the billions who have already died the first death? Not, will they be resurrected, but will their dying the first death be taken away?
- What about suffering, sickness, disease, injuries, wounds, assaults, rapes... why do such



- occur? Because of sin – will those historic events be taken away?
- Why did Jesus have to die? Was it a consequence of sin? Will the death of Jesus be taken away?

The consequences of sin will not be taken away – SIN will be removed, and the damage from sin will be healed, hearts renewed, biology perfected, the ecosystem restored to perfection, but our memories of these events, the historic reality will always remain.

Read third paragraph, “Jesus’ assertion that His blood...” What is meant by remission of sin? Which law lens?

If we view it through imposed law lens we stay stuck on the metaphor of the courtroom judge investigating books and rendering legal pardons and erasing records after pardon.

From the book, *When Christ Comes* by Max Lacado:

Imagine this event. You are before the judgment seat of Christ. The book is opened and the reading begins—each sin, each deceit, each occasion of destruction and greed. But as soon as the infraction is read, grace is proclaimed.

Disrespected parents at age thirteen. – pardoned
Shaded the truth at age fifteen. – pardoned
Gossiped at age twenty-six. – pardoned
Lusted at age thirty. – pardoned
Disregarded the leading of the Spirit age forty. – pardoned
Disobeyed God’s word at age fifty-two. – pardoned

The result? God’s merciful verdict will echo through the universe. For the first time in history, we will understand the depth of his goodness. Itemized grace. Catalogued kindness. Registered forgiveness. We will stand in awe as one sin after another is proclaimed, and then pardoned. Jealousies revealed, then removed. Infidelities announced, then cleansed. Lies exposed, then erased. p 108-109

Again what law lens is this view presenting?

This is human law – not God’s law. This is the view of cleansing record books of sin, not cleansing hearts and minds of sin. This view doesn’t bring peace, it incites fear, it undermines trust. We must come back to worship the Creator, whose record books reveal something completely different – they reveal the accurate condition of each person, including the symptoms of our terminal condition (sins), but God’s records also reveal when the remedy is applied and who is cured. Thus the books reveal the incredible power of God’s love and grace to heal and restore all who let him.



FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 2

Are they suggesting there is no place for psychopharmacology? Are they saying that if you have a life as Christ designed, no one would ever need psych meds?

This would be like saying, if we live like Christ wants us to, we will never get any physical health problem—because depression is a physical health problem, which affects brain, immune system, and body.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase is now available on our website, BOTH the Android and Apple Version is not Available! First update for Apple Version now available – most glitches fixed, but if not let me know.

- This is a **FREE** app
- Please read the preface to understand the approach to this paraphrase
- We have cards available to share with others and will ship them at no cost
- Also, if you find typos please email those to us so we can fix any missed typos

CARDS – If you have any of our ministry business cards please check to see if they have our current address: PO Box 28266 Chattanooga, TN 37424. If they are the old ones please discard them. We will be happy to send new ones, just email us. Thanks!

Prayer Request:

Please Pray God will bless our efforts to share this beautiful message about Him at The General Conference of SDA in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. Our booth is A481 and we are giving away DVDs and books. Pray God will make this an amazing event for the advancement of the truth about Him!

The Journal of the Watcher:

The Journal of the Watcher is an illustrated ebook available

For ANDROID in the APP

For APPLE in the iBooks store and in the APP Store – your choice slightly different controls and features.

We are also having it rendered as a “movie” for itunes, for all those people who don’t have smart devices or Apple computers. Will let you know when it is available in itunes.

Come and Reason Ministries FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under.

June 20, 2015: JFEST, Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth at JFEST to give away our materials. JFEST is at Camp Jordan. We will have class at our normal time on June 20. We need some volunteers to work our booth that day – please let us know if you are local and can help out.

July 1-12: GC session at San Antonio. Come and Reason will have a booth in the exhibit hall, booth A481. Please come by and see us if you are there. We will have class at our regular times here in Collegedale.

August 1: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Petaluma, CA SDA church.

September 3,4: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Baptist Boomer’s Conference in San Antonio, TX.

September 12: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr., CA SDA church.

September 23-26: American Association of Christian Counselors World Convention at Gaylord Opryland Hotel, Nashville TN. Come and Reason will have a booth in the exhibit hall, and Dr. Jennings will be doing a preconference workshop and regular conference presentation, as well as commencement speaker for Light University graduation.

October 24: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Puyallup, WA.

AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support a charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered Charity. So, you can select us, and whenever you shop in their [smile.amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile) site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called “Come Reason Ministries” and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN.**



The Book of Luke 2Q 2015 Lesson 13

Crucified and Risen

SABBATH

When you think of the Crucifixion and Resurrection – what comes to mind?

Do you understand any of it? Why did Christ have to die? What was accomplished?

Just this morning I received an email with a link to a blog by Brian Zahnd regarding the Cross:

Jesus Died for Us...Not for God

<http://brianzahnd.com/2015/04/jesus-died-us-god/>

Brian Zahnd

“You killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead.” –The Apostle Peter, Acts 3:15

Golgotha is where the great crimes of humanity — pride, rivalry, blame, violence, domination, war, and empire — are dragged into the searing light of divine judgment. At Golgotha we see the system of human organization that we blithely call “civilization” for what it is: an axis of power enforced by violence so corrupt that it is capable of murdering God in the name of what we call truth, justice, and liberty.

Golgotha is also the place where the love of God achieves its greatest expression. As Jesus is lynched in the name of religious truth and imperial justice he expresses the heart of God as he pleads for the pardon of his executioners. At the cross we discover that the God revealed in Christ would rather die in the name of love than kill in the name of freedom. Our savior is Jesus Christ, not William Wallace.

The cross is both hideous and glorious, simultaneously ugly and beautiful. It’s as hideous as human sin and as glorious as divine love. It is a collision of sin and grace. But it is not a contest of equals. In the end love and beauty win. We call it Easter.

What the cross is not is a quid pro quo where God agrees to forgive upon receipt of his Son’s murder. What the cross is not is an economic transaction whereby God gains the capital to forgive. These legal and fiscal models for understanding the cross simply will not do.

Jesus does not save us from God, Jesus reveals God as savior. What is revealed on Good Friday is not a monstrous deity requiring a virgin to be thrown into a volcano or a firstborn son to be nailed to a tree. What is revealed on Good Friday is the depths of human depravity and the greater depths of God’s love.

Before the cross is anything else, it is a catastrophe. It is the unjust and violent lynching of an innocent man. It is the murder of God. Jesus is sacrificed by the Father only in this sense: The Father sent his Son into our system of violent power (civilization) to reveal how utterly sinful it is — so sinful that it will murder the Innocent One. God did not will the murder of his Son, he simply knew it would occur. But even Plato knew that. In imagining what would happen to a perfectly just man in our unjust world, Plato said, “our just man will be scourged, racked, fettered...and at last, after all manner of suffering, will be crucified.” (The Republic, Book II, p. 37) Plato wrote



that three centuries before Christ. God knew what Plato knew. For Jesus to proclaim and inaugurate the kingdom of God in the midst of our unjust and violent world would require a supreme sacrifice.

The death of Jesus was a sacrifice. But it was a sacrifice to end sacrificing, not a sacrifice to appease an angry god. It was not God who required the sacrifice of Jesus, it was human civilization. A system built upon violent power cannot tolerate the presence of one who owes it nothing. The sacrifice of Jesus was necessary to convince us to quit producing sacrificial victims; it was not necessary to convince God to forgive. When Jesus prays for forgiveness on the cross he was not acting contrary to the nature of God, he was revealing the nature of God as forgiving love.

Think of it this way: Where do we find God on Good Friday? Is God found in Caiaphas seeking a sacrificial scapegoat? Is God found in Pilate requiring a punitive execution? Or is God found in Jesus, absorbing sin and responding with forgiveness?

The Apostle Paul says God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. (2 Corinthians 5:19) And this should not be misread as God reconciling himself to the world...as some mistaken atonement theories do! Jesus died for us...not for God.

The crucifixion is not what God inflicts upon Jesus in order to forgive, the crucifixion is what God in Christ endures as he forgives. The cross is where God absorbs sin and recycles it into forgiveness.

The crucifixion is not the ultimate attempt to change God's mind about us — the cross is the ultimate attempt to change our mind about God. God is not like Caiaphas seeking a sacrifice. God is not like Pilate requiring an execution. God is like Jesus, absorbing sin and forgiving sinners.

The cross is not about payment, the cross is about forgiveness.

Good Friday is not about divine wrath, Good Friday is about divine love.

Calvary is not where we see how just God is, Calvary is where we see how unjust civilization is.

As long as we think Jesus died for God instead of dying for us, we will never see the sinfulness of human civilization and the beauty of the divine alternative: the kingdom of God.

The justice of God is not retributive justice. In the end retributive justice changes nothing. The justice of God is entirely restorative. The only thing God will call justice is setting the world right, not punishing the innocent. (Our sense of retributive justice is derived from the fact that we are more punished by our sins than for our sins.)

The bottom line is this: God did not kill Jesus, human civilization did. We did. Jesus absorbed the blow in love and forgave us. The Father vindicated his Son on Easter. Now Jesus calls us to follow him into the kingdom of grace, the kingdom of love, the kingdom of God.

Let us follow the Lamb.

BZ

Read first paragraph, "From childhood..." What was the Father's will for Jesus?

- "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" 2Cor 5:19



Does this text give any indication of what God's will was for Jesus?

- "I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do... I have revealed you..." John 17:4,6

Does this text give any indication of what was necessary in order to achieve that reconciliation? Why was this necessary? Why is this the determining factor?

Is anything else necessary in order to reconcile use to God besides revealing God, which destroys lies and wins us to trust?

Yes, a new nature – thus Jesus became the second Adam and developed a perfect humanity by the exercise of His human brain.

Read the second paragraph, "Throughout..."

How do you understand the "must"? Why "must" Jesus do this? Did Jesus not have an option? He did. Jesus was not required to this for some need of His own, or because He was robotic in some way and was preprogrammed to carry out certain actions. Here is a quote from the book *The Desire of Ages*:

The grain of wheat that preserves its own life can produce no fruit. It abides alone. **Christ could, if He chose, save Himself from death. But should He do this, He must abide alone.** He could bring no sons and daughters to God. Only by yielding up His life could He impart life to humanity. Only by falling into the ground to die could He become the seed of that vast harvest,--the great multitude that out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, are redeemed to God. {DA 623.4}

He had freedom and He could choose not to do these things, but such a choice had consequences.

So, it should be: IF, then He must, and the IF is IF He wants to rid the universe of sin, refute the lies of Satan, redeem and heal humanity then He must. Why? Why could He not save Himself and us?

Because that is how reality works. God is love, God wants His intelligent creatures to love and trust Him and operate in harmony with His character of love. Love cannot be programmed like a computer, it requires real freedom, further love cannot be obtained by force, deceit, threat, or punishment. Therefore, the only means to fix this creation and to restore the universe to love was for Christ to become part of this creation and actually live perfectly, love perfectly, as a member of this species and ultimately refuse at all costs, including the cost of His own life, to act in self interests, thus destroying the infection of fear and selfishness and establishing a new and perfected humanity.



SUNDAY

As we review the record of Jesus' experience in Gethsemane, what do we learn?

- Did Jesus struggle in Gethsemane?
- What was the source of His trial, pain, suffering?
- Was God inflicting it upon Him?
- Did He experience human emotions?
- What impact did his human emotions have upon him? In what directions did they pull Jesus? Was Jesus tempted by His own human emotions?
 - Heb 4:15 and James 1:14 would support that He was
- Why did an angel come to Jesus?
- What did the angel do for Jesus?
- What would have happened had the angel not strengthened Jesus?
- What does this mean? What do we learn?
- Why does death happen?
- What is the source of life? God, what does sin do? Separates us from God—the source of life—and results in death.
- Jesus, “who knew no sin became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God.” In Gethsemane, Jesus experienced what unremedied sin results in, and felt the unity with His Father disintegrating, and He fell down dying.
- Did God lay a hand on Jesus in Gethsemane or at the Cross?
- Was Jesus helpless, or could He have at any time stopped what was happening and return to heaven? What does it mean that He didn't?

Here is a historical quote from a founder of the SDA church:

To the heart of Christ it was a bitter task to press His way against the fears, disappointment, and unbelief of His beloved disciples. It was hard to lead them forward to the anguish and despair that awaited them at Jerusalem. And Satan was at hand to press his temptations upon the Son of man. Why should He now go to Jerusalem, to certain death? All around Him were souls hungering for the bread of life. On every hand were suffering ones waiting for His word of healing. The work to be wrought by the gospel of His grace was but just begun. And He was full of the vigor of manhood's prime. Why not go forward to the vast fields of the world with the words of His grace, the touch of His healing power? Why not take to Himself the joy of giving light and gladness to those darkened and sorrowing millions? Why leave the harvest gathering to His disciples, so weak in faith, so dull of understanding, so slow to act? Why face death now, and leave the work in its infancy? The foe who in the wilderness had confronted Christ assailed Him now with fierce and subtle temptations. **Had Jesus yielded for a moment, had He changed His course in the least particular to save Himself, Satan's agencies would have triumphed, and the world would have been lost.**



{DA 486.1}

Agree or disagree? Why?

MONDAY

Top of the page, “Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve.” (Luke 22:3)

And what happened after “Satan entered Judas”?

- Did Judas levitate?
- Did Judas begin having objects float around the room?
- Did Judas talk in a weird voice?
- Did Judas begin frothing at the mouth?
- Did Judas go into hysterics?

What did Judas do? He acted selfishly, deceitfully, evilly! He rejected truth. He rejected love. He betrayed the one he claimed to love and serve. He joined with the religious institution of his day, used coercive power and took away Jesus’ freedom.

The point—does having Satan enter a person mean that person will necessarily manifest supernatural signs and wonders?

TUESDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “For all else...” Do people have a choice in whether they accept the God Jesus revealed at the Cross or reject Him? And if a person judges Jesus to be a fraud and rejects the God of love preferring a god of coercive power, what is the result?

What if a person accepts Jesus, but misinterprets the entire meaning through the lens of imperial law, and thus believes God was executing Jesus at the cross?

Here is another quote from *The Desire of Ages*:

At the cross of Calvary, love and selfishness stood face to face. Here was their crowning manifestation. Christ had lived only to comfort and bless, and in putting Him to death, Satan manifested the malignity of his hatred against God. He made it evident that the real purpose of his rebellion was to dethrone God, and to destroy Him through whom the love of God was shown. {DA 57.2}

By the life and the death of Christ, the thoughts of men also are brought to view. From the manger to the cross, the life of Jesus was a call to self-surrender, and to fellowship in suffering. It unveiled the purposes of men. Jesus came with the truth of heaven, and all who



were listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit were drawn to Him. The worshipers of self belonged to Satan's kingdom. **In their attitude toward Christ, all would show on which side they stood. And thus everyone passes judgment on himself.** {DA 57.3}

In the day of final judgment, every lost soul will understand the nature of his own rejection of truth. The cross will be presented, and its real bearing will be seen by every mind that has been blinded by transgression. Before the vision of Calvary with its mysterious Victim, sinners will stand condemned. Every lying excuse will be swept away. Human apostasy will appear in its heinous character. **Men will see what their choice has been.** Every question of truth and error in the long-standing controversy will then have been made plain. **In the judgment of the universe, God will stand clear of blame for the existence or continuance of evil. It will be demonstrated that the divine decrees are not accessory to sin. There was no defect in God's government, no cause for disaffection.** When the thoughts of all hearts shall be revealed, both the loyal and the rebellious will unite in declaring, "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? . . . for Thy judgments are made manifest." Revelation 15:3, 4. {DA 58.1}

Do we believe that a person, by how they judge God, actually passes judgment upon themselves?

But is it in the verbal acknowledgement and profession of faith that one passes their judgment? In other words, is it by taking a public stand, being baptized, and proclaiming with one's mouth that they believe in Jesus? Or is it by loving and trusting God with one's entire being, which may result in taking that public stand...?

Can a person state publicly that they don't believe in Jesus but still be saved?

Would it depend on who they understand Jesus to be? If they have been presented with a Jesus from the Crusades, and they reject a god who would slaughter people who believe differently, does that mean they have rejected the true Christ?

Didn't Jesus say many false messiah's would go out into the world?

So, what is it we must make a judgment about? Who God is, and then whether we love and trust this God. It is not enough to believe in God, the devils believe in God and it terrifies them, why? Because while they believe He is real, they also believe lies about His character. We must do more than believe IN God, we must actually "know" Him for who He is as revealed in Christ, then we also love and trust Him!

In C.S. Lewis' last book of the Narnia series Lewis describes a Calormene soldier named Emeth and his encounter with Aslan the lion. Emeth was a worshipper of Tash, and as a result was terrified when he came face to face with Aslan. This is that encounter from the book:



I fell at his feet and thought surely this is the hour of death, for the Lion will know that I have served Tash all my days and not him.

But Aslan's response?

Son thou art welcome. But I said, alas Lord I am no son of thine but the servant of Tash. He answered, Child all the service thou hast done to Tash I account as service done to me.

I questioned the Glorious One: Lord, is it then true that thou and Tash are one? The Lion growled and said, It is false. Not because he and I are one, but because we are opposites, I take to me the services which thou hast done to him. For I and he are of such different kinds that no service which is vile can be done to me, and none which is not vile can be done to him. Therefore if any man swear by Tash and keep his oath for the oath's sake, it is by me that he has truly sworn, though he know it not, and it is I who reward him. And if any man do a cruelty in my name, then, though he says the name Aslan, it is Tash whom he serves and by Tash his deed is accepted".

Emeth questions once more:

Lord, I have been seeking Tash all my days.

Beloved, said the Glorious One, unless thy desire had been for me thou shouldst not have sought so long and so truly. For all find what they truly seek.

So is how one responds to Christ the dividing line? Absolutely, but it divides on how one responds to the character and methods of Christ, not the idea of Christ. Does one value love, truth and freedom, believe God is like Jesus and surrender in trust to Him? OR does one value power, force and legal justice and thus believe in a authoritarian god who will torture and kill those who refuse him?

WEDNESDAY

The Resurrection – the lesson asks, “Why is the resurrection of Jesus so pivotal in apostolic preaching and in the faith of the early church?”

Paul says in 1Cor 15:14: “If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.”

If Christ has not risen again, then God is not the source of life, Christ didn't procure remedy, and our belief is a fraud.

In considering the resurrection, I wanted to share 2Cor 5:1-10 from *The Remedy*:



¹Now we know this earthly body is like a tent or hospital gown that wears out easily and leaves us exposed. And if this earthly body, our individuality currently occupies, is destroyed, we have an eternal body that will never wear out, a heavenly dwelling place for our individuality not built by human hands.²Meanwhile, the older we get, the more we groan, longing to be free of this deteriorating body and clothed in our perfect heavenly body,³ because when we have exchanged this mortal body for our heavenly one, we will not be found sick, dying and exposed.⁴For while we are in this collapsing tent, we groan with the burden of aging and slow decay. We don't want to die to be rid of this worn-out body, but to be translated directly into our heavenly body so that this mortal may be swallowed up by eternal life.⁵Now God's intention for us has never changed. He created us to live eternally and has given us the Spirit to heal our minds as the first phase of our restoration, guaranteeing our future complete recreation.

⁶We certainly know that as long as this frail body is our home, we remain away from the Lord⁷but we live by trusting God with how things will turn out, not by waiting to see the future restoration.⁸Therefore, we are confident while in the mortal body, even though we prefer to be translated into our heavenly body and be at home with the Lord.⁹Our goal is to please him by living in harmony with his design for life, whether we are in this mortal body or our heavenly one¹⁰for we will all appear in Christ's examining room so that each one may be accurately diagnosed and receive what his or her condition warrants, whether from compliance or non-compliance with God's treatment plan.

THURSDAY

After His resurrection Jesus used several methods for communicating this truth to His followers. What methods of communication were used?

- Road to Emmaus – Jesus took them through Scripture showing how all the prophecies were fulfilled in His life
- The angel proclaimed it to the women at the tomb
- The women proclaimed it to the disciples
- Jesus appeared to the followers, Mary, Emmaus, upper room
- Jesus ate fish – why?
- Jesus told Thomas to put his hands in Christ's side why?

Why is it important to include all three evidentiary threads, Scripture, science and experience?

Because any one by itself can be twisted, manipulated, misunderstood.

- Scripture alone is used to teach many things that contradict reality
- Experience alone can be unreliable,
 - consider someone giving false testimony, but they are very sincere and believable,
 - or consider magicians how they can make something seem to be real, but it isn't



- Science alone, often has only partial evidence

FRIDAY

Read top paragraph, “The significance...” thoughts? Did angels need the cross?

For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or **things in heaven**. Col 1:19,20

For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like those condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, **to angels** as well as to human beings. 1Cor 4:9

It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- **things into which angels long to look**. 1Pet 1:12

Read question 1 – What do you think of their idea of faith? What is our faith in, the things we can't see or understand, like eternal life, mansions in heaven, resurrection – or is our faith in God? And has Jesus come to reveal God to us so we can see and understand Him?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase is now available on our website, BOTH the Android and Apple Version is not Available! First update for Apple Version now available – most glitches fixed, but if not let me know.

- This is a **FREE** app
- Please read the preface to understand the approach to this paraphrase
- We have cards available to share with others and will ship them at no cost
- Also, if you find typos please email those to us so we can fix any missed typos

CARDS – If you have any of our ministry business cards please check to see if they have our current address: PO Box 28266 Chattanooga, TN 37424. If they are the old ones please discard them. We will be happy to send new ones, just email us. Thanks!

Prayer Request:

Please Pray God will bless our efforts to share this beautiful message about Him at The General Conference of SDA in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. Our booth is A481 and we are giving away DVDs and books. Pray God will make this an amazing event for the advancement of the truth about Him!

The Journal of the Watcher:

The Journal of the Watcher is an illustrated ebook available

For ANDROID in the APP

For APPLE in the iBooks store and in the APP Store – your choice slightly different controls and features.

We are also having it rendered as a “movie” for itunes, for all those people who don’t have smart devices or Apple computers. Will let you know when it is available in itunes.

Come and Reason Ministries FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under.

June 20, 2015: JFEST, Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth at JFEST to give away our materials. JFEST is at Camp Jordan. We will have class at our normal time on June 20. We need some volunteers to work our booth that day – please let us know if you are local and can help out.

July 1-12: GC session at San Antonio. Come and Reason will have a booth in the exhibit hall, booth A481. Please come by and see us if you are there. We will have class at our regular times here in Collegedale.

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October 24: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Puyallup, WA.

AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support a charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered Charity. So, you can select us, and whenever you shop in their [smile.amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile) site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called “Come Reason Ministries” and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN.**



Biblical Missionaries 3Q 2015 Lesson 1

The Missionary Nature of God

INTRODUCTION

In the first paragraph the lesson quotes Jesus, “All authority has been given Me in heaven and earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Mt 28:18-20)

What does it mean? Let’s break it down point by point:

- Who are disciples? Followers willing to be taught, to learn and apply what they learn to their lives.
- What is baptism? Is it a ritual or something else? It is about dunking in water, or about immersing the mind/heart into God?
- What does “in the name” mean? Is it about syllables? Or, is it about character?
- What does observe mean? To keep certain holidays, feast days? Or does it mean to live in harmony with God’s design?
- What did Jesus command? To love—but can love be commanded? Then why did He do it?
- So what is the message that the disciples of Jesus are to learn, assimilate into their lives, immerse others in and observe? Is it not the truth about God’s character of love, kingdom of love, methods of love, design protocols of love that life is constructed to operate upon?

Here is MT 28:18-20 from *The Remedy*:

Then Jesus walked up to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.¹⁹ So go and spread the Remedy to the entire world, teach the people of every nation, immersing their hearts and minds into the character and methods of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teach them to live in harmony with the law of love, the design protocols upon which life is built, exactly as I have instructed you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, all the way, right through to the very end of time."

Is this the way you think of the gospel commission? Or do we have some other idea?

Is the gospel commission to get people to join a certain denomination? Is it to get them to change their lifestyle (aren’t there many health-conscience people that have no interest in God?) Is it about getting people to worship on a certain day? What is the gospel commission?

Read second paragraph, “It’s not hard...” When you hear the first of the three angel’s messages, what do you hear?



What is the war between good and evil center upon? The truth about God (2Cor 10:3-5)

Who is the one who has been accused of being unjust and untrustworthy? God!

Who did Paul say would win his day in court? God! (Rom 3:4)

So, what is the final message to go to the world? Would it not be the good news about God, that allows people to make a right judgment about him so they can be saved?

Here is Rev 14:6-8 from *The Remedy*:

Then I saw another messenger flying in midair, and he had the eternal good news about God's character of love to proclaim to everyone living on earth, to every nation, tribe, language and people, which represents a movement of people who arise to proclaim the truth about God's character of love throughout the world.⁷ He said in a clear resounding voice, "Be in awe of God, and glorify him by living his methods of love, because the hour has come for everyone to make a judgment about God and worship the Designer, Creator and Builder who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and springs of water, all of which operate upon his law of love."

Where do we find ourselves now in God's plan? Does God have a plan for His people to be missionaries in the world today? If so, what is the message we are to be taking to the world?

We often hear things like the "remnant of God," what message are they to take to the world?

Rev 12:17:

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

- Who is the dragon? Satan
- Who is the woman? God's people, the true church invisible
- Who is the remnant? The end time people who remain true to God
- What does keep the commandments of God mean? Live in harmony with God's design for life, His law.
- What is the testimony of Jesus that they have?

At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Rev 19:10

What is the spirit of prophecy? One interpretation of this phrase is, an institution in which one



member of that institution was blessed with a particular gift of the spirit, called the gift of prophecy.

I think that particularly interpretation misdirects our focus and our message away from the central issue in the war, which is about God, and subtly directs our attention toward putting a church institution at the center. 2000 years ago a group of people were God's chosen on earth to fulfill a mission of evangelizing the world for Christ's first advent. They were blessed with many members who had the gift of prophecy. And this caused them to think of *themselves* as special, elite, and caused them to believe it was essential, above all else, that their nation survive. Thus, putting their institution at the center, Caiaphas said, "What fools you are! ⁵⁰Don't you realize that it is better for you to let one man die for the people, instead of having the whole nation destroyed?" Jn 11:49,50

If we interpret the phrase "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" to mean a single person, now deceased, who was gifted with the gift of prophecy, do we subtly shift the focus where Scripture does not actually lead? (Note, I am not questioning at all whether the gift of prophecy was manifested in a person or not. The Jewish nation clearly had many prophets, yet it did not protect them from, as a nation, choosing institutional loyalty over loyalty to God.)

Here is Rev 19:10 from the Good News Translation:

I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "Don't do it! I am a servant together with you and with your fellow-believers, all those who hold to the truth that Jesus revealed. Worship God!" For the truth that Jesus revealed is what inspires the prophets.

Does this suggest another meaning? What truth would it be that Jesus revealed that would have inspired the prophets? What is the central issue in the war? Who is on trial? What is the truth Jesus said He came to reveal?

Here it is from *The Remedy*:

I was so overwhelmed with awe I fell down to honor him, but he told me, "Don't honor me! I am a fellow worker on God's team with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony Jesus revealed about his Father. Give honor to God and worship him! For the testimony Jesus gave about his Father is the same as that which inspired the prophets."

What is our mission as missionaries today? Is it not to present the truth about God, first, last and always? Here is a quote from one of the founders of our church:

"It is the **darkness of misapprehension of God** that is enshrouding the world. **Men are losing their knowledge of His character.** It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. **At this time** a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. **His character is to be made known.** Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and



truth...The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.” Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

Is this the message we are taking to the world, or instead, have we also taken a dictator god to the world, a god who imposes laws and imposes rules, only telling people we know his true rules and you have a wrong set of rules, come keep the rules we have?

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “Our world...” Are we all sinners? Yes—but how did we become this way?

Ps. 51:5 we were born this way—we didn’t choose to be this way! And therefore, it isn’t our fault we are this way. But even though not our fault, we are still terminal.

Consider a child with HIV infected parents, born HIV infected. Did the child do anything wrong? No, but does the child still have a condition that will kill it? This is our situation, we are not born guilty, we are not under legal condemnation, we are born with a condition that is deviant from God’s design and we need healing.

Read second paragraph, “All is not lost...” Jesus died for our sins, which means what? What law lens do you use?

Is God’s law design law, protocols upon which life is built or functionally, no different that what created beings make, rules that require external enforcement and inflicted punishment?

Pause and think about it and then think, through both views, what does it mean Jesus died for our sins?

What is the Catholic understanding of how Jesus death deals with our sins?

I watched a discussion between a Catholic Priest and Protestant theologian on this question. The Catholic Priest said our sins are dealt with when we confess and partake of the Holy Communion, i.e. the Eucharist which becomes the literal flesh of Jesus when one partakes. The Protestant theologian challenged this saying that the Bible says Jesus died, once for all, and alleged that the Catholic view teaches Jesus dies over and over again every time the Eucharist is taken. The Priest responded with this explanation:

“There are two elements to any sacrifice the immolation and the offering. The immolation is a bloody death. The lamb is slain, what is precious about that is the life in the blood of the lamb is precious and that pays back God. That’s how the Old Testament rituals used to work. The immolation happened once but the offering is something Christ does for all eternity. He is right now in the presence of the Father, in the holy of holies, in the eternal presence, offering



himself to the Father for the forgiveness of our sins.... Christ isn't killed again and again and again, he is offered [in the Eucharist] in the same eternal presence as Christ offers himself."

<http://amazingdiscoveries.org/12.10.24-debate-about-the-mass-and-transubstantiation>

The priest said it was in this offering of his sacrifice over and over again to God that the sins were paid for. So each time we sin, we must take mass in order to have the sacrifice of Christ pay God for that sin.

How do you think the Protestant theologian responded? The Protestant theologian responded, with the argument that Christ is not in heaven offering his sacrifice over and over, but offering his *merits* to the Father over and over again to pay for our sins.

In the Protestant view, all human sins were placed on Christ at the Cross and paid for there, but when we pray for forgiveness, then Jesus goes to the Father and reminds the Father of what He has already done in paying for the sins and claims his "merits" as the payment He offers to the Father.

What is the basis of their argument? They both believe God's law is no different operationally than human law, rules imposed that require punishment. Thus, both believe Jesus had to do some legal action to pay for those sins, and that the Father as the supreme Judge must have something offered to Him to satisfy His sense of justice and deal with His anger and wrath. The Catholic view, it is Jesus' sacrifice being offered to the Father, the Protestant view, it is Jesus' merits being offered to the Father.

What do you think? What do you understand if you step back and realize God's law is design law, that deviations are destructive to the deviant and if God does nothing, the sinner dies eternally. Then, what do you understand dying for our sins to mean?

Here are a few quotes from one of the founders of our church:

"In assuming human nature, that he might reach to the very depths of human woe and misery and **lift man up**, Christ has shown what estimate he places upon the human race. In this work everything was at stake. **Satan claimed to be the lawful owner of the fallen race; [who takes a legal approach?]** and with what persistent effort did he seek to overthrow Christ through his subtilty! It was only by the most desperate conflict with the powers of Satan that Christ could accomplish his **purpose of restoring the almost obliterated image of God in man, and place his own signature upon his forehead.** It was a desperate battle; for **Satan had so long worked in league with human intelligencies** as to almost completely intercept every ray of light shining from the throne of God upon the human mind. The cross of Calvary alone could destroy the works of the devil. In that wondrous sacrifice all eyes were called to 'behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' The love of Christ kindles in the heart of all who continue to behold him. {General Conference Daily Bulletin, March 2, 1897 par. 17}



In the beginning, man was created in the likeness of God, not only in character, but in form and feature. **Sin defaced and almost obliterated the divine image; but Christ came to restore that which had been lost.** GC 645

Weakened through sin, we can not of ourselves keep the law of God. But **Christ came to our world to restore the moral image of God in men**, and to bring them back from the path of disobedience to a path of obedience. **His mission to the world was to reveal the character of God by living the law, which is the foundation of his government;** and those who will accept him as their personal Saviour will grow in grace, and in his strength will be enabled to obey the law of God. {ST, February 11, 1897 par. 15}

Christ came to give expression to the law of God, to represent the Father's character. He came to minister to man, to restore in him the moral image of God. Tho he was rich, yet for our sake he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. {ST, August 26, 1897 par. 3}

How does God get a new heaven and new earth? What is the key to making it new? Is it merely a issue of recreating physical matter? Or is it something more? It is about having an environment without fear, without selfishness, where all beings are 100% trustworthy all the time and love others more than self?

How does God get such a place? Can He get this by force and power?

God can only get what He longs for, the restoration of His character of love into His children, when we come back to a true knowledge of Him – and this cannot happen until we reject the imposed law construct and come back to worship Him who made the heavens, earth, sea and all that is in them – Designer worship!

WEDNESDAY

God's Initiative to Save Us – what does this title mean? Do you believe it?

From what is God saving us? Is God working through Christ to save us from Himself, from the punishment He would inflict on us if Christ didn't die for us? Absolutely not! But this is what is often taught.

God is working through Christ to heal us (save, Greek *sodzo* means to save), from sin, which is a state of being deviant from His design. He is working to set us right, or make us right, which is the same as to make righteous or justify. However, because of the infection of imposed law, the term justify has been twisted to mean legal adjustment rather than actual change within the heart and mind of the believer in Christ. See the last paragraph,



“God ‘made Him who knew...” notice how the last sentences says so we can be “counted as righteous” no, it is so we can be MADE righteous, actually healed, actually restored, actually recreated to have the mind of Christ!

Our natural heart is “enmity” toward God, i.e. opposed to God, selfish rather than selfless, and thus out of harmony with God’s design for life. This is a terminal condition. Romans 4 tells us Abraham trusted God and THEN, after his heart was changed from distrust to trust, he was recognized or counted as righteous. The change in Abraham came first, the accounting or recognition was a recognition of what was real, what had actually transpired in the heart/mind of Abraham, not as penal/legal theologies state, a declaration of righteousness even though we are not.

SUNDAY

We are talking about Biblical Missionaries – why do you think the lesson focuses on the creation of Adam and Eve?

The lesson will go on to discuss free will and love, and then the fall, but for right now, is there some aspect of God’s missionary nature that was being expressed in the creation of Adam and Eve?

What was happening in the universe when this earth was created? War had already broken out in heaven—what kind of war? A polemic (Rev 12) – which is a war of words, over what? Over God’s trustworthiness—so how did God respond?

God provided evidence: He began to create a new solar system, with a new planet teeming with life and with new intelligent beings who were given procreative ability and dominion to govern, and then God rested His case. Why? What was revealed? What were the charges of Satan that were refuted by God’s work during creation week of planet earth?

Paul says that we are a spectacle, a theater, to angels and men (1Cor 4:9)

Was God being a missionary by creating planet earth and were Adam and Eve to be missionaries to angels?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Embedded in the Creation...” Why was it wrong to eat from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge? The lesson states we have the capacity for moral judgment, which is the ability to tell right from wrong – so why don’t we examine the question of eating from the Tree of Knowledge through the seven levels.



1. **Level One—Reward and Punishment:** It is wrong to eat from it because God will punish. It is right not to eat because God will not punish.
2. **Level Two—Marketplace Exchange:** It is wrong to eat because it breaks the deal with God and would lose His blessings and place in the garden. It is right not to eat to keep all the benefits from God.
3. **Level Three—Social Conformity:** It is wrong to eat if my community says it is wrong, it is right to eat we, as a community, agree it is right.
4. **Level Four—Law and Order:** It is wrong because it breaks God's law and is treason against the divine government, which would require a just God to inflict the death penalty. It is right not to eat because we avoid legal trouble with God.
5. **Level Five—Love for Others:** It is wrong to eat because it would be an act of selfishness, taking what is not one's own. When we love others we don't take what is another's for ourselves. It is right not to eat because we want to protect the best interests of the other.
6. **Level Six—Principle-Based Living:** It is wrong to eat because it would deviate from God's design and infect them with a terminal condition. It is right not to eat because they continue to live in harmony with His design of love.
7. **Level Seven—Understanding Friend of God:** It is wrong to eat because it breaks trust with God, which violates the law of love, alters their condition, and obstructs God's purpose for the creation of earth and humankind.

Read second paragraph, "God could..." What would be lost had He done this? The ability to love!

Read fourth paragraph, "Because of its divine..." This is so well said – do you agree?

If it is against the character of God to force compliance or obedience how do we apply this fact to our theology?

Are certain teachings ruled out if this is true?

If someone said to you, "You are free to obey me or not. That is your choice, but if you don't I will torture and kill you." Are they respecting your freedom?

But, what if they said, "I have to torture and kill you because the law requires it and I must be just—but remember you are free and I would never coerce you"?

So, if God is not threatening to kill us if we disobey, does that mean everyone will be saved? Why not?



The critical issue is: how do we understand God's law – if we accept the lie that it functions like human law, rules imposed, we inevitably teach God inflicts punishment, which contradicts His character, the law of liberty and coerces.

We must come back to understanding God as Creator, and His law as the protocols upon which life is constructed, then deviations are understood to destroy the deviant as God leave all free who choose to persist in deviation from His design. Death comes from sin, living outside the law life was designed to operate upon, not from God!

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Eating a little..." What do you think "stern necessity" means? Had it been some stern necessity would that had made a difference?

Why did God give the clear instructions? What was the purpose for Him telling them not to eat of the fruit? Why did He put the tree in the Garden in the first place?

Here are a couple of historic quotes:

God would not permit Satan to follow the holy pair with continual temptations. **He could have access to them only at the tree of knowledge of good and evil.** E.G. White, Story of Redemption 31

God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case **man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automaton.** Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. **There could have been no development of character...** It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule. E.G. White, Conflict and Courage 33

Do you agree? If you understand Design Law then this reasons fit perfectly, but if operating level four and below, under imposed law concepts, then other reasons come to mind.

Read second paragraph, "Likewise, we must..." How does God get us to choose to follow Him? What method does He use?

Truth, presented in love, leaving us free! As the lesson says, He never coerces. How much of Christianity violates this by presenting God as threatening to punish disobedience?

So, what does it mean to cherish God's Word? Does it mean a "God said it, I believe it, that settles



it” attitude? Is it “My Bible says” attitude?

What is the problem with cherishing the Word of God like this? First, it doesn’t require one to actually understand what is meant, thus misunderstanding occurs and people can actually go out in God’s name and misrepresent Him.

Further, if one has a thoughtless attitude, just obey, they only have to be convinced the messenger is from God and they do what they are told, no questions. Remember the story of the young and old prophet? (1Kings 13)

Who were called God’s friends in the Old Testament? Abraham and Moses, and what did they do when God came with instructions? How did they respond to God’s Word?

- When God told Moses he needed him to be a spokesperson what did Moses do? Did he cherish that information? Did he argue?
- When God told Moses he was going to destroy Israel, what did Moses do?
- When God told Abraham that he was going to destroy Sodom, what did Abraham do? Did he cherish God’s Word, or question it?

God wants us to understand, so if we don’t, he wants us to ask questions, with a heart of true concern for God, to truly know and be in harmony with Him. He hates blind obedience, thoughtless adherence to rules, because such practices obstruct our growth and healing and actually separate us from God.

Fourth paragraph quotes Genesis 3:24: “After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.”

What are the implications? If, as many Christians believe, human beings possess innate immortality, why bar them from the tree of life?

What was the reason for barring them? To prevent sinners from having access to the fountain of youth, which is what I believe the tree of life actually was—a source of perfect nutrition that prevented physiological aging and healed all physiological problems. But, the tree of life would not have prevented Cain from smashing Abel’s head with a rock, or beheading, or vaporization in a nuclear explosion. True immortality comes only from God, not from a tree.

Imagine, what would have happened on earth if the tree had remained accessible to sinful beings? Who do you think would have controlled it?

Just consider how evil would have been multiplied and magnified on earth had that happened. Thus, God, in great love and mercy, limited evil by preventing sinful beings from having access to a youth promoting, healing resource.



THURSDAY

What is our mission? What is the message we have to offer? Do we have something to say that people need to hear? What?

What does salt do? Not only does it enhance flavor, it increases thirst – are we to make the gospel more palatable and cause people to thirst for more?

FRIDAY

Discuss questions 1-3



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

On July 4, Class **WILL** meet here at our usual time, however, we will not broadcast it live because our entire broadcast team will be at the GC. We will audio record it and the audio and notes will be available on our website. On July 11, we will be back to normal broadcast and recording.

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase– ALL GLITCHES NOW FIXED in the IOS Version! So please UPDATE to latest version.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes.

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Biblical Missionaries 3Q 2015 Lesson 2

Abraham: The First Missionary

SABBATH

What do you think about the title? Was Noah a missionary? Was Enoch a missionary?

Read memory text, Galatians 3:6-8:

Consider Abraham: “He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”
⁷ Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. ⁸ The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.”

The lesson chose to use the NIV – what do you hear when you hear this verse?

What law lens to you understand it through? Is God’s law like human law, rules imposed and we are in legal trouble with the ruling authority? If we view it through that lens what kind of theories do we come up with?

This is from the SDA Bible Commentary on this verse (which is not inspired, but just intelligent honest people sharing what they think it means):

Accounted. Or, “counted,” “reckoned.” Abraham’s faith was credited to his account in heaven, thus balancing the account. Accordingly, God considered Abraham a righteous man. [according to this why did God consider Abraham righteous? Because of an adjustment in a legal document in heaven, not because Abraham was actually righteous. In other words, it puts God in the position of dealing in fantasy not reality.] Works had nothing to do with his attainment of this favorable credit rating in the books of heaven. God simply offered it to him and he accepted it by faith, believing that God meant exactly what He said. His own efforts could never have purchased this blessed status. See on Rom. 4:9–13.

Faith does not satisfy the demands of the law, for the law requires perfect obedience. Therefore, if one is to be justified by faith, it must be on the basis of some other principle than the works of the law. [Do you see the difficulty this author has in trying to reconcile the issues? The problem is the author is trying to come up with a solution to justification based on the premise that God’s law operates like human law, rather than design law. Why does the law require perfect obedience? For the same reason the law of respiration require we breathe, it is how life is constructed. Yet, this view suggests if we find someone suffocating all they need to do is have faith in someone who is not and have their breathing credited to their account and they will be recognized to be breathing.] To be credited as righteous means being forgiven and admitted to the favor of God. [what is suggested as the



reason we are not in the favor of God? That God hasn't forgiven because we haven't received the proper legal payment for the heavenly court.] Man can do nothing to deserve the gift of Christ's righteousness; he cannot claim it on the basis of merit. Divine grace makes it possible for a just God to consider repentant sinners righteous. Vol 7, p. 954

So, was Abraham is actually righteous or only declared to be righteous? The typical position taken by those who teach God's government operates like a human government, is that God declares a person righteous based on the legal application of Jesus' perfect sacrifice in our behalf, even though we are not righteous. This puts God in the position of declaring falsehoods – God declaring Abraham righteous even though Abraham is not righteous.

This happens because they are operating in a fantasy world (and I mean that literally not pejoratively). They have a construct that is not real, a false reality – the idea that God's law is imposed rules.

This is from Enhances Strong's Lexicon, the word translated accounted or credited:

λογίζομαι [*logizomai* /log·id·zom·ahee/] v. Middle voice from 3056; TDNT 4:284; TDNTA 536; GK 3357; 41 occurrences; AV translates as “think” nine times, “impute” eight times, “reckon” six times, “count” five times, “account” four times, “suppose” twice, “reason” once, “number” once, and translated miscellaneous five times. **1** to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over. **1a** to take into account, to make an account of. *1a1* metaph. to pass to one's account, to impute. *1a2* a thing is reckoned as or to be something, i.e. as availing for or equivalent to something, as having the like force and weight. **1b** to number among, reckon with. **1c** to reckon or account. **2** to reckon inward, count up or weigh the reasons, to deliberate. **3** by reckoning up all the reasons, to gather or infer. **3a** to consider, take into account, weigh, meditate on. **3b** to suppose, deem, judge. **3c** to determine, purpose, decide. *Additional Information:* **This word deals with reality. If I “logizomai” or reckon that my bank book has \$25 in it, it has \$25 in it. Otherwise I am deceiving myself. This word refers to facts not suppositions.**¹

When we come back to worship the Creator, Him who made the heavens, earth, sea and realize God's laws are the protocols upon which reality functions, then we realize several key facts.

1. When Adam sinned humankind was changed (God and God's law were not changed)
2. This change in human kind altered what was right, i.e. the way God built it, to something that was wrong, or deviant from the design. Another way to say this, what was right-eous became un-right-eous
3. The natural state of the mind/heart/character of humans after Adam and Eve's fall is

¹ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



“enmity” toward God. In other words, we don’t trust God. Our inherited state of being is, not right or, unrighteous.

4. Abraham experienced a change in his heart attitude toward God, moving from distrust to trust—first. Thus, his heart attitude toward God was “set right.” And only AFTER this change IN Abraham did God recognize Abraham as being set right, or righteous. Why? Because Abraham actually was set right in his heart attitude and relationship with God and therefore, because of that change in heart attitude he was able to partake of the Remedy Christ achieved. Thus, the victory of Christ is NOT applied to record books in heaven, but into the hearts, minds, characters of those who trust in God, such that we become partakers of the divine nature, and it is no longer I that lives but Christ lives in me.

This is reality, a real, actual change in the believer in Christ. This is justification or righteousness by faith. And what this looks like is dying to selfishness and experiencing renewal of love as the driving motive in one’s character.

This Galatians 3:6-9 from *The Remedy*:

Consider Abraham: "He trusted God, and his trust was recognized as righteousness, because the distrust caused through Satan's lies had been removed, and through trust he was endowed with a new heart, right motives, and Christlike principles."⁷ Be clear on this: All those who trust God, as Abraham did, experience the same transformation of character and are considered children of Abraham.⁸ The Scriptures foretold that God would set the Gentiles right with him by trust - just like Abraham - and announced this incredible good news to Abraham: "All nations, peoples and ethnic groups will be blessed through you."⁹ So those who trust God experience healing of heart and mind just like Abraham - who trusted God.

SUNDAY

Read Genesis 12:1-3 at the top of the page, “The Lord...” What do you make of this portion of the passage, “I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse...”?

What law lens do you see it through? Is God a dictator or Designer?

Those who operate at level four and below hear these words and think: God has two faces. He has a kind and merciful side that blesses us if we do what he wants, but he also has a stern, vengeful side that will use power to torment and punish those who don’t do what he says.

Is this how you hear it? Can anyone bring in any Bible texts that might shed light on this?

Through whom is the Remedy for sin coming? Didn’t God just promise that it is through Abraham that all nations will be blessed, that it is through Abraham that the Messiah will come?



Then what does it mean, contextually, for someone to bless Abraham? It means they value, cherish, rejoice, celebrate and identify with Abraham and his mission and want to support the fulfillment of God's purpose. And what would such persons do when presented with the opportunity to partake of God's Remedy? And would that be a blessing?

What does it mean to curse Abraham? What attitude would one have toward Abraham and his descendants, including Jesus? And if one chooses to curse Jesus what happens? If one rejects the Remedy what happens? What does God do? He let's go – and if you have a terminal condition and the one with the Remedy grants you your choice to refuse the Remedy, what happens? You are cursed – remember Scripture, “cursed is the one who is hung on a tree.” Jesus was let go by the Father, abandoned, and that was God's curse.

To all those who curse Abraham and thereby curse God and God's Remedy, hardening their hearts and refusing to trust God as Abraham did, God let's them go and they die of their terminal condition – this is God's curse.

Here is a quote from one of the founders of the SDA church:

God pledges himself to bless those who will obey his commandments... With these words of light and truth before them, how dare men neglect so plain a duty? How dare they disobey God **when obedience to his requirements mean prosperity in temporal and spiritual things**, and disobedience means the curse of God? **Satan is the destroyer. God cannot bless those who refuse to be faithful stewards. All he can do is to permit Satan to do his destroying work.** We see calamities of every shape and in every degree coming upon the earth, and why?--**The Lord's restraining power is not exercised.** The world has disregarded the word of God. They live as though there were no God. Like the inhabitants of the Noachic world, they refuse to have any thought of God. Wickedness prevails to an alarming extent, and the earth is ripe for the harvest...
{Pamphlet 166 10.1}

Read last paragraph, “Many of us are tested...” What comes to mind when you hear the concept of being tested by God?

- Is God examining you like a schoolteacher in order to find out what you know?
- Is God testing you like a human government tests operatives, to see if you are loyal or treasonous?
- Is God testing you to see how much you can take?

Which law lens do you hear this through?

What design law applies? The law of exertion – if you want something to get stronger you must exercise it, if you don't use it you lose it.



What does God want for us? He wants us to grow, develop in ability in Christlike character, in trust in him, which requires what? That we exercise our trust in him!

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴ Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. Jas 1:2-4

What does this mean in the context of how reality works?

Consider going to a physical therapist after months in a cast. They start you out with two pound weights, and you struggle, but as you gain strength, and it becomes easy to lift two pounds, what does the therapist do? Add weight, and you struggle again, and when it becomes easy what does the therapist do? Add weight, why? Is the therapist trying to burden you, overwhelm you, discourage you? No, to strengthen you to recover your autonomy.

What is the last fruit of the Spirit – self-control – how do you think God gets us there?

Does this mean we are saved by works? Absolutely not! We get a new heart and right spirit by God's grace through trust/faith. But, with that new heart and spirit, we team up with God, via the Spirit and choose to exercise our abilities to mature, develop, and grow.

This is design law – we must exercise our trust in God in order for it to grow!

God cannot save a person against that person's will – but salvation is not a mere legal assent, or ritual performed, it is healing, it is a relationship with God that grows by experience each day. So a person who claims legal forgiveness, but chooses to live outside God's design law of love, is not healed/saved, they continue to be hardened and damaged by such deviations (sin). This is why Jesus said many will come to him in the last days claiming to be his but he never knew them. This is what Paul means about those who have a form of godliness but not power.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Lot was..." Now think about Lot for a minute, where do we find Lot in the New Testament? Peter describes Lot as a righteous man whose conscience was tormented by the wickedness of Sodom. (2Pet 2:7)

Do you think righteousness and unrighteousness at Sodom was primarily about maintaining healthy sexual boundaries?

It is often taught this way, but let's consider some facts:



- When all the men of the city turned out and demanded the angels, who were in the form of men, to sexually abuse what did Lot do?
 - He offered his daughters to them to sexually abuse
 - “Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him ⁷ and said, “No, my friends. Don’t do this wicked thing. ⁸ Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don’t do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.” Gen 19:6-8
 - Remember lot is considered a righteous man—how is this an act of righteousness?
- After Lot leaves Sodom did he eventually have children? Who were the mothers of his children?
 - His daughter, Lot had incest with his daughters, yes they got him drunk, but consider that for a minute...
 - If someone gets drunk are they now excused for their choices?
 - Are they responsible for getting drunk in the first place?
 - Does this mean Lot had an alcohol problem? But he is still considered righteous?
 - Where were they living at the time? A cave in the mountains (Gen 19:30) So who do you think Lot, in his drunken state, thought was available for intimate physical relations?
- So what are the implications regarding Lot and him being considered righteous?

Was the issue of Sodom being a wicked city primarily an issue of sexual sin?

What was it that made the city so wicked?

‘Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. ⁵⁰ They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen. Ezek 16:49,50

What was it that made them wicked? Selfishness, greed, pride, arrogance, lack of compassion, no love!

Lot demonstrated hospitality to the strangers. Lot welcomed them to his home, used his resources to provide for them, and was willing to sacrifice his own family members to protect them – these are acts of love. The men of Sodom cared only for themselves and were willing to abuse others to gratify self.

Are we suggesting sexuality cannot be abused, exploited, and there are no acts of sexual sin – Absolutely not! Of course people can abuse themselves and others via the avenue of sexuality, but we are speaking of what is primary – the character and it is defect in character, being selfish, being exploitive of others, pride, arrogance, etc. which is the root.



War broke out on the plane, and some kings came along conquered Sodom and took Lot and his family captive. Abraham organizes a force and pursues them and defeats them freeing Lot and his family.

Read third paragraph, “To the kings...” What do you think about Abraham’s victory revealing the power of God?

Note what Paul says in Romans:

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. 1:16

So when you think about power, what comes to mind? There is physical power, but there is another kind of power – the power of truth and love. Which is more powerful?

Does God use both types? Yes, why? Because of whom he is dealing with. Who needs physical power used? What level of development needs to see displays of physical power? Why?

And do displays of physical power win God what he wants? Why not?

- Can’t get love by force
- Can’t get trust by force
- Physical signs and wonders can be counterfeited
- Actions based on fear, because of power and might, inflame selfishness, they don’t cure it!

When Christ returns how is it described in Revelation returning with a sword coming out of his mouth that strikes down the nations – what does that sword represent? The Sword of Truth and Love and truth destroys lies and love destroys selfishness. So those who have solidified their beings upon lies and selfishness will be destroyed by the unveiling of infinite truth and love!

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “The Lord wanted...” Do we need to leave our past behind? In what ways?

- Leaving immaturity for maturity
 - When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. 1Cor 13:11
 - In what context is this passage found? In the chapter on love! Love is mature, selfishness is childlike. Think again of the seven levels of development and how the first four, including the legal model, are all selfish, childlike approaches, not love. The first four are based on fear – fear of getting punished, fear of not getting the deal, fear of rejection, fear of legal trouble. We must leave our immature way of



thinking behind, leave magical thinking behind, leave fantasy behind and come to understand how reality actually works.

- What are examples of magical thinking- magical thinking is the belief that a causal relationship exists between things that have no causal relationship in reality:
 - step on a crack break your mother's back
 - break a mirror get seven years bad luck
 - "my daddy moved out because I didn't eat all my peas. If I would have eaten all my peas daddy would still be here."
 - If I say this prayer every day for thirty days God will bless me
 - If I claim the blood of Jesus to my heavenly record then I am declared to be righteous, even though I am still unrighteous
- Leave our past mistakes behind
 - But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:13:14
 - We must stop living in guilt over past shortcomings, stop beating ourselves up and accept and embrace our new hearts and lives in Jesus!
 - So you cheated on an exam in 7th grade, or had sex before marriage, or viewed porn, or lied, or committed adultery or whatever. History cannot be changed, what can change is your heart, mind, character. You can be reborn in Christ.
 - David through all eternity future will still *have* murdered Uriah and had adulterous relationship with Bathsheba. History doesn't change, what did change was David, he was recreated in the inner man and had a new heart and right spirit. We must move forward, in truth, in the reality of God's kingdom of love.
 - But the childish way of thinking is rules oriented, thinking God is mad and must punish, and we stay focused on legal accounting and getting our penalty paid, thus we never actually moved forward and live a life of love!
- Leave our losses behind and move forward
 - But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead." MT 8:22
 - When my father died I grieved. And there is an appropriate time for grieving – but I realized, I would not father by living in the past, the only way I would see my father again was by letting go the past and moving forward. As God brings about his plan, when Christ returns again, then we can be with our departed loved ones. Thus, we move forward, we don't let ourselves get stuck in the past.
 - Deep-Space 9 analogy
- Leave our destructive habits behind
 - Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Col 3:5
 - We must say no to the deviations from God's design
 - The Holy Spirit brings new desires, new motives, new wisdom and leads us to points of decision. We know the choices we must make, but we don't get the divine power over habits until we choose to do what we know is right for us. THEN we are



imbued with divine power sufficient to do what we have chosen.

- Leave our grudges and resentments behind
 - Love keeps no record of wrongs 1Cor 13:5
 - When we live in love we don't hold grudges, we grieve the destruction of character our enemies are inflicting upon themselves. We pray like Stephen as he was being stoned, Father don't lay this to their account.
- Leave our disappointments and unfulfilled desires behind—so may of my patients had problems in their childhood, parents who abused them, abandoned them and they live continually in the pain of that unfulfilled childhood.
 - We come, as citizens of heaven, to build upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, are members of his family, and have loyalty and purpose in seeking his kingdom fulfilled.

Read third paragraph, “Amazing, too, was...” What do you think of this definition of faith? In what is our faith, is it our destination or in the one who is leading?

If we know, if we can see it, does our faith get undermined? Well, when Christ returns again, and we meet him face to face, do we say: “Well before you returned and I couldn't see you I had real faith in you. But now that you are here I don't have faith in you anymore?”

Of course not! Our faith increases as we gain understanding and evidence!

WEDNESDAY

At the end of the first paragraph it states, “Despite his faults, Abraham was still used by the Lord because Abraham wanted to be used by Him; and thus, the Lord was able to mold His character.”

This really resonated with me. I remembered years ago, when I was around twenty, I heard a song by a Christian group called Petra that became a real prayer for me. It is called:

I Am Available

Words and music by Bob Hartman

Based on Matthews 9:37-38, Romans 12:1

I don't have much to offer you, I don't have much to give
There's so much I may never be as long as I may live
I may never be all I want to be although I'll always try
But if you choose me, to use me, there's just one reason why

(Chorus)

I am available, I am available

I will go when you say go



I am available, I am available
I will stop when you say no
My whole life was incomplete till I laid it at Your feet
So use me as You will
I am available

I'm not the most dependable - sometimes you can't rely
There's no excuse, there's no defense, there's only one reply

I know that my ability is not Your main concern
It's my availability and willingness to learn

I think this is so true – God wants people who are willing. He will provide what is necessary to do whatever he asks you to do!

THURSDAY

Read top dark section, “Abraham will surely...” Did Abraham’s descendants become a great nation? What nation? Who are the descendants of Abraham?

³⁹ “Abraham is our father,” they answered.

“If you were Abraham’s children,” said Jesus, “then you would do the things Abraham did.

⁴⁰ As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. ⁴¹ You are doing the things your own father does.”

“We are not illegitimate children,” they protested. “The only Father we have is God himself.”

Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. ⁴³ Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. ⁴⁴ You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. In 8:39-44

Here is *The Remedy*

John 8:39 “Abraham is our father,” they shouted. “If you were more than genetic descendants, if you were children of Abraham in values and character, then you would practice the methods Abraham did, and embrace the truth. ⁴⁰ But instead, you prefer lies, and are determined to kill me, the one who has brought you the truth—the only Remedy to heal you—which God himself gave me. Abraham did not reject truth or prefer lies. ⁴¹ But you don’t practice Abraham’s values. No! You are doing what your own father does.” “We were not born illegitimately!” they protested; “The only Father we have is God himself.”



John 8:42 With tears in his eyes, Jesus replied, “If God were really your Father, you would love me, for I came from the Father and am an exact representation of him. I have not come on my own account but as his ambassador to reveal him to the world. ⁴³ Why don’t you understand what I am saying to you? Because your minds are so darkened with your preconceived ideas and your preference for a god like yourselves, that you are unwilling to open your minds and receive the truth I bring. ⁴⁴ You belong to your father, the devil; you prefer his methods, share his motives, and carry out his desires.

Who is a descendant of Abraham? All those, who trust God like Abraham did!

FRIDAY

Questions 1-3

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

On July 4, Class **WILL** meet here at our usual time, however, we will not broadcast it live because our entire broadcast team will be at the GC. We will audio record it and the audio and notes will be available on our website. On July 11, we will be back to normal broadcast and recording.

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase– ALL GLITCHES NOW FIXED in the IOS Version! So please UPDATE to latest version.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes.

July 1-12: GC session at San Antonio. Come and Reason will have a booth in the exhibit hall, booth A481. Please come by and see us if you are there. We will have class at our regular times here in Collegedale.

August 1: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Petaluma, CA SDA church.

September 9,10: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Baptist Boomer’s Conference in San Antonio, TX.

September 12: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr., CA SDA church.

September 23-26: American Association of Christian Counselors World Convention at Gaylord Opryland Hotel, Nashville TN. Come and Reason will have a booth in the exhibit hall, and Dr. Jennings will be doing a preconference workshop and regular conference presentation, as well as commencement speaker for Light University graduation.

October 24: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Puyallup, WA.



2015 3Q “Biblical Missionaries” Lesson 3

The Unlikely Missionary

SABBATH

“And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian” (Luke 4:27, NIV).

Now, for some context:

16 Then Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath he went as usual to the synagogue. He stood up to read the Scriptures 17 and was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written, 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed 19 and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people.”

20 Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. All the people in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him, 21 as he said to them, “This passage of scripture has come true today, as you heard it being read.”

22 They were all well impressed with him and marveled at the eloquent words that he spoke. They said, “Isn't he the son of Joseph?”

23 He said to them, “I am sure that you will quote this proverb to me, ‘Doctor, heal yourself.’ You will also tell me to do here in my hometown the same things you heard were done in Capernaum. 24 I tell you this,” Jesus added, “prophets are never welcomed in their hometown. 25 Listen to me: it is true that there were many widows in Israel during the time of Elijah, when there was no rain for three and a half years and a severe famine spread throughout the whole land. 26 Yet Elijah was not sent to anyone in Israel, but only to a widow living in Zarephath in the territory of Sidon. 27 And there were many people suffering from a dreaded skin disease who lived in Israel during the time of the prophet Elisha; yet not one of them was healed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”

28 When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were filled with anger. 29 They rose up, dragged Jesus out of town, and took him to the top of the hill on which their town was built. They meant to throw him over the cliff, 30 but he walked through the middle of the crowd and went his way. GNT .

How would our church leaders react to someone coming in to the GC claiming to be God’s Son, and spoke in glowing terms about some medieval Pope? They might not try to throw him off of a cliff, but ...



Why do you think Jesus referenced Naaman, and not the Jewish captive maiden who pointed Naaman to Elisha?

In the last sentence, the lesson states we can see “a model for how the plan of salvation works.” I completely agree.

Any payment[s] required by an angry God? In fact, when Naaman tried to pay for his healing, Elisha refused. What does this tell us? Did Naaman place one of his healthy subordinates in the river in his place? Did Elisha declare him healed without it actually being so? If Naaman, had refused to submerge in the Jordan, would Elisha or God have set him on fire?

What actually happened? HEALING by faith in a Savior [evidenced by works], and restoration to the design protocols of life.

For a review: Leprosy [aka Hansen’s Disease] is caused by a bacterial infection, and while contagious [usually from respiratory secretions], it’s not considered highly contagious. It is generally more prevalent in poverty stricken areas with poor sanitation [e.g. 900 BC Syrian battle camps]. There are some studies suggesting a genetic predisposition for the infection. The infection causes granulomas of nerves, the respiratory tract, skin, and eyes often resulting in a diminished ability to feel pain and loss of parts of the extremities due to repeated injury. More than 50% of all current new cases of leprosy occur in India, and the USA has about 200 new cases / year.

Any insights as to why Leprosy is used in Scripture as a metaphor for sin?

SUNDAY

He Had it All ... But,

I’ve been unable to discover whether or not leprosy was as “feared” by heathen nations as it was by the children of Israel, however, one could conclude that even if it didn’t carry the “legal” stigmas [see below], it was disfiguring and potentially lethal.

4. The [Jewish] Legal Attitude: It should be observed here that the attitude of the Law toward the person, garment or house suspected of leprosy is that if the disease be really present they are to be declared unclean and there is no means provided for cure, and in the case of the garment or house, they are to be destroyed. If, on the other hand, the disease be proved to be absent, this freedom from the disease has to be declared by a ceremonial purification. This is in reality not the ritual for cleansing the leper, for the Torah provides none such, but the ritual for declaring him ceremonially free from the suspicion of having the disease. This gives a peculiar and added force to the words, "The lepers are cleansed," as a testimony to our Lord's Divine mission. <http://biblehub.com/topical/l/leprosy.htm>

Most of Israel viewed leprosy [as well as any other malady] as a judgment from God [see Num. 12: 9-14]. Note verse 9 – “God’s anger burned against them, and He left.”



From the lesson:

“Personal life disruptions, tragedies, and transitions can make people more open to spiritual truth and set them on a search for God. Physical, psychological, political, or other disasters can open people up to the reality of the Divine. Personal loss, national catastrophes, and wars are major motivators that cause people to seek a power greater than them- selves. The church has long been aware that increased soul-winning results tend to come in areas in which people are struck by personal or societal suffering.”

This is well said, and true. Does this mean that God brings / allows our suffering in order to get us to pay attention, or are there more explanations? Consider what the primary cause of leprosy is currently. <http://www.cdc.gov/leprosy/exposure/index.html>

MONDAY

An Unlikely Witness

Might this captive girl have been living out, as best she understood, the design laws [Love, Liberty, Worship, Health, etc.] which is what the nation of Israel failed to do? Just like Joseph, Daniel, & his three friends, she gave a revelation of the Designer that enlightened the darkness of a community steeped in serving gods that demanded appeasement. Are we not ALL witness/missionaries – from Lucifer, Adam/Eve, right down to you & I?

Also interesting, is the approach that Benhadad and Naaman take to secure favor / healing by bringing costly gifts [appeasement].

What does Israel’s king’s reaction tell us?

TUESDAY

Elisha the Prophet

Just a review of Elisha’s situation: He was the son of a wealthy land owner, who left the wealth to follow Elijah. Before Elijah was taken to Heaven in a chariot of fire, he asked for, and was granted a “double portion” of the Holy Spirit. He was a vehicle for God’s power in that he, parted the Jordan with Elijah’s mantle, he prophesied victory, and drought relief when the armies of Judah, Israel, and Edom were allied against the Moabites, he directed Naaman to wash in the Jordan river to cure his leprosy, he cursed, in the name of God, a group of rowdy youths and two bears tore them to pieces, he was the instrument for the multiplication of olive oil so the widow could be released from her debts, he prayed for the birth of a son for the wealthy woman to reward her hospitality, and subsequently for the resurrection of the same son, he “cured” the poisonous porridge, made the axe head float, fed 100+ men with a few loaves of bread and a few fish, he instructed the king how to avoid the Syrian forces, revealed to his servant the angels circling them, then blinded the group come to assassinate him, and



led them to be fed by his king, before having them released to return home. Even after his death, he performed a miracle [2 Kings 13: 21].

WEDNESDAY

The Healing of Naaman

What do we see of Naaman's character in this story?

- He's reached "rock bottom"
- He attempts to buy his own healing [30,000 pieces of silver & 6,000 pieces of gold – roughly \$3.75 million assuming 1/2 ounce / piece].
- He's teachable – he listened to his wife's servant, Elisha, and his soldiers [the most valuable commanders listen to the soldiers observations and opinions in order to make the difficult tactical decisions].
- He's grateful – he returned to say "thank you" unlike the nine lepers Christ healed.
- He's concerned about being a "stumbling block" to others [bowing in the temple of Dagon with the his king].

Any insights as to why Elisha didn't adhere to custom and bring Naaman in to his house and feed him & his company?

THURSDAY

A New Believer

"Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. So please accept a gift from your servant" (2 Kings 5:15, NIV).

Imagine the wonder of Naaman, being steeped in appeasement-based idolatry, now healed by following some simple directions. Symbolically born again, and unable to constrain himself, acknowledging the Creator with: "there is no God in all the world, except in Israel."

From the lesson: *"The confession that the God of Israel is sovereign in the world is the main theme of the Bible."*

I respectfully disagree. **"God Is Love"** is the main theme of the Bible.

Also quoted in the lesson: "Let this point be fully settled in every mind: If we accept Christ as a Redeemer, we must accept Him as a Ruler. We cannot have the assurance and perfect confiding trust in Christ as our Saviour until we acknowledge Him as our King and are obedient to His commandments. Thus we evidence our allegiance to God. We have then the genuine ring in our faith, for it is a working faith. It works by love."—Ellen G. White, Faith and Works, p. 16.

This passage [along with nearly every other one] leads to very different conclusions based on which Law lens you read it with.



2015 Q3 “Biblical Missionaries” Lesson 4 The Jonah Saga

We are studying Lesson 4 in the current quarterly Biblical Missionaries, and this lesson is titled “The Jonah Saga”. Probably one of the most familiar stories in the entire Bible...and it really was a saga wasn’t it? Because it is more of a saga with lots of drama, I thought I would start out with a little funny story. Some of you may not know this, but my mom has a budding career in stand-up comedy...so I am always kind of on the lookout for material for her, and I found this little ditty that happens to be about Jonah. This is why you should never argue with children...A little girl was talking to her teacher about whales. The teacher said it was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human, because even though the whale is a very large mammal its throat is very small. The little girl stated that Jonah was indeed swallowed by a whale. Irritated, the teacher reiterated that a whale could not swallow a human - it was physically impossible. The little girl said, "Well, when I get to heaven, I will ask Jonah." The teacher asked, "What if Jonah went to hell?" The little girl replied, "Then you ask him." There is no theological concepts included there...just a little lighthearted comedy.

So it’s a well-known story, a truth-is-stranger-than-fiction kind of story, it is just chock full of valuable object lessons we can learn from. Let’s try to make a comprehensive list of typical object lessons gleaned from the story of poor Jonah:

- God has a specific plan or calling for each of our lives
- You can’t run from god or His plan...or you can run but you can’t hide
- Amazing insight into the grace, longsuffering, and patience of God that He wants not even one of His children to be lost, and will go to such extraordinary measures to save us
- Provides a dramatic picture of God’s discipline, correction, and protection...even in the midst of rebellion
- The teacher’s notes say, “By the end of the lesson, you should be able to comprehend the magnitude of God’s love for outsiders and the mission responsibility of insiders.” Any thoughts about that statement?
- The teacher’s quarterly summarizes the lesson this way: “The book of Jonah shines a bright light on the wideness of God’s mercy and the depth of His patience, both for the pagan sinners of Nineveh and the reluctant prophet God chooses for His mission. As the drama unfolds, we’re left with no doubt that relying on our own wisdom and inclinations is a poor way to approach mission. Only through submission to God’s leading can we begin to understand the scope of His mission plan and our role within it.” I think this is well-written and a nice summary...thoughts?
- So let’s take a look at the memory text in Sabbath’s lesson...it is not taken from the book of Jonah, but speaks to the heart of what motivated God to call Jonah to the mission field. “I now



realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears Him and does what is right.” Acts 10:34, 35, NIV. Of course, this is Peter speaking to Cornelius after they both had visions and Peter went to his house and ended up baptizing him and his whole family. So we know even in the New Testament that Jews had trouble accepting that gentiles were included in God’s plan of salvation...but back in Jonah’s day, despite repeated statements to the contrary, popular Israelite theology believed that God intended to limit salvation to only his chosen people. So Jonah is the only OT prophet we know of who was directly called to be a foreign missionary, and the four chapters of this brief book give an honest record of both the positives and the negatives in his reluctant pioneering missionary experience...and it really tries to show Jonah’s inner struggle, fear, and very human reaction to God’s calling.

SUNDAY

The Flawed Prophet

Jonah was born just a few miles from Nazareth, and he had some other interesting parallels to another Galilean prophet 750 years later. The quarterly lists several texts that give us a picture of Jonah, and he seems to be a study in contrasts:

- Mix of strength and weakness
- Self-willed and rebellious, but teachable and eventually obedient...so although he initially runs away from his mission assignment, when he finally steps up to the job he ends up leading an entire pagan city to conversion
- Loyal to God, courageous, selfless and willing to die to save the heathen sailors, he believed in prayer, but also narrow-minded, selfish, and vindictive...he was a poet and became emotionally attached to a plant, but he could also be callous in the potential destruction of an entire city.
- The quarterly calls this a “strange mixture”, but does anyone else find these descriptions frighteningly familiar? Doesn’t this sound like all of us? Doesn’t this describe each of your children at one time or another? I mean I identify with every one of these traits! #iamjonah
-

And Jonah is just one in a long list of flawed prophets, priests, kings, and disciples who were used by God in spite of (or *because* of) their character flaws – get your minds around that. Our part in vindicating and glorifying God’s character is the very real transformation of our hearts, minds and characters that takes place when we are won back to trust and His Holy Spirit is poured out into us. Mrs. White says that our hearts are united with His heart; our wills are merged in His will; our minds become one with His mind; our thoughts are brought into captivity to Him (ST 11/22/1905). Wow...I really want that, don’t you? When Moses offered to have his name removed from the book of life in order to save the Israelites, doesn’t it make his testimony much more powerful to know that he started



out as a murderer and a reluctant leader? What if we didn't know about David's adulterous and murderous past? Peter's cowardice and prejudice? Paul's Isis-like persecution of the first Christians? To me, it is these traits being transformed, these character corrections that stand as of the most powerful evidence that God exists...and that his methods and design principles work!

The pink box at the bottom of Sunday's lesson asks, "What hope can we draw for ourselves from the fact that God uses flawed and damaged people to work for Him in reaching out to others? It is the **ONLY** hope we have, if we have any hope of being involved in the process! And I believe it is our testimony of this transforming work in our lives that constitutes the "greater things" Christ talks about in John 14 when he says, "Believe me: I am in the Father and my Father is in me. If you can't believe that, believe what you see – these works. The person who trusts me will not only do what I'm doing but even **greater things**, because I, on my way to the Father, am giving you the same work to do that I have been doing." This story...our story...of being lost once and now found, of being blind and now being able to see, of amazing grace that saved a wretch like me...Jesus doesn't have this story to tell – telling that story to others is up to us.

MONDAY

An Early Missionary

In Monday's lesson, the quarterly makes a point of contrasting God's desire/design for Israel – live out their religion (all of which pointed to the plan of salvation), making the nation so attractive that other nations would come to them for guidance. Wouldn't it be amazing if we could all do that – make our lives such a reflection of Christ's love and character that people come to us, in search of what we have?

So Jonah is characterized as a forerunner of the New Testament disciples...and instead of waiting for folks to come to him, he was told to go to Nineveh...and he was less than excited about this prospect.

To put this into some current perspective, Nineveh was over 500 miles east of Jonah's hometown on modern-day Iraq. It was a big city...one of the capitals of Assyria, which by the way had brutally attacked and conquered Israel a few years earlier – an event still very much alive in Israelite memories. The quarterly says Jonah imagined it as an unclean center of idolatry, brutality, and totalitarianism. A few years earlier, Assyria, of which Nineveh was one of the capitals, and according to Nahum, Nineveh was "the city of blood, full of lies, full of plunder, never without victims!"(Nah. 3:1, NIV). He asks, "Who has not felt your endless cruelty?"(vs. 19, NIV). No doubt Jonah was well aware that the Assyrians had finely nuanced ways of mass killing and were experts in impaling and mutilating human bodies. Perhaps he felt it wasn't an ideal location for a public evangelist to begin a campaign. And yet God's command was clear. But it wasn't just fear that spurred Jonah's disobedience. Historians tell us that Jonah would have felt a sense of cultural superiority and religious



prejudice against the pagan Ninevites. It's a human tendency that is alive and well today – isn't it? As Christian author Anne Lamott puts it in her book, *Bird by Bird*:

"You can safely assume you've created God in your own image when it turns out that God hates all the same people you do."—Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird* (New York: Anchor Books, 1994), p. 22

Can you think of any places in the world today that could be described this way? Really not much has changed. It was very much like being asked today to go be a Christian missionary in Iraq (literally), Iran, Syria, or Afghanistan. Yikes! No wonder his first inclination was to run in the opposite direction!

Jonah 1:3-17 reads,

"But Jonah got up and went the other direction to Tarshish, running away from God. He went down to the port of Joppa and found a ship headed for Tarshish. He paid the fare and went on board, joining those going to Tarshish—as far away from God as he could get. But God sent a huge storm at sea, the waves towering. The ship was about to break into pieces. The sailors were terrified. They called out in desperation to their gods. They threw everything they were carrying overboard to lighten the ship. Meanwhile, Jonah had gone down into the hold of the ship to take a nap. He was sound asleep. The captain came to him and said, "What's this? Sleeping! Get up! Pray to your god! Maybe your god will see we're in trouble and rescue us." Then the sailors said to one another, "Let's get to the bottom of this. Let's draw straws to identify the culprit on this ship who's responsible for this disaster." So they drew straws. Jonah got the short straw. Then they grilled him: "Confess. Why this disaster? What is your work? Where do you come from? What country? What family?" He told them, "I'm a Hebrew. I worship God, the God of heaven who made sea and land." At that, the men were frightened, really frightened, and said, "What on earth have you done!" As Jonah talked, the sailors realized that he was running away from God. They said to him, "What are we going to do with you—to get rid of this storm?" By this time the sea was wild, totally out of control. Jonah said, "Throw me overboard, into the sea. Then the storm will stop. It's all my fault. I'm the cause of the storm. Get rid of me and you'll get rid of the storm." But no. The men tried rowing back to shore. They made no headway. The storm only got worse and worse, wild and raging. Then they prayed to God, "O God! Don't let us drown because of this man's life, and don't blame us for his death. You are God. Do what you think is best." They took Jonah and threw him overboard. Immediately the sea was quieted down. The sailors were impressed, no longer terrified by the sea, but in awe of God. They worshiped God, offered a sacrifice, and made vows. Then God assigned a huge fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah was in the fish's belly three days and nights." (MSG)



The quarterly lists out several object lessons we can glean from this narrative, and none of these was on my original list:

- The winds and the waves obey their creator, even when we do not – evidence of his design laws and our freedom.
- Jonah slept during the storm while even the gentile crew prayed – perhaps another forerunner to the NT disciples, in the garden of Gethsemane.
- There was true selflessness and compassion shown on both sides – Jonah was honest in admitting that he caused the calamity, and was willing to sacrifice himself to save others/strangers. The gentile sailors shown compassion to Jonah in their reluctance to toss him overboard even though their own lives were at risk.
- Jonah testified of the true God and creator, and the amazed sailors become Jonah's first converts – even though he was not actively engaged in "mission work" or soul seeking. We can never underestimate the magnetic power of presenting the creator/designer God as Jonah did.

TUESDAY

In the Belly of the Big Fish

The quarterly mentions an interesting tidbit about the phrase "three days and three nights" being an old figure of speech used to express the time needed for the imaginary journey to Sheol, the Hebrew name for the realm of the dead...and also a symbolic pointer to the death and resurrection of Christ, as written in Matthew 12:40

"Jesus said, "You're looking for proof, but you're looking for the wrong kind. All you want is something to titillate your curiosity, satisfy your lust for miracles. The only proof you're going to get is what looks like the absence of proof: Jonah-evidence. Like Jonah, three days and nights in the fish's belly, the Son of Man will be gone three days and nights in a deep grave."

So, down in the belly of the fish, in what looks to be a rather hopeless situation, Jonah finally begins some serious prayer...in the form of a psalm containing five parts:

- Introduction
- Description of the distress
- Cry to God for help
- Report of God's action
- Promise to keep any vow made and testify to God's saving action...sound familiar?
-

So, after he made his way back onto dry land, Jonah finally accepted his gospel commission and took God's message to the Gentiles...and in so doing became the most successful missionary in the OT.



“Jonah’s rescue witnessed to God’s saving mercy. His seaweed-draped arrival on the beach testified to God’s determination to save even sinful Assyrians from death.” Thoughts about that statement?

WEDNESDAY

The Nineveh Generation

The quarterly points out the two important verbs in the Jonah 3 commission – Go and Proclaim. Go out into the nations versus expecting other nations to come to you...and “Proclaim”, the quarterly says that “Proclamation has always been important in the Bible, and is still the most effective way of spreading the gospel message.” Agree or disagree? Thoughts? And what gospel message are we proclaiming?

Let me read the last several paragraphs in Wednesday’s lesson, in case you missed them...because we always seem to end up back here sooner or later:

“God’s message is generally threat and promise, judgment and gospel. His stark proclamation was, “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown” (vs. 4, NIV). That was the judgment. <Was it? Foreknowledge?> Yet, there was also the promise of hope, of deliverance, of salvation (there must have been because the people heeded the message and were saved). Even with the “everlasting gospel” at the heart of it, Revelation 14:6–12 also warns about judgment. Gospel and judgment go hand-in-hand: the gospel offers us God’s way to avoid the condemnation that judgment would justly bring upon us all

Judgment would bring upon us? Who is judgment? The implication here is, of course, God.

So this author is obviously writing from an imposed law point of view here. What is God’s way to avoid the “condemnation” that tying a plastic bag over our heads would justly bring upon us all? What is God’s way to avoid the “condemnation” that a terminal disease would justly bring upon us all? No preaching of the gospel is fully effective unless judgment is taught. “Political correctness,” which leads to a watering down of these stark elements and downplaying differences between religions or even between different Christian traditions, is risky. Though in mission we need to adapt our presentation for the people we are trying to reach (contextualization), we must never do so at the expense of the message God has given us to proclaim.

sigh.



The pink box states, “God has given us some wonderful promises, and stern warnings too. What should this story teach us about the conditionality of these promises and warnings? Are they conditional? Or are the cause and effect outcomes of natural laws absolutely guaranteed?”

There is a blurb in the teacher’s quarterly about the decline in mission support in our denomination. If Sabbath School mission offering trends are any indicator, then the grand narrative of global outreach has indeed lost a great deal of its shine for Seventh-day Adventists.

In 1932, during the Great Depression, per capita giving to the church’s Sabbath School mission offerings was \$5.83 per member for that year. More than eighty years later, with wages exponentially higher, the per capita mission giving was actually lower, with an average of \$4.81 per member in 2010. (See Gina Wahlen, “100 Years of Mission Giving,” *Adventist World*, Nov. 1, 2012, pp. 16–19.) What attitudes do you think are driving this trend? Is it possible the attitude and message in the previous paragraph are what is driving it...our message?

THURSDAY

Jonah’s Lament

Remember the hashtag...#iamjonah. Jonah chapter 4 confirms that the greatest obstacle for God to get his prophet involved in world mission was not distance, wind, sailors, fish, or Ninevites...it was the prophet himself. Jonah is the only person in scriptures who accuses God of being gracious, compassionate, and slow to anger, abounding in love and who relents from sending calamity. One would think most people would view these aspects of God with thankfulness. One would think that...right? Has this been your experience when sharing this message about a God of love? Does anyone think it is by chance or coincidence that this view of God...by one of his prophets...is shared in scripture for us?

The quarterly includes this quote from *Prophets and Kings*:

“When Jonah learned of God’s purpose to spare the city that, notwithstanding its wickedness, had been led to repent in sackcloth and ashes, he should have been the first to rejoice because of God’s amazing grace; but instead he allowed his mind to dwell upon the possibility of his being regarded as a false prophet. Jealous of his reputation, he lost sight of the infinitely greater value of the souls in that wretched city. The compassion shown by God toward the repentant Ninevites ‘displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.’ (p. 271)

Does anyone else believe this is prophetic? Have we seen folks get angry when extolling the gracious, compassionate, abounding love and forbearance of a God is not required to punish sins?



We are asked to read Jonah 4:10-11, and describe what these texts teach us about the contrast between God's character and man's sinful nature. Why should we be glad that God, not fellow human beings, is our ultimate Judge? What law lens are you looking through? Why should you be glad that Doctor Moses is diagnosing your orthopedic issues and operating on you...and not me?

How often do we find ourselves more concerned about our own personal issues, many of which at times can really be trivial, than about the lost souls who need healing and transformation? Based on what we have witnessed this past week in our own church.

“In the history of Nineveh there is a lesson which you should study carefully. . . . You must know your duty to your fellow beings who are ignorant and defiled and who need your help.”—Ellen G. White, *The Southern Work*, p. 80.

What is our duty to these fellow beings? When is the last time we were genuinely upset at the thought of millions of people not knowing Jesus? Are we seeing these folks through God's eyes?



Biblical Missionaries 3Q 2015 Lesson 5

Exiles as Missionaries

(announcements and GC update at end of notes)

SUNDAY

The lesson focuses on Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as captives in Babylon and Medo-Persia.

Read first paragraph, “Daniel, whose name...” When you think a missionary is, what comes to mind?

Do you think Daniel thought of himself as a missionary? What made him a missionary?

Does this mean, that people in their routine, day-to-day jobs, are also missionaries?

Is a missionary – someone on a mission? Do we have a mission? What is our mission?

Ellen White, one of the founders of the SDA church, said this:

The mission of the church of Christ is to save perishing sinners. It is to make known the love of God to men and to win them to Christ by the efficacy of that love. The truth for this time [what is the truth for this time? The final message of mercy is the truth about God’s character of love!] must be carried into the dark corners of the earth, and this work may begin at home. The followers of Christ should not live selfish lives; but, imbued with the Spirit of Christ, they should work in harmony with Him. {3T 381.1}

There are causes for the present coldness and unbelief. [what might those be?] The love of the world and the cares of life separate the soul from God. [What are these? love of the world just isn’t hedonism, it includes the love of the world’s ways, loving how the world runs its government, and preferring this method to God’s so much one teaches God runs His universe the same way. And cares of life, don’t mean sinful things, but failing to keep balance and allowing healthy activities in excess to overwhelm and exhaust.] The water of life must be in us, [what is the water of life?] and flowing out from us, springing up into everlasting life. We must work out what God works in. [what does this mean? how does this apply to the idea of salvation is by grace and not works versus the idea that without works faith is dead? How does the legal view fail here and the healing view find perfect expression?] If the Christian would enjoy the light of life, he must increase his efforts to bring others to the knowledge of the truth. [what does this look like? and how can this be misdirected?] His life must be characterized by exertion and sacrifices to do others good; and then there will be no complaints of lack of enjoyment. {3T 381.2}



Dann Wyatt one of our online members emailed me this quote from Oswald Chambers this week:

Reconciliation means the restoring of the relationship between the entire human race and God, **putting it back to what God designed it to be.** [What did God design it to be? What is God working for, legal pardon or restoration to His design?] **This is what Jesus Christ did in redemption.** [What did Jesus do? He took broken humanity and in His person cured it, restored it to God's design and unity with God. He procured the Remedy, which restores all who partake to unity with God.] **The church ceases to be spiritual when it becomes self-seeking, only interested in the development of its own organization.** [Wow, do denominations ever get caught into this trap?] The reconciliation of the human race according to His plan means realizing Him not only in our lives individually, but also in our lives collectively. Jesus Christ sent apostles and teachers for this very purpose—that the corporate Person of Christ and His church, made up of many members, might be brought into being and made known. **We are not here to develop a spiritual life of our own, or to enjoy a quiet spiritual retreat. We are here to have the full realization of Jesus Christ, for the purpose of building His body.** <http://utmost.org/the-spiritually-self-seeking-church/>

Do you agree?

How can the mission of the church be derailed?

- By becoming involved in the issues of the world (politics)
- By coming to love the world and its methods (teaching and practicing the imperial law methodology in the church)
- By focusing only on one's spiritual development and ignoring the community of believers
- By focusing on organizational development rather than the salvation of souls (the Jews who crucified Christ said, "It is better for one man to die than the nation.")
- By sectarian fighting over legal definitions of certain passages, and by focusing on organizational growth, "sheep stealing" rather than delivering individuals from fear and selfishness and establishing them in a love/trust relationship with Jesus Christ and His Father.

Read second paragraph, "The book of Daniel..." What does it mean that they were saved without the priesthood, temple and sacrifices?

Were these rituals needed for the salvation of anyone? No, then why were they given? What was there purpose?

They were merely teaching tools to teach a greater reality, but the rituals had no power to heal from sin.

Did one have to be an Israelite to be saved? (Melchizedek, Nebuchadnezzar, Naaman, the wise men from the east, widow in Zarephath). Then what was the benefit?



And if these people, Jews in Babylon and non-Jews could be saved without the ritual feasts, sacrifices etc., what does this reveal about the idea some are promoting today of the need to observe the OT feast days?

The observation of certain religious rituals or feasts is not a requirement to salvation. The only requirement is partaking of Jesus Christ and being restored into God's design for life. If a particular activity helps in that goal, excellent, then do it.

Think about singing hymns. Do we have to sing hymns to be saved? But could singing hymns help us in our experiencing Christ? Could singing hymns focus our minds, calm our fears, open our hearts, draw us closer in our relationship with God? This is how the various rituals and religious festivals are supposed to function, merely as activities designed to assist in reconnecting us with God for healing and restoration of our hearts and minds.

Read last paragraph, "Every institution..." What was the knowledge Joseph and Daniel took to Egypt and Babylon?

Do we have any evidence they promoted to Pharaoh or the King the weekly Sabbath? The Sanctuary service? What did they present to these people?

They presented a God who is Creator – which means what? What kind of law does the Creator run His universe upon?

- They presented a God who knows the future, who is compassionate, who wants to save. Daniel and his three friends modeled the power of design law in their lifestyle, showing when one puts into their bodies the foods God designed the body to run upon the body, including the brain, is healthier and more effective.
- They also modeled how they were wiser because of worshipping the only true God, another design law – the law of worship.
- They modeled an understanding of how reality works, rather than a religion of superstition, contradictions, irrational beliefs, with which much of religion today struggles.

What is to be the message we are to present? The truth about God – which is what?

Within Christianity as a whole, is the message of God's character of love the primary message that has gone to the world?

What about in our denomination, is the message of God's character of love the central message? Do we struggle with preoccupation with institutional survival to interfere with the actual work of saving souls, the actual work of presenting the truth about God?

MONDAY



Monday's lesson starts with the story of Daniel 2 which is the story of Nebuchadnezzar having a dream that troubles him and telling his wise men they must tell him his dream and interpret it or he will have them all killed. They cannot, and then Daniel and his friends pray and it is revealed to Daniel.

Daniel goes to the king and the king asks, "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?" (Dan 2:26)

Now, if you were asked this, wouldn't it be easy, without arrogance or pride, simply to have answered, "Yes, king, I know what you dreamt and what it means."?

But notice Daniel's answer:

Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,²⁸ but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. (Dan 2:27-28)

What is the point of Daniel's answer? To give credit to God, to bring the king an awareness of the Creator! What was the purpose of the dream? What was the dream?

Daniel had a perspective that was not self-focused, not focused on saving his own life. He realized that this was opportunity to enlighten Nebuchadnezzar, thus his answer is about revealing eternal truth to the king, rather than answer in a way that protects himself. This was a love-based answer!

What is the rock that crushes described in the dream? It is the kingdom of God, which is founded upon what? Jesus – what does it mean that the rock crushes? What does it crush? How does it crush?

From the Remedy 1 Pet 2:6-9 it says:

This is exactly what the Scripture is talking about:

"See, I will put a Stone in the land of promise, an especially chosen, perfect, foundation Stone, and whoever trusts in him and is put in harmony with him will never be put to shame."

⁷For you, who know and trust God, this Stone is life's one true treasure; but to those who don't know and trust God, "This Stone was thought to be worthless and rejected, but is actually the one upon which all life is built.

⁸"A Stone of pure love that trips up selfish men and a Rock of holiness, humility and truth over which the sinful, proud and deceitful fall." They trip and fall because they prefer selfishness to love, and unhealed selfishness is a terminal condition, exactly as God diagnosed.

⁹But you who trust God and build upon the Stone are a select and special people, royal ministers of God's healing Remedy, a clean and purified nation, a people whose hearts and



minds are in unity and oneness with God, that you may commend, with your words and lives, him who called you out of the darkness of fear and selfishness into his wonderful light of truth and love.

The lesson points out that when the three were thrown in the fiery furnace that Nebuchadnezzar recognized the fourth as one like the Son of God because the captive Hebrews told him about God.

Why didn't Nebuchadnezzar already know about God? Weren't the Jews supposed to be a kingdom of priests to tell the entire world about God?

Why were they in captivity? Because they refused God's protection and God removed his restraining hand and the Babylonians took them captive, and in this situation the Holy Spirit was still working with both Daniel and his friends and on the pagan king. What lesson do we learn for today?

Read bottom green section, "How important..." When is character most clearly revealed? During good times or during trials?

- Trials reveal character – because it is an opportunity to uncover whether one is concerned with others or self (recent movie in which a person who seemed magnanimous, until a earthquake hit and then it was all watch out for himself)
- Use of money – the widow and her mites
- At the GC our booth was the only one that gave away everything and didn't sell anything. People were stunned and kept commenting how can we do it? Or, they couldn't believe it.
- When the Jews were plotting against Jesus and lying about Him, criticizing Him, He didn't retaliate, but treated them with love. We have tried to model this, by refusing to retaliate against those who have gone around and said negative things about us, instead just focus on telling the truth about God.
- We discovered the power of having a message to share, of having the message of God's truth and love to share, in comparison to some persons who focus on criticizing and fault finding in others.

TUESDAY

The Persians overthrow Babylon and what happens to Daniel? What does this imply? What amazing person Daniel must have been to have been kept in a position of leadership by a conquering force.

The king gets tricked into throwing Daniel into the lion's den, and we all know what happens—but read the second paragraph, which is quoting Daniel 6:25-27: "Then King Darius..." thoughts?

What motivated Darius to do this?

- Did Darius believe in Daniel's God?



- What does it appear, from this Scripture, that Darius understands about God?
 - That God is powerful, creator, enduring
 - Does this proclamation indicate Darius understood God's character and methods of love? Why or why not?
 - What method did Darius use to "evangelize" about God?
 - A governmental edict forcing worship – this is consistent with viewing God through imposed law lenses, which is the great infection of Christianity. Notice, Darius is converted away from his false god to the true God of Daniel, but still views the true God through the lens of dictatorship. This is what has happened to Christianity – exchanged the truth of God's law of love for a lie, that God's law is rules imposed.

WEDNESDAY

Read top paragraph, "Daniel was not merely..." What do you think about the meaning of this? Is God the one causing the events in nations or God foreknows the events and thus can accurately predict them?

Did God cause Nebuchadnezzar to invade Israel? Did God cause the Israelites to worship false gods and thus reject God's protection? Were the Babylonians a country of conscientious objectors that were forced by God to invade Israel? Did God cause the Persians to invade Babylon? Whose spirit is inciting selfishness, pride, power-seeking, leading to war? Does the Holy Spirit bring division and fighting? So is God causing these events, or accurately foretelling what He knows will transpire?

Consider Daniel 10:12-13, 20:

Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. ¹³ But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."... ²⁰ So he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come;

Who is the prince of Persia? Satan is called the prince of this world, so the prince of Persia, who fights against God's angels, would be who? One of Satan's minions, as would be the prince of Greece, and what is the battlefield these angels are fighting upon? The mind of the king of Persia – the time for the fulfillment of prophecy of 70 years captivity and the release of the Jews has come. Gabriel is working to enlighten the king of Persia and inspire him with love and truth, the prince of Persia is working to obstruct truth and incite selfishness.

Now, why is Michael the only one left to help Gabriel? If only 1/3 of the angels fell with Satan,



and 2/3's are still on God's side, why is Michael the only one who can help Gabriel, but the prince of Persia can get help from the prince of Greece?

Because this isn't a battle over numbers, or power, or might, it is a battle of truth and love versus lies and selfishness. Gabriel took the position vacated by Lucifer, thus there is no created being with greater knowledge of God's character of love. Only Jesus, God Himself possessed more truth and love than Gabriel, thus only Jesus is left to bring additional truth and love about God to bear in the heart and mind of the king! The prince of Greece can come help the prince of Persia because multiple lies can be told from variety of different perspectives inciting fear and selfishness.

Read third paragraph, "And this gospel..." What is the gospel of the kingdom? What is the abomination that causes desolation?

Imperialism – in all its form – so:

- When the Roman legions surrounded Israel using imposed rules, power, coercion and infliction of punishment and death, they surrounded the theater, and in graphic display acted out what happens when such methods are used—pain, suffering, famine, rebellion, death
- When Constantine converted and the spirit temple was surrounded by imperialism in the form of changing the idea of God's law from the design law of love, to imperial rules which require force and imposed punishment, what happened? Pain, suffering, famine of truth and love, desolation of the character of people who took the name Christian, rebellion, war, crusades, torture, intolerance, destruction and the darkest time in human history.
- Today, when Christianity presents God operating no differently than a sinful human government the minds of men are infected, the characters corrupted and desolation of godliness results, which will lead to a recurrence in the world of a time in which religious people will seek to control governments to enforce their methods.

Here is a quote from the book *The Great Controversy*:

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." Matthew 24:15, 16; Luke 21:20, 21. **When the idolatrous standards of the Romans should be set up in the holy ground**, which extended some furlongs outside the city walls, then the followers of Christ were to find safety in flight. {GC 25.4}

Notice the idolatrous standards – what are the idolatrous standards, merely the poles that carried the Roman symbols or something else?

Israel is an object lesson. Israel represents the world, the non-priests the unconverted people, the priests the converted people, the temple God's body of believers being healed and reconciled to Him through Christ.



The Romans and their pagan standards represent Satan's war against God's truth to surround the world with such pagan views of God that no one, Christian or non-Christian can see the truth about God.

The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary. He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. **The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth.** Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. **The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes.** That men might have salvation he came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature...

Christ exalted the character of God, attributing to him the praise, and giving to him the credit, of the whole purpose of his own mission on earth,--**to set men right through the revelation of God.** [to set right is to justify] In Christ was arrayed before men the paternal grace and the matchless perfections of the Father. In his prayer just before his crucifixion, he declared, "I have manifested thy name." "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." **When the object of his mission was attained,--the revelation of God to the world,--**the Son of God announced that his work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men. {ST, January 20, 1890}

When Constantine converted the church was infected with the lie that God's law is like human law, rules imposed. The minds of humanity became surrounded with such distortions that they came to conceive of God as one who is arbitrary, severe, unforgiving and who is the source of inflicted punishments upon the wicked. This is the abomination of lies that desolates the true church of God.

Thousands have a **false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal.** Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? **God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion.** Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God. {FLB 59.8}

THURSDAY



Read first paragraph, “Daniel was an...” Wasn’t the decree to return to Israel and rebuild the temple before the events in the book of Esther? So, was Esther there “involuntarily”?

Notice the contrast between Esther and Daniel – what stands out to you?

What is the critical issue, the specific behavior, or the heart motive to love others, be willing to sacrifice self, loyalty to God?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the questions

Update from General Conference of SDA 2015, San Antonio, TX:

First I want to thank God for His amazing blessing in enabling this ministry to have a booth at the GC event. I also want to thank this class, who five years ago chose to help establish this ministry and has faithfully supported us. I also want to thank our online, worldwide class who also has been supporting us. Without all of you we could never have had such a successful event. Finally I want to specifically thank those who volunteered their time to come to San Antonio and help us man the booth:

- Dean and Zoe Scott
- Jim and Carla Harris (from Michigan)
- Russell Atkins
- Lori Atkins
- Chip and Laurie Liles
- Dennis and Kathy Kiley
- Cirsten Weldon
- Christie Jennings
- Luann Serafine (from California)
- Simon Harrison (from Australia)
- James and Donna Ehrlich
- Special guest helper (Kara Dale from Australia)

Our booth at the Exhibit Hall at the GC 2015 in San Antonio was an overwhelming success. We had people come up to us from all over the world, (Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica, Brazil, Argentina, Bermuda, Trinidad, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, England, Sweden, Germany, France, China, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Jordan, Taiwan, Botswana, Kenya, Congo, Puerto Rico, and others I can't remember) many in tears of joy, telling us how much our ministry means to them, how they listen to our classes, watch our DVDs and how their lives have been changed.

We had others, many others, who took the material for the first time and then brought friends the next day to get material telling us how they started reading or watching the night before and found it was already changing their lives. More pastors than we can count came up and told us how much the material is helping, and many took boxes back to distribute in their churches. Union and Conference officials from various parts of the world came by and told us what a blessing our ministry was for them and requested material for their pastors. One Union Ministerial Director has requested 500 of each of our DVDs to give to every pastor in his union.

I was interviewed on an FM radio station MCU 91.1, 91.3, 91.5 in Jamaica, which broadcast while we were there and the host came to our booth the next day telling us what incredibly positive feedback they were already receiving.

I did three Hope Channel interviews, one already broadcast, the others to broadcast later.



We took 10,000 each of God and Your Brain, Healing the Mind and God and Your Church, 10,000 each of CIBTS English and Spanish and 12,500 Study Guides, along with other cards and flyers.

We gave out all 10,000 of the Healing the Mind and somewhere around 9000 of each of the other DVDs, about 8000 of each of the CIBTS and 7500 of the Study Guides.

Dean is writing an article to submit to the Southern Tidings about our Ministry and booth at the GC. He asked those involved to share any thoughts or moments from their time at the GC. Luann Serafine, one of our online class members, who came to the GC just to help us at our booth spent several days with us and sent this:

A year ago, thereabouts, a friend told me to go to a website...he said, "I think you will really appreciate it." So, I did just that.

*Amazingly, what I found that day on the Come and Reason Ministries website (and what I continue to find) is an open invitation to join the ongoing dynamic and robust conversation - **about all the things that really matter in this life!***

Part of my professional background includes approximately a decade immersed in emergency services, fire, rescue, medical transport, with an additional 20 years of trauma, emergency nursing beyond that.

While working to help patients in my care, I have listened to story after story. The similarities we all share have become very visible to me. A common thread might read, "my day started like any other...I was...and then - it just happened so fast – now everything has changed." The unthinkable circumstance or event shows up at the door. And thus, the difficult conversations come to all of us whether we are prepared or not. As a nurse, I continue to find myself very briefly in the midst of someone else's story, and perhaps a pivot point in life. Each time it happens it is clear I have been handed a role to play.

The critical question for me has always been, 'so what do you have to give them right now that will be real, and have lasting and meaningful value?' It takes only a few passes in this scenario for a person to discover that all the conventional, traditional religious or scripted secular answers (those I was given in my past or in my training) fall woefully deficient in the face of raw reality.

At Come and Reason Ministries I have found tools to help others, and myself, in just these kinds of moments.

Come and Reason Ministry is a community of people, a team, unafraid to look at the reality of the world we live in. Open minds willing to study and think through biblical principles – applying these concepts to every aspect of our existence here as it really is. I have discovered a sanctuary of contemplative free thought in this community of people. By using the online



presentations at C&R, the seemingly divergent and disconnected ideas of the past are now melting away. Conflicting concepts are now merging seamlessly into a beautiful cacophony of integrated truth about God's love, about the freedom He has handed to us that we may know truth and live love abundantly. These tools have changed my life.

When you discover truth that has the power to change your world, and change the lives of those around you - how can you not want to jump in and help share these same tools and resources with anyone and everyone who will listen?

In San Antonio, TX, only a few blocks away from the Texas shrine of freedom...The Alamo, I saw hundreds of people from the four corners of the earth truly free to search for truth. I watched those who took a moment to stop at the Come and Reason Ministries booth, and indulge in the freedom of thought God calls us into, exploring ideas and concepts about His love.

In the eyes of so many, I saw the same light of understanding go on. Over and over, I can still see the many smiles of excitement – and how folks would return with their friends. One very tall woman, beautiful, articulate - educated, wearing a lovely purple dress stands out in my mind. As some of us spoke with her I could see her eyes dance as she experienced rapid-fire 'aha' moments.

It was such a joy to place into the hands of so many people, free to them, the very tools that have been helping me over the past year.

We can all see that the whole world is now deeply embroiled in a war where the real theater of battle is in the mind, in our thoughts, contained in our world-views of how life should be and how God operates His Universe. Thank you Come and Reason Ministry team for reaching out to all of us – helping us to have the conversations that are very overdue. Waking us up to the awareness that God has already handed us the most powerful weapons in the universe to win this war against evil, sickness, loss, and death.

These are truth, freedom, and love – and they are best revealed through the heart and life of our Lord Jesus – our most intimate friend...forever.

Luann's beautiful testimony represents so many verbal testimonies we heard from all over the world during the GC. Thanks to each one of you for enabling this ministry to share this message with the world.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase**– ALL GLITCHES NOW FIXED in the IOS Version! So please UPDATE to latest version.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes.

August 1: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Petaluma, CA SDA church.

September 9,10: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Baptist Boomer's Conference in San Antonio, TX.

September 12: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr., CA SDA church.

September 23-26: American Association of Christian Counselors World Convention at Gaylord Opryland Hotel, Nashville TN. Come and Reason will have a booth in the exhibit hall, and Dr. Jennings will be doing a preconference workshop and regular conference presentation, as well as commencement speaker for Light University graduation.

October 24: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Puyallup, WA.



Biblical Missionaries 3Q 2015 Lesson 6

Esther and Mordecai

SABBATH

Read the first three paragraphs, "Esther was used..." What do you think of the idea of Esther's faithfulness?

We are looking at it from thousands of years downstream, through the perspective of history. Try for a moment to put yourself as one of her contemporaries, would you have viewed her as being faithful?

What does it mean to be faithful? Faithful to what or to whom?

- Were Esther and her uncle Mordecai following the Lord's directions for their lives?
- From the book Prophets and Kings we have this commentary:

Under the favor shown them by Cyrus, nearly fifty thousand of the children of the captivity had taken advantage of the decree permitting their return. These, however, in comparison with the hundreds of thousands scattered throughout the provinces of Medo-Persia, were but a mere remnant. **The great majority of the Israelites had chosen to remain in the land of their exile** rather than undergo the hardships of the return journey and the re-establishment of their desolated cities and homes. {PK 598.1}

A score or more of years passed by, when a second decree, quite as favorable as the first, was issued by Darius Hystaspes, the monarch then ruling. **Thus did God in mercy provide another opportunity for the Jews in the Medo-Persian realm to return to the land of their fathers.** The Lord foresaw the troublous times that were to follow during the reign of Xerxes,--the Ahasuerus of the book of Esther,--and He not only wrought a change of feeling in the hearts of men in authority, but also inspired Zechariah to plead with the exiles to return. {PK 598.2}

"Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north," was the message given the scattered tribes of Israel who had become settled in many lands far from their former home. "I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the Lord. Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon. For thus saith the Lord of hosts; After the glory hath He sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye. For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me." Zechariah 2:6-9.... {PK 599.1}

It was those "whose spirit God had raised" (Ezra 1:5) who had returned under the decree of Cyrus. **But God ceased not to plead with those who voluntarily remained in the land of**



their exile, and through manifold agencies He made it possible for them also to return. The large number, however, of those who failed to respond to the decree of Cyrus, remained unimpressible to later influences; and even when Zechariah warned them to flee from Babylon without further delay, they did not heed the invitation. {PK 599.3}

- Which group of Jews did Esther and Mordecai fall into, those who faithfully returned to Israel or those who remained “unimpressed”?
- So, were Esther and Mordecai obedient to God’s plan, going where He instructed or not?
- Did God cast them off or turn His back on them?
- Did Esther and Mordecai, and the rest of the Jews who remained, suffer hardship and difficulty they might have avoided, had they followed God’s plan from the beginning?

How would you define faithful? The lesson states she worked “undercover”

- Do we view acting in ways to deceive as being faithful?
- Does working undercover meaning purposely choosing to mislead?
- And, BEFORE Esther became queen, what did the interview process with the king entail?

Before each young woman was taken to the king’s bed, she was given the prescribed twelve months of beauty treatments—six months with oil of myrrh, followed by six months with special perfumes and ointments. ¹³ When it was time for her to go to the king’s palace, she was given her choice of whatever clothing or jewelry she wanted to take from the harem. ¹⁴ That evening she was taken to the king’s private rooms, and the next morning she was brought to the second harem,* where the king’s wives lived. There she would be under the care of Shaashgaz, the king’s eunuch in charge of the concubines. She would never go to the king again unless he had especially enjoyed her and requested her by name.

¹⁵ Esther was the daughter of Abihail, who was Mordecai’s uncle. (Mordecai had adopted his younger cousin Esther.) When it was Esther’s turn to go to the king, she accepted the advice of Hegai, the eunuch in charge of the harem. She asked for nothing except what he suggested, and she was admired by everyone who saw her. Esther 2:12-15

If Esther was your daughter would you have advised her to tell the king, we can only talk, but for the rest, we must wait until marriage?

Or, was it part of her “undercover” work to do this, obviously no Persian woman would object, so if she objected she would reveal her beliefs were based on something other than the pagan gods of Persia.

So, how was Esther faithful?

So what did she do? She put her life on the line to save others. She was safe in her position; she could continue to hide who she was, but she instead chose to risk her own life in order to try and save others. This was an act of love, this act, more than anything else, modeled, revealed,



demonstrated, God's character of love and thus was faithful to God and His kingdom of love.

This is the faithfulness we see in Rahab—who is in the hall of faith because even though she hid spies and lied, her heart action was one of self-sacrificial love. She wasn't lying to protect herself, or thinking of herself, she was protecting others to the best of her ability from evil forces.

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read from the first chapter of Esther, the account of the king's party, drunkenness, requesting Queen Vashti to dance, her refusal and banishment.

In the first paragraph it states, "Whatever her response, she faced a dilemma of losing status, and her courageous choice to retain self-esteem in the face of an autocratic ruler's base desires prepares the reader to understand the power for good that a principled woman could exert, even in a male-dominated royal court."

What principle, according to the lesson, did the queen stand for? Herself – her pride, her reputation, her self-esteem—is that a godly principle?

Why do they validate this as noble? Is it noble to stand for one's pride, to refuse actions that would humiliate and demean us?

When Jesus was being mistreated, should he have stood on principle of retaining self-esteem and refused to be demeaned and lose status?

Why does the lesson validate this self-first principle? Because when one looks through the lens of imposed law, one focuses on the right behavior – since her behavior was "right" in refusing to indulge the lewd request, the authors sought a motivation that caused the behavior. In this case, it was self-esteem, pride. I think the authors are probably right in identifying pride as the reason for Vashti's refusal, however, is this to be validated as honorable?

Which is better to do the wrong action for the right reason or the right action for the wrong reason?

Just look at what God blessed – Vashti stands up for self and is desposed, Esther sacrifices self for others and is blessed. Rahab sacrifices self for others and is blessed. (Both Esther and Rahab did actions that are outside the 10 Commandments, but heart motive was right)

Jesus said in MT 5...

Much of the Christian world falls into the Vashti trap, looking through imposed law lens, they validate prideful, selfish behavior as honorable if it behaviorally follows within their rule set. These were the Pharisees in Christ's day. They would find honorable the son who donated his property to Corban, and refused to care for his family.

Of course, what God ultimately wants is maturity of character that is intelligent and understands His design and purposes so that the motives and behaviors are in perfect harmony. But in the maturing process, heart motive is what matters, not the specific behavior—so back to Vashti:

Could her refusal of the king have been an act of love—could Vashti have loved her husband and realized he had put himself in a compromising situation and she weighed which course would cause him the least eternal damage—refusing him and thus causing political embarrassment, or agreeing and adding the guilt of debasing his wife to his conscience?

Was it God's desire for these events to happen? Did God cause the king to get drunk and demand his wife dance? Did God cause Vashti to refuse?

- Were the king's motives in sending for Vashti motives of godly love?
- Was Vashti's refusal motivated by love?
- So, then, were these actions fruits of the Spirit of love?
- Who is the motivator toward selfishness?
- What happens when selfishness rules our decision-making?

Read bottom green section, "So far in the story..." Do you agree we should stand on principles? And is there a difference between principles and rules? But do the principles one is standing for matter?

- Do parents, of certain religious groups, who refuse to give their children life-saving medicine stand on principle? What principles?
- Do people who vandalize abortion clinics do so on principle? What principle?
- Do people who refuse to eat out on Sabbath stand on principle? What principle?

Here is a photograph of a sign in the window of a public restaurant, called Schilo, in San Antonio during the GC

The voucher is a piece of paper, purchased for \$10.00 that one would use on Sabbath and exchange for food. In principle, what is the difference from using the voucher on Sabbath, than using a piece of paper with a US President on it?



- Were the Jews who crucified Christ standing on principle? The principle of self-preservation?
- Will the persecuting powers who constitute the beast of Revelation and persecute God's children do so on principle? What principle?

Does our view of God and His law make a difference as to what principles we hold?



So, we do need to stand on principle—but do we need to identify upon which principles we are standing?

I was listening to Moody radio this week and they were discussing God’s character and they were making the point that most important thing in a person’s life is the view of God they hold.

They went on and talked about the parable of the landowner who hired workers at different times of the day. They explained it as God being able to do what He wants with His resources and how humans have selfish motives that interpret things through a “what is earned” mentality, and that with God we don’t earn anything.

Are there other ways to understand the parable? What difference when we understand the parable through design law, the reality to which the parable is actually pointing?

In the parable each of the workers received the same wage, a denarius. What does the coin represent? What is the reality? What is the wage that is paid by God to those who work in His field? A healed character, reconciliation with God and eternal life, it is not an arbitrary payment, it is design law payment, thus it is fair. And the opposite payment is likewise design law – as the Bible says, “the wages of sin is death.”

Now, in the parable, who had the advantage, those who experienced God’s love and truth, converted, gave up fear and selfishness as their prime motive for life, and entered into the field of God’s service early in life like Daniel, or those who are like the thief on the cross, enter at the last hour?

It is only when we see through imposed law lenses, which is the payment of a coin, an arbitrarily determined compensation/reward, that an unfairness element enters.

Jesus told this parable to show them how their imposed law view fails, how thinking through that lens creates tension and factions and divides, and thus challenged them to rethink – God’s universe is somehow different than what we think.

Sadly, many Christians today still struggle to understand the reality of this parable as they are stuck in imposed law views.

MONDAY

The lesson focuses on Esther’s decision, based on Mordecai’s instruction, to conceal her Jewish identity? What do you think about this?

Is there a difference from withholding information and actively seeking to obstruct, obscure or intentionally mislead?



In this case, was it merely not disclosing, (like Christ did to His disciples, “I have much to tell you but you cant yet bear it”) or was it actively misleading?

From the SDA Bible commentary on Esther 2:7:

'Ester. This may possibly be a Persian loan word. It closely resembles *Stâreh*, a modern Persian name meaning “star.” This name is transliterated into Greek as *Aster* or *Esther* (LXX). The Greek root *aster* appears in such English words as “aster,” “star,” and “asteroid,” which means “starlike.” The Babylonian form of the word was *Ishtar*, which became *Ashtoreth* (plural *Ashtaroth*) and *Astartē* in Greek. In Babylon the planet Venus was deified as *Ishtar*. Mordecai’s selection of a Persian name may have been due to a desire to conceal Esther’s Jewish ancestry (v. 10).¹

Is it sin to actively conceal information? What did Jesus mean when He said, “Don’t cast your pearls...”?

The lesson contrasts Jesus’ conversation with the woman at the well, where He openly disclosed that He was the Messiah, to His refusal to openly declare this to the Jewish leadership and asks why the difference – thoughts?

Was it about what Jesus understood the various persons would do with the information? In the case of the woman at the well Jesus knew she would use it to spread the gospel. But what would the Jewish leaders have done if Jesus had declared to them He was the Messiah? Would they not have used this to crucify Him for blasphemy?

But did Jesus ever seek to actively mislead people in regard to His identity? He might not have made a verbal declaration of His identity to some, but He also never sought to conceal His identity.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “In Esther...” Do you agree with the lesson, Mordecai was following the commandment – the commandment says don’t do it, so I don’t do it?

It could be that; it could be Mordecai was only keeping a rule, level four and below action. But couldn’t it be much more?

- Couldn’t Mordecai be at level five development and have actually had a relationship with God and loved God and thus refused to betray that love relationship and refused to be disloyal to God?
- Couldn’t it be that Mordecai was at level six development and understood the law of

¹ Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1977). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 3, p. 469). Review and Herald Publishing Association.



worship and that to worship any man would not only violate the law of love, but damage everyone involved and Mordecai would not collude with actions that would destroy himself and others?

- Couldn't it be that he was at level seven and understood God had a purpose and would work through the lives of those who trust Him to bring about great good if they stay faithful, and thus he chose not to bow as part of God's greater purpose?

Why do we always have to make it about rules and obeying rules?

What do you think of the famous words of Mordecai to Esther, "Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

The lesson asks: in what way does this apply to your life?

WEDNESDAY

Read bottom paragraph, "Though Mordecai..." What is the balance between loyalty to God and the state? Are they the same?

Are we to have loyalty to the state? Where does "render to Caesar what is Caesar's" begin and end?

Does the state have a claim on your heart? On your love? On your conscience?

What does it have a claim on? On your cooperation with its governance in harmony with God's design... so does the state have a claim on your cooperation with...

- Slavery
- Jim Crow laws
- taxes?
- What about when taxes are used by the state to fund activities against your conscience?

How do we find that balance between our loyalty and love for God and our country?

Have you ever travelled in a foreign country? While you were there did you enjoy it? Did you obey their laws? But did you care about their politics? Why or why not? If you didn't care about their politics was it because, even though you were in their country, you were not of their country?

Is this how we are to be as Christians, in the world, but not of the world? Do we get derailed when we get too emotionally tied to national identity?

Which government on earth represents God's government? So, good Christians are to be the best citizens, loyal to good living, obedient to laws for social order, safety, and functioning of society, but not burdened with trying to reform the government to become God's kingdom on earth.



Instead, Christians focus on spreading the truth about God to remedy the sin-condition of every human being on planet earth.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “No question...” What do you think about fear-based evangelism? How can fear be used appropriately in today’s society, and how is it misused?

- Should we be afraid to jump off the Empire State building?
- Is it wrong to teach our children to fear walking out into traffic?
- Should we be afraid of partaking illegal drugs—why? Because they are illegal and one might get arrested and prosecuted by the state? Or are we afraid of the damage the drugs will do to our brains and bodies?
- Can we present the gospel in a way that incites fear – but fear of what? Fear of unremedied sin, it sears the conscience, warps the character, destroys relationships, incites fear, guilt, shame, damages the health and results in pain, suffering and death! Why? Because sin is deviation from how God constructed life to operate and it is always damaging.
- But, what about when evangelism presents a message that causes people to be afraid of God? What happens when God is presented as the one who inflicts pain, suffering, death on law breakers? What happens when people are taught that sin is wrong because God gets angry and God keeps records to judge and inflict torture and suffering upon the unrepentant? **It might convert people to systems of religion, but such teaching does not bring people to love and trust God.** Instead, they live in fear of God and create false theologies to protect themselves from Him.

FRIDAY

Read top paragraph, “The decree...” Who do you think trampled the Sabbath commandment more, the Roman centurion who came to Jesus and asked to have his servant healed, but never kept a Sabbath, OR the Jews who put Christ on the Cross and wanted Him off by sunset in order to “keep” the Sabbath?

Which were the greatest Sabbath breakers and why?

Of what is the Sabbath a sign? Of God’s creatorship, which calls us back to be aware of what? How God’s universe runs, how it is designed and created to operate, back to His law, which is design law. Further, it is a sign that God is the One who makes us holy, or heals us, and restores us back to His original design, which again is design law.

The Sabbath is holy because it was made that way. No amount of sinful living on the Sabbath can change the holiness of the Sabbath. So, when the Commandment says: “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy...” It means, remember to keep yourselves holy, because the only way to keep the Sabbath holy is to be holy people, which means having been reborn to have the law of God written on the heart and mind.



The specific actions are not the primary issue; it is the heart/mind/character of the person that determines whether they are keeping the Sabbath holy.

The Sabbath was created in the midst of a war over God's trustworthiness, when God is being accused of ruling His universe with the same methods created beings use—imposed rules enforced with coercive pressure. The Sabbath is evidence this allegation is a lie, because during creation week of planet earth God is presenting truth in love and then steps back and rests His case giving all intelligences freedom to think for themselves. It is just the opposite of an imposed rule; it is the creation of perpetual freedom to think.

But the system of the beast is a system that operates like beasts operate, and how do beasts operate? By coercion, kill or be killed, survival-of-the-fittest. Thus human governments make laws, and use power to force compliance on pain and death. The mark of the beast is the mark of this type of governing, those who agree that God actually works this way and makes up rules and inflicts punishments mark themselves in their foreheads. Those who go along for advantage practicing methods of coercive pressure mark themselves in their hands as practicing the methods of the beast.

Sadly, many Christians are looking for a God to come and operate just like the beast, use power to coerce and pressure conformity and punish those who don't conform.

Read question 2, "Both ancient..." How did the cannon come to be? Why are some books in and some books out? Did God choose which books are in and which are out? God inspired writers to write, but who selected which got in? Why do some Bibles include the Apocrypha and others do not?

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase– ALL GLITCHES NOW FIXED in the IOS Version! So please UPDATE to latest version.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes.

August 1: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Petaluma, CA SDA church.

September 9.10: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Baptist Boomer's Conference in San Antonio, TX.

September 12: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr., CA SDA church.

September 23-26: American Association of Christian Counselors World Convention at Gaylord Opryland Hotel, Nashville TN. Come and Reason will have a booth in the exhibit hall, and Dr. Jennings will be doing a preconference workshop and regular conference presentation, as well as commencement speaker for Light University graduation.

October 24: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Puyallup, WA.



2015 Q3 Biblical Missionaries Lesson 7

Jesus: The Master of Missions

1. Memory Text: John 20:21 “Jesus said to them again, ‘Yes, peace be with you! Just as the Father sent me, so I am now going to send you.’”
2. Christ as a missionary
 - a. Who was Christ representing? Who sent Him? God
 - b. To whom was He sent?
 - i. Jews
 - ii. The World
 - iii. To the universe
 - c. And yet, Christ was truly sent to His own family.
 - i. As a human being he did not have many external evidences of who He was
 - (1) That was the point of the temptations in the Wilderness
 - (a) If you are the son of God, then . . .
 - (b) The idea of being an extra-terrestrial being that was God is either the ideas of a mad man or divine insight.
 - d. Luke 4:18 Christ was sent of God
 - e. Luke 4:43 Sent of God
3. “Sent” in the Bible
 - a. 120+ in gospels
 - b. A few of them about Christ
4. During Christ’s trial (Luke 23:7 - 12), Pilate sent Christ to Herod. Did it do Herod any good?
 - a. Why not?
 - b. In keeping with this question, go to **Sabbath Afternoon** lesson . . .
5. **Sabbath Afternoon**

 - a. Read the first paragraph
 - b. It ends with the following statement: “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit will then restore this redeemed world to full unity with the divine will.”
 - i. How?
 - ii. When Christ prayed just before His crucifixion (as recorded in John 17), how did unity into God’s divine will occur?
 - (1) Read John 17:9 - 12, 17, 20 - 24 and list what has made them one and what sanctifies them (sets them apart)
 - (a) “Kept Your word” v 7



- (b) truth
- iii. Can unity be created by creative power?
 - (1) If so, why did disunity develop in the world in the first place?
 - (2) If not created by power, how will the Godhead restore unity with the divine will?
 - (3) When will that restoration occur?
 - (4) What is the mechanism which will be used to “create or restore” unity in the world?
- c. Read second paragraph begins to describe the incarnation of Christ into human form, and then says:
 - i. “The total mission activity of God becomes coherent? (Makes sense)
 - (1) “Logical and well-organized; easy to understand” Merriam-Webster
 - ii. Is this true?
 - iii. Why?
 - iv. Why is the incarnation of Christ the thing that makes God’s missionary activity coherent?
 - v. If you make the wrong diagnosis, the wrong prescription will be written.
 - vi. If the diagnosis is wrong the treatment will be wrong.
- 6. Who was estranged at the fall of man?
- 7. Who needs to be changed by the missionary activities of Christ?
- 8. If your description of the plan of salvation does not make common sense, maybe the diagnosis of what is wrong is not correct.
- 9. In 1 John 2:1 (read verse) it says, “And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”
 - a. What direction is he facing?
 - b. How is He with the Father?
 - i. In what way is He **with** the Father?
 - c. John 14:9 “He who has seen Me has seen the Father”
 - d. John 16:26 “In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf; for the Father Himself loves you,”
 - e. Romans 8:26 The Spirit intercedes for us “according to the will of God”
 - i. If the Holy Spirit is according to the will of God, who is being changed into the will / unity of God?
 - ii. What direction is the Spirit facing and addressing His efforts
 - iii. Romans 8:31 - 39 who is interceding - being a missionary?
 - (1) To whom is He sent?
 - (2) What direction are the efforts expended?



- (3) Whose heart needs to be changed?
- iv. 2 Corinthians 5:19 “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”
- v. The energy of the universe, of God himself, who created and sustains the universe by his power is being directed toward His children.
 - (1) It is not inward focused
 - (2) This is not one member of the Trinity trying to convince another of the Trinity to do something.
 - (3) They are one in Mind, Purpose
 - (4) Their love, attention and yearning activities are toward US!

10. Sunday: Jesus in the Old Testament

- 11. The lesson reviews some of the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah and description of prophetic timeline for the Messiah as given by Daniel.
- 12. What is the most compelling description of Christ in the old testament? What example would you use?
- 13. Temple service
 - a. Every item of the ritual service pointed to Christ
 - b. Every emblem and piece of furniture was describing Christ
- 14. Each of the stories of the old testament were miniatures of Christ
 - a. Noah
 - b. Abraham
 - c. Joseph
 - i. Saved his own people and the entire known world
 - ii. Persecuted by his brothers
 - iii. Other:
 - d. David
 - i. Read the Messianic Psalms
 - ii. David wrote them about himself, but they prefigured Christ
 - e. Hosea: going after his wayward wife
 - f. “In every page, whether history, or precept, or prophecy, the Old Testament Scriptures are irradiated with the glory of the Son of God. So far as it was of divine institution, the entire system of Judaism was a compacted prophecy of the gospel. To Christ “give all the prophets witness.” Acts 10:43. From the promise given to Adam, down through the patriarchal line and the legal economy, heaven’s glorious light made plain the footsteps of the Redeemer. Seers beheld the Star of Bethlehem, the Shiloh to come, as future things swept before them in mysterious procession. In every sacrifice Christ’s death was shown. In every cloud of incense His righteousness ascended. By every jubilee



trumpet His name was sounded. In the awful mystery of the holy of holies His glory dwelt.” {DA 211.5}

15. Monday: The Desire of Ages

a. Read the Preface to the Desire of Ages

In the hearts of all mankind, of whatever race or station in life, there are inexpressible longings for something they do not now possess. This longing is implanted in the very constitution of man by a merciful God, that man may not be satisfied with his present conditions or attainments, whether bad, or good, or better. God desires that the human shall seek the best, and find it to the eternal blessing of his soul.

Satan, by wily scheme and craft, has perverted these longings of the human heart. He makes men believe that this desire may be satisfied by pleasure, by wealth, by ease, by fame, by power; but those who have been thus deceived by him (and they number myriads) find all these things pall upon the sense, leaving the soul as barren and unsatisfied as before.

It is God’s design that this longing of the human heart should lead to the one who alone is able to satisfy it. The desire is *of* Him that it may lead *to* Him, the fullness and fulfillment of that desire. That fullness is found in Jesus the Christ, the Son of the Eternal God. “For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fullness dwell;” “For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” And it is also true that “In Him ye are made full” with respect to every desire divinely implanted and normally followed.

Haggai calls him “The Desire of all nations,” and we may well call him “The Desire of all ages,” even as He is “The King of ages.”

1. The desire of everyone everywhere
2. It was also the desire of the universe: Other angels and other worlds “desire to look” into the mysteries of God’s love. (See 1 Peter 1:12)

2. Tuesday: Mission to the Jews

3. “Multitudes who were not interested in the harangues of the rabbis were attracted by His teaching. They could understand His words, and their hearts were warmed and comforted. He spoke of God, not as an avenging judge, but as a tender father, and He revealed the image of God as mirrored in Himself. His words were like balm to the wounded spirit. Both by His words and by His works of mercy He was breaking the oppressive power of the old traditions and man-made commandments, and presenting the love of God in its exhaustless fullness.” {DA 204.4}

4. Why was Christ sent “only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”

5. Why did Christ send the 12 disciples to the Jews only, and then in the great commission send them to the world?

1. Why were they sent to the Jews first?



1. The prejudice of the Jews would have kept them from hearing the message if it was given in a different order
 2. God gives us what we need. That may not be the eventual best, but “we might not be able to stand it”
 3. The sequence of Acts 1:8 was due to the hardness of their hearts. The compassionate heart of God was yearning for all to hear his message of love.
6. They were the only people that had a religious language that would enable them to understand.
1. John 3:3 “Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God”
 1. One meaning of this is that unless you have ‘ears to hear’ God’s word, you cannot comprehend what God is saying
 2. The children of Israel did have an advantage in being prepped for Christ’s coming
 3. Few took advantage of that blessing
 4. The leaders were blinded to the message by their hardened hearts and minds
 5. It is a warning to us about the difficulty of comprehending what we are hardened against.
7. At the bottom paragraph: the concept of a established center for a foundation for missions.
1. Is this valid?
 2. Is this the only way of working?
 3. Is this the best way of working?
 4. Read 2 Kings 5:1 - 6
 1. How far apart were these two cities? 135 - 150 mi
 2. He was sent with 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and ten changes of clothes as a gift.
 3. Tell me again about the center of evangelism that prompted this result.
 5. Where was the center of evangelism for Elijah?
 6. Abraham
 7. How was the news of the gospel spread during the first century?
 1. Was the center of Jerusalem the organized force that planned and spread the good news?
 2. Read Acts 8:1 - 5, 12, 25

The Place of Visitation Evangelism in Finishing God’s Work on Earth—How can the great work of the third angel’s message be accomplished? It must be largely accomplished by persevering, individual effort, by visiting the people in their homes.—Historical Sketches, 150. {WM 97.1}

1. One of the most effective ways in which light can be communicated is by private, personal effort. In the home circle, at your neighbor’s fireside, at the bedside of the sick, in a quiet way you may read the Scriptures and speak a word for Jesus and the truth. Thus you may sow precious seed that will spring up and bring forth fruit.—Testimonies for the Church 6:428, 429.

Repaid a Thousand Times—Wake up, brethren and sisters. Don’t be afraid of good works. Be not



weary in well-doing, for you shall reap in due time if you faint not.... Encourage in yourselves a love of hospitality, a love to help those who need help.

You may say you have been deceived, bestowing your means upon those unworthy of your charity, and therefore have become discouraged in trying to help the needy. I present Jesus before you.... One soul wrenched from Satan's grasp; one soul you have benefited; one soul encouraged! This will a thousand times pay you for all your efforts. To you Jesus will say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Should we not ladly do all we can to imitate the life of our divine Lord?—The Review and Herald, April 20, 1886.

Vital to Our Own Eternal Destiny—As you engage in this work you have companions unseen by human eyes. Angels of heaven were beside the Samaritan who cared for the wounded stranger. Angels from the heavenly courts stand by all who do God's service in ministering to their fellow-men. And you have the cooperation of Christ Himself. He is the Restorer, and as you work under His supervision you will see great results. Upon your faithfulness in this work, not only the well-being of others, but your own eternal destiny depends.—Christ's Object Lessons, 388.

Christ Enters the Homes With Them—The Lord desires that the truth shall come close to the people, and this can be accomplished only by personal labor. Much is comprehended in the command, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled." There is a work to be done in this line that has not yet been done. Let God's workers teach the truth in families, drawing close to those for whom they labor. If they thus cooperate with God, He will clothe them with spiritual power. Christ will guide them in their work, entering the houses of the people with them and giving them words to speak that will sink deep into the hearts of the listeners. The Holy Spirit will open hearts and minds to receive the rays coming from the Source of all light.—The Review and Herald, December 29, 1904.

Bring Hope to the People—It is impossible for the man who believes in Christ to see the work that needs to be done and yet do nothing. Daily we are to receive from Heaven the healing balm of God's grace to impart to the needy and suffering. Christ's followers are to learn of the woes of the poor in their immediate vicinity and seek to bring them relief. Those who have a dark and disagreeable life are the very ones whom we should bid to hope because Christ is their Saviour. Are there not those who can go from house to house, from family to family, and repeat the A B C of true Christian experience?—The Review and Herald, April 11, 1912.

E. G. White's Experience in Visitation—I remember when the converting power of God came upon me in my childhood I wanted everyone else to get the blessing that I had, and I could not rest till I had told them of it. I began to visit with my young companions and went to their houses to talk with them and tell them my experience, how precious the Saviour was to me, and how I wanted to serve Him, and how I wanted them to serve Him also. So I would talk of the preciousness of Christ, and I would say, "Won't you kneel down and pray with me?" Some would kneel and some would sit in their chairs, but before we gave up, everyone would be on her knees and we would pray together for hours, till the last one would say, "I believe that Jesus has forgiven me my sins." Sometimes the sun would begin to make its appearance in the heavens before I would give up the struggle. There is a great power in Jesus.—Manuscript 10, 1888.

The "First Works" Bring Results—The reason so many fail to have success is that they trust in themselves altogether too much, and do not feel the positive necessity of abiding in Christ, as they go



forth to seek and save that which is lost. Until they have the mind of Christ and teach the truth as it is in Jesus, they will not accomplish much....

The atmosphere of the church is so frigid, its spirit is of such an order, that men and women cannot sustain or endure the example of primitive and heaven-born piety. The warmth of their first love is frozen up, and unless they are watered over by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, their candlestick will be removed out of its place, except they repent and do their first works. The first works of the church were seen when the believers sought out friends, relatives, and acquaintances, and with hearts overflowing with love, told the story of what Jesus was to them and what they were to Jesus.—Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 167, 168.

You Are a Letter; Deliver It!—The apostle Paul says to the disciples of Jesus, “Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ,” “known and read of all men.” In every one of His children Jesus sends a letter to the world. If you are Christ’s follower, He sends in you a letter to the family, the village, the street, where you live. Jesus, dwelling in you, desires to speak to the hearts of those who are not acquainted with Him. Perhaps they do not read the Bible or do not hear the voice that speaks to them in its pages; they do not see the love of God through His works. But if you are a true representative of Jesus, it may be that through you they will be led to understand something of His goodness, and be won to love and serve Him.—Steps to Christ, 119.

2. Wednesday: Mission to the Gentiles

3. Thursday: The Great Commission

4. Friday:

5. Teachers Comments:

6. Read the Step 4 description of Legates within the Roman government. Is this a good job or a bad job?

7. In the teachers quarterly notes, one of the final activities is:

1. Invite class members to imagine that they are “drawing up the terms” for someone to become a Christian – a member of the family of God. What would the list look like? Discuss one another’s ideas.
2. Is this not what every religious creed does?
 1. Builds wall of separation between the ins and the outs?
 2. At this point in my life, this is not a good exercise. I already am too willing and able to devise human restrictions on God’s love and acceptance.
 3. I need to be more willing to see God’s love to all
 4. “Man looks on the outward appearance, God looks on the heart”
 5. I do not need any encouragement to build walls of definition to separate me from God’s love.



Biblical Missionaries 3Q 2015 Lesson 8

Cross Cultural Missions

SABBATH

Read Memory Text: “Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the Gentiles.” (MT 12:18 NKJV)

To what is this passage referring? Who is the One speaking? Who is the Servant spoken of?

What will He declare to the Gentiles?

What is justice?

When you think of justice, what comes to mind?

Which law lens do you understand this word through?

What law is human justice based upon? Imposed rules.

How does human justice function? Coercive enforcement, externally inflicted punishments upon law breakers.

What law is God’s justice based upon? Design law, the law of love, the principle of giving, Freedom, Truth.

How does God’s justice function? By seeking to deliver, save and heal those who are breaking the law

- Defend the poor and fatherless; **Do justice to the afflicted and needy.** (Psalms 82:3)
- Wash yourselves clean. Stop all this evil that I see you doing. Yes, stop doing evil and learn to do right. **See that justice is done — help those who are oppressed, give orphans their rights, and defend widows.** (Isaiah 1:16-17 GNT)
- **The Lord longs to be gracious** to you; he rises to show you **compassion.** The **Lord is a God of justice.** (Isaiah 30:18 NIV)
- This is what the Lord says to the dynasty of David: ‘Give **justice** each morning to the people you judge! **Help those who have been robbed; rescue them from their oppressors.**’ (Jeremiah 21:12 NLT)

From an article by Christianity Today on Biblical Justice:

Biblical justice involves making individuals, communities, and the cosmos whole, by



upholding both goodness and impartiality. It stands at the center of true religion, according to James, who says that the kind of "religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" ([James 1:27](#)). Earlier Scripture says, "The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern" ([Prov. 29:7](#)). <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2010/summer/biblicaljustice.html>

Biblical justice is delivering and restoring the oppressed not punishing the oppressor!

Then if *justice* is restoring the oppressed what is *justification*? Would it not be restoring the sinner to a state of being just or right? This is exactly what justification is; it is reality; it is not legal fiction. The species human was justified, or made right, healed to perfection in the humanity of Jesus Christ. We as individuals are set right, made right, justified, restored to rightness when we trust God, our heart of distrust is changed to trust and in trust the Holy Spirit takes what Christ achieved and reproduces it in us!

So, what is the significance of Jesus bringing justice to the Gentiles?

That God is the Creator of humanity and all human beings are members of one species, and that God's plan to save is for the entire human race, not just one subgroup of that race.

Rom 11:32 (The Remedy):

from God's perspective, all humanity is infected with the same illness of distrust and selfishness, and the entire human race is dying and in need of the same Remedy; and God mercifully offers full healing and restoration to all who trust him.

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read John 4:4-30, from *The Remedy*:

John 4:4 On his way to Galilee, he had to pass through Samaria, ⁵ and came to a town called Sychar, near the parcel of land Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ This is where Jacob's well was located. Jesus was tired from his journey and sat down by the well. It was about noon.

John 4:7 While Jesus was resting at the well, a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus asked her, "Would you be kind enough to give me a drink?" ⁸ (Jesus was alone because his disciples had gone to town to buy food.)

John 4:9 The Samaritan woman was momentarily stunned by Jesus' request because Jews were notorious for discriminating against Samaritans (women in particular), and wouldn't even talk to them. Once she recovered from her shock, she said to Jesus, "What's going on that you, a Jew, would ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?"



John 4:10 Jesus, with courtesy and respect, said, “If you knew the gift that God has provided for all humanity, and who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would ask me and I would give you the water of eternal life.”

John 4:11 “Sir,” the woman replied, “the well is deep and you have nothing with which to draw the water. So, where do you propose to get this water of eternal life? ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who dug this well and drank from it himself, as did all of his family and their flocks and herds?”

John 4:13 Jesus patiently answered, “Everyone who drinks of the water from this well, in just a short time becomes thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water of life I give him will never thirst again. In fact, the water of life I give will actually become a new fountain inside him that will overflow to eternal life.”

John 4:15 Upon hearing what Jesus said, the woman eagerly requested, “Sir, please give me this water so that I won’t ever get thirsty again and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

John 4:16 Jesus told her, “Go, get your husband and come back.”

John 4:17 She replied, “I don’t have a husband.” Jesus gently said to her, “You are right when you say that you have no husband. ¹⁸ In fact, you have had five husbands, and the man you now live with is not your husband. So, when you said you don’t have a husband, that was quite true.”

John 4:19 Shocked and somewhat uncomfortable with such a personal revelation, the woman said, “Sir, to know such things you must certainly be a prophet. ²⁰ So please help me with a problem. Our people have always worshiped God here on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place we must worship God is in Jerusalem; so, which is it?”

John 4:21 Jesus declared, “Believe me, dear woman, the place where one worships God is not important; it is the condition of the heart of the worshiper that matters. Very soon you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship a confusing tradition of rituals that doesn’t enlighten the mind and has no ability to heal the worshiper; we worship the Creator God and our minds are enlightened and healed by him because all that he asks of us is sensible and reasonable. The plan to heal humanity from the infection of selfishness and sin is provided through the Jews. ²³ The time has now come that all true worshipers will worship the Father with an intelligent, reasonable understanding of who he is—loving, admiring and respecting the truth about his nature, character, and methods. These understanding worshipers are the kind the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is intelligent and reasonable, and his worshipers must worship him intelligently and reasonably, appreciating and valuing the truth of God’s methods and principles.”



John 4:25 The woman said thoughtfully, “I know that the Savior of the world (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will make plain the truth about God and untwist all the confusing ideas about the Father. He will destroy the lies of Satan that prevent us from knowing God. He will explain the real problem regarding the infection of selfishness and sin within mankind, and he will reveal God’s plan to heal and restore mankind to God’s original ideal.”

John 4:26 Then Jesus proclaimed, “I, who stand before you and am speaking with you, am he.”

John 4:27 Just as Jesus said this, his disciples returned and were shocked to find him talking with a woman, and not just any woman, but a Samaritan. They were too insecure to ask, “Why are you talking with her?” or “What do you want with her?”

John 4:28 After hearing what Jesus had just told her, the woman forgot all about her water jar, rushed back to town and said to the people, ²⁹ “Come, see a man who knew everything about me. Could this be the Savior we have been waiting for – the Christ?” ³⁰ The townspeople were so intrigued by the woman’s testimony that they made their way toward Jesus.

What do you think about this woman’s current living situation? What do you think about her relationship history?

If a woman came to church today who had been married five times and was now living with someone who wasn’t her husband would you ask her to be a missionary for your church?

Did Jesus invite her to be a missionary for Him? How could He?

- Didn’t Jesus worry, living as she was, that if she told people about Him that some people might think He condoned living together before marriage?
- Did Jesus have a different standard in selecting who can be a gospel worker than churches do today?
- Should we tell people, in their current situation, about Jesus? Should we share the water of life with them? The cohabitor, the alcoholic, the prostitute, the homosexual, the criminal – should we share Jesus with them and ask them to share with others or should we require them to change their situation first?
- Did Jesus restrict Mary Magdalene from association with Him? Was she a member of his “group”? Why was she permitted?
- Why was the rich young ruler not instantly admitted to Jesus group?
- What was the difference?
 - Jesus was looking for people who were humble, teachable, and loved others
- Who would have been first to be accepted to our church board?
- Do we focus too much on behavior and not enough on character?

Read the last paragraph, “Also, we shouldn’t...” Did Jesus follow Jewish customs when in Israel? Or, did Jesus follow Jewish customs only when they didn’t interfere with His mission?



- Was it customary to heal on Sabbath? Did Jesus?
- Was it customary to pick grain on Sabbath? Did the disciples?
- Was it customary to instruct people to carry their mat on Sabbath? Did Jesus give such instructions?
- Was it customary to drive moneychangers out of the Temple? Did Jesus?
- Was it customary for religious leaders to visit homes of tax collectors? Did Jesus?

Jesus didn't let custom interfere with His mission, but He also didn't purposely violate customs that had no bearing on His mission. He didn't seek to antagonize.

MONDAY

The lesson talks about the Roman centurion who asked Christ to heal his servant, and had faith he only needed to command and it would be done. It points out the large cultural divide and how the centurion was sensitive to the Jewish custom of not going into a Gentile home.

How does culture play in our witnessing today? Do we allow cultural differences to interfere with sharing Christ?

Think about the treatment of blacks in America, particularly the southern states, after the end of slavery up through the 1960s—by white Christians.

Have you ever seen some historical films with southern white leaders speaking about integration?

What about today? Do we have cultural barriers today?

What about witnessing to Muslims? How would you approach one?

Do we have biases toward Christians of other denominations? Do we see other Christians as part of the body of Christ or do we see them as needing conversion?

How much of our practices are cultural versus God directed?

- Sabbath practices? (Not recognition of Sabbath sacredness, but the actual practices of what one does on Sabbath)
- Dress
- Music
- Worship
 - Liturgy – is this God directed or cultural
 - Holidays – God directed or cultural
 - Tithe – God directed or cultural
 - Diet – God directed or cultural
 - This week I received the newsletter from LLU regarding the Adventist



Health Study. As many of you know, and some who might be in it, they have been following several hundred thousand Adventists for years monitoring disease in association with which diet they practice.

- In this newsletter, they focused on colorectal cancer, which kills more people in the US each year than any cancer besides lung.
- The diet groups are non-vegetarians, semi-veg, pesco-veg, lacto ova veg, and vegan.
- All veggie groups had lower colorectal cancer rates than the non-vegetarian group – but which had the lowest?
- Here were the four group's reduced risk percent, as compared to non-veggie group:
 - 8%
 - 16%
 - 18%
 - 43%

Can you guess which group had their risk reduced by 43%?

- 8% - Semi-vegetarian
- 16% - Vegan
- 18% - lacto ova vegetarian
- 43% - pesco-vegetarian

All groups of vegetarians had more plant fiber in their diet than the non vegetarians, which is a significant factor, but not the only factor as the vegan group had more plant fiber than any group, but didn't have the lowest risk. But the authors noted that other factors included the differences in the pesco group of omega 3 fatty acids, Vit D and arachidonic acid.

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read Luke 8:26-39 (from *The Remedy*):

LK 8:26 They sailed on to the region of Gerasenes, across the lake from Galilee. ²⁷ When Jesus went ashore, a man from the town, whose mind was controlled by evil angels, confronted him. The man had not worn clothes or lived in a house for a long time, but lived in the graveyard. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he fell down at his feet and began shouting as loud as he could, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Please don't torture me!" ²⁹ Jesus commanded the evil intelligence to leave the man's mind. Many times through the years it had taken control of his mind and, though he was chained hand and foot and guarded, had broken the chains and driven the man into desolate places.

LK 8:30 Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"Legion," he replied, because many evil intelligences had taken control of his mind.



³¹ They begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them into isolation from living beings.

LK 8:32 There was a large herd of pigs feeding on the hill nearby. The evil angels begged Jesus for permission to take control of the pigs, and he gave it. ³³ The fallen angels left the mind of the man and went into the minds of the pigs; the herd went berserk and stampeded down a steep bank into the lake and drowned.

LK 8:34 When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran into town and told everyone, ³⁵ and the people came out to see it for themselves. When they came to Jesus, they found the man, whose mind had been freed from demons, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed, calm and coherent; and this frightened them. ³⁶ Those who had seen all that transpired told the new arrivals how the man had been freed from the evil agencies. ³⁷ Then all the people from the region of Gerasenes were so terrified, that they asked Jesus to leave, so he got in the boat and left.

LK 8:38 The man whose mind had been freed from demons begged to go with Jesus, but Jesus had another mission for him. He told him, ³⁹ "Go home and tell everyone how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told everyone he encountered how much Jesus had done for him.

While I believe this story literally happened, does it also serve as an object lesson? How?

- What is our condition separated from Christ?
- What would our minds be like without Jesus?
- Here is a quote from one of the founders of the SDA church:
 - The Lord says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." The **enmity does not exist as a natural fact**. As soon as Adam sinned, he was in harmony with the first great apostate, and at war with God; and **if God had not interfered in man's behalf, Satan and man would have formed a confederacy against heaven**, and carried on united opposition against the God of hosts. **There is no natural enmity between evil angels and evil men**; both are evil through transgression of the law of God, and evil will always league against good. Fallen men and fallen angels enter into a desperate companionship. {ST, July 11, 1895 par. 5}
 - thoughts? So, what would be the condition of our mind without the intervention of God? We would be like the demoniac!
- Where did the demoniac stay? In a graveyard, what is our condition without Christ? Dead in trespass and sin (Col 2:13)
 - Deviation from God's design law is always terminal!
- When the demoniac came into Christ's presence what happened?
 - Protestations, acting out, fear, attempt to avoid, redirect focus, attack the other, "What are you doing here, have you come to torture."
 - What happens when the truth first comes to our awareness – conviction, fear, protestations, externalization, attempt to redirect attention away onto others.



- What did Jesus do? He freed the man and restored his soul!
 - What happens to us when we come to Jesus? We are freed!
- Where did the evil angels go?
 - Into the pigs – which symbolically represents what?
 - Brute beasts, those who are no longer in God's image or under the influence of God's Spirit – and such individuals run headlong into self-destruction, just as the pigs did: "The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction;" Gal 6:8

What about the question of demonic activity versus insanity? What is insanity? being insane, which means what?

Dictionary definition:

1. not sane; not of sound mind; mentally deranged.
2. relating to, or characteristic of a person who is mentally deranged
3. utterly senseless

What determines whether an action is sane, rational, reasonable, sensible or insane, irrational, unreasonable, senseless?

Isn't it the understanding of reality one holds?

Through what lens do you use to determine reality, whether something is wise or foolish?

- Is it wise or foolish to, when you are behind in your bills, to give tithe and offering? Does the motive matter?
- Is it wise or foolish to give with the idea and reason that God has promised if I give He will return more to me, so it is the best financial investment. And if I don't give I break my contract with God and He won't give back to me? This is level two maturity, making a deal, and the motive is selfish.
- But, if one loves God and others, and recognizes the importance of the gospel going to the world, and one gives regardless because they value their love for God and His mission over their own situation, then is this wise or foolish?

From the Remedy:

¹Cor 1:9 For the Scriptures reveal that God's method of self-sacrificing love will destroy the world's wisdom of promoting self first; the apparent logic of working for self-exaltation, fame, personal advancement or financial wealth, rather than bringing healing and restoration, will be shown to actually accelerate the damage to one's mind and character.²⁰ So then, what value is there in the wisdom of the selfish man? Or the agnostic professor? Or the atheistic scientist? Or the psychologist of the New Age? God has shown that all "wisdom" based on the principles of this world is in reality foolishness, silliness, nonsense!²¹ For after those who value the methods of the world rejected God and denied his



existence, God joyfully revealed his wisdom by actually healing and transforming all those who trust him on the basis of the simple message of God's selfless love revealed by Jesus.²² The Jews, and many like them, demand supernatural signs and wonders, which (they fail to realize) can be counterfeited, and the Greeks look only for intellectual explanations,²³ but we preach God's self-sacrificing character of love revealed by Christ crucified. It's a roadblock to the egocentric Jews, and utter nonsense to the self-seeking Gentiles,²⁴ but to all those who respond to God's call, whether Jew or Gentile, Christ is the embodiment of the character, wisdom and power of God!²⁵ For the simple love of God is wiser than all humankind's self-centered scheming; God's love literally heals and restores. And this love of God, which appears weak to the world, is stronger than all the strength of selfish humanity.

What is insanity? Believing reality works like the world says it does, choosing to diverge from God's design law and claim one gets healthier in the process:

Here is one historic view:

"Today the world is mad: an **insanity** is upon men and women, and is hurrying them on to eternal ruin. **Every species of indulgence** prevails, and men have become so infatuated with vice that they will not listen to warnings or appeals." {Mar 108.1}

All sin is selfishness. [what is sin? deviation from the law, lawlessness, which is failure to love, or selfishness] Satan's first sin was a manifestation of selfishness. He sought to grasp power, to exalt self. **A species of insanity** led him to seek to supersede God. [what does this mean? Why was this insane? Because it was like saying, I will stop breathing so I can live longer] And the temptation that led Adam to sin was Satan's declaration that it was possible for man to attain to something more than he already enjoyed, possible for him to be as God Himself. **The sowing of seeds of selfishness in the human heart was the first result of the entrance of sin into the world. God desires every one to understand the evil of selfishness, and to co operate with Him in guarding the human family against its terrible, deceptive powers.** The design of the gospel is to confront this evil by means of remedial missionary work, and to destroy its destructive power by establishing enterprises of benevolence. {Worker's Bulletin, September 9, 1902 par. 3}

As a remedy for the terrible consequences into which selfishness led the human race, God gave His only begotten Son to die for mankind. How could He have given more? In this gift He gave Himself. "I and My Father are one," said Christ. **By the gift of His Son, God has made it possible for man to be redeemed and restored to oneness with Him.** "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." **Love is the great principle that actuates unfallen beings.** With amazement the angels behold the indifference that those who have light and knowledge manifest toward a world unsaved. The heavenly host are filled with an intense desire to work through human agencies **to restore in man the image of God.** They are ready and waiting to



do this work. The combined power of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost is pledged to uplift man from his fallen state. **Every attribute, every power of divinity has been placed at the command of those who unite with the Saviour in winning men to God.** O, that all would appreciate the truth as it is in Jesus. O, that all would love God in return for the love wherewith He has loved them. {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 4}

Sin has extinguished the love that God placed in man's heart. The work of the church is to rekindle this love. The church is to co-operate with God by uprooting selfishness from the human heart, placing in its stead the benevolence that was in man's heart in his original state of perfection. {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 5}

What do you think about this quote? What is insanity according to this perspective? Selfishness, survival-of-the-fittest, why? Because it is deviant from God's design for life and results in death. What is the remedy for this type of insanity? What would you call someone in layman's terms who had this form of insanity? Would you call them demon possessed?

Consider this quotation by the same author, writing a letter to a husband and wife about what is described as a self-centered wife:

She has well learned the secret of acting for effect, of **creating a sensation to call attention to her small self.** I have seen but few persons as successful in making **self the center** of attraction when there was so little sweet, noble, genuine attractiveness in the character.

But unless she changes her course, **this acting for effect**, this desperate maneuvering to force the attention of her husband and gain his sympathy, will finally be repeated once too many times, and **God will give her fully into the hands of Satan.** Unless there is a change, a time will come soon when this **lower nature in the wife, controlled by a will as strong as steel, will bring down the strong will of the husband to her own low level.** His will would then be merged in that of the impulsive, inconsistent, **insane wife.** **He would no longer be a man, for the satanic mold upon the character of the wife would be upon him also.** His sympathies would no longer be pure and uncorrupted, like fine gold, but they would be deteriorated. His energies would be enfeebled, his life distorted.

Brother Craig **has felt that it was his duty to fight her battles**, become as inconsistent in her behalf as she is herself, **see through her eyes, and contend for her rights; for unless he does this, she will indulge in those awful outbursts of passion.** [this is violation of the law of liberty, where wife creates emotional drama and consequences to punish the husband for not giving her her way, and thus he begins losing himself and seeing the world through the wife's eyes.] Her oft-repeated assertions draw upon his sympathies, and a continual burden is cast upon him by her **manufactured physical disabilities.** [The person who is unhappy, not getting their way, and then experiences numerous physical maladies.] In her mother's house her will was law. However inconsistent and perverse her course, it was regarded as resulting from



a physical condition for which all allowance must be made. It was thought that her every demand must be met.

But the folly of the mother and other relatives must not become the folly of the husband. Should he follow in their footsteps, his life and hers also would be wrecked. Better would it be had they never been born. As it is, she is a fit subject for the insane asylum; for God has shown me that she throws herself wholly into the hands of Satan, soul, body and spirit, and his power through her is deadening the fine sensibilities of right and integrity in her husband.

If she were a child, she could be treated as such; these outbursts of temper could be punished as those of a self-willed, passionate child. But she is a woman, and her husband cannot force her perverse will to be reasonable. **Never will this exacting temperament be improved by yielding to it. Her tragical performances are enacted to frighten her husband into complying with her demands, and he must yield or have a scene. As Satan sees how he can work through her when she thus casts soul and body into his hands--that he can use her as he pleases--he will throw her into these paroxysms more and more, whenever her will is crossed. In this case it is not the woman whom Brother Craig is dealing with, but a desperate, satanic spirit.** MR 16 pg 301

What do you hear in this description? Extreme selfishness, selfishness that destroys the person but also works to destroy those in relationship with the person. This is not mental illness as we know it. There are no hallucination, no other beings speaking through her mouth, no levitation, not supernatural manifestations – just pure evil, which is selfishness that destroys.

A great book that exposes human evil that hides as righteousness, is *People of the Lie* by M. Scott Peck. The first two thirds of this book is excellent, unbelievable in its detail to uncover this type of evil masquerading as the righteous in our families, churches, and communities. The last 1/3 of the book I don't agree with, when he gets into demonic possession and exorcism.

So, let me be clear, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, schizoaffective disorder, major depression, delirium, dementia and other psychiatric disorders are NOT demonic activity or disorders. These are disorders of brain and body, with a wide range of genetic and environmental contributing factors.

WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph, “Nevertheless, Samaritans...” What do you think about the idea that Gentiles were not Jesus immediate goal?

The Bible quote is interesting one for those who have a “literal” view of Bible translation – note the verse Mt 15:24 “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”

Do we take this literally? Or do we understand something is meant beyond the literal reading?



When we talk about cross-cultural differences does one's view of Scripture come in? Do we have cross-cultural views of Scripture?

What do we understand about this?

How does inspiration work? What in the Bible is inspired? Are the words inspired?

Here is one view – do you agree?

The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. **The Bible must be given in the language of men.** Everything that is human is imperfect. **Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea.** The Bible was given for practical purposes. {1SM 20.2}

The stamps of minds are different. **All do not understand expressions and statements alike.** Some understand the statements of the Scriptures to suit their own particular minds and cases. Prepossessions, prejudices, and passions have a strong influence to darken the understanding and confuse the mind even in reading the words of Holy Writ. {1SM 20.3}

The disciples traveling to Emmaus needed to be disentangled in their interpretation of the Scriptures. Jesus walked with them disguised, and as a man He talked with them. Beginning at Moses and the prophets He taught them in all things concerning Himself, that His life, His mission, His sufferings, His death were just as the Word of God had foretold. He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. How quickly He straightened out the tangled ends and showed the unity and divine verity of the Scriptures. How much men in these times need their understanding opened. {1SM 20.4}

The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. **But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen.** Look at the different writers. {1SM 21.1}

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.-- Manuscript 24, 1886 (written in Europe in 1886). {1SM 21.2}

This is mature, level seven, understanding of reality. Those who can only use one version of the



Bible, or take the words as inspired and get upset of one rephrases the words with new words that express the same meaning, show they are still struggling to grow up to the full stature of children of God.

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, “What we see here are...” What does, “What a sign that the world was ready for His atoning death!” mean?

How does Jesus death atone? How has the cross been presented to the world?

Does Satan have a version of Christ’s death on the cross that he presents to the world? What is that version?

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase**– ALL GLITCHES NOW FIXED in the IOS Version! So please UPDATE to latest version.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes.

September 9.10: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Baptist Boomer’s Conference in San Antonio, TX.

September 12: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr., CA SDA church.

September 23-26: American Association of Christian Counselors World Convention at Gaylord Opryland Hotel, Nashville TN. Come and Reason will have a booth in the exhibit hall, and Dr. Jennings will be doing a preconference workshop and regular conference presentation, as well as commencement speaker for Light University graduation.

October 24: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Puyallup, WA.

January 9, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, California.



Biblical Missionaries 3Q 2015 Lesson 9

Peter and the Gentiles

At the end of last week's lesson we closed on the story of Jesus healing the demoniac. I gave a quotation from a letter written more than 100 years ago from EG White to a man and his wife, describing extreme selfishness with tantrums as demonic.

What I didn't discuss is that mental illnesses such as bipolar, schizophrenia, schizoaffective d/o, depression, OCD and others, are physical problems with brain and body and NOT demonic activity.

What we are promised now is new characters, we don't get new physiology until the second coming. Thus, a person can have a saving relationship with Jesus and still struggle with a mental health problem.

SABBATH

Read Memory Text:

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." Acts 2:38,39 NKJV

What does this text mean? The text is filled with words that have become common use in Christianity, but do we know what they mean?

Repent—what is repentance?

What does it mean to be baptized? Going through a ceremony with water and saying the words "I baptize you in the name of Jesus"?

Does it mean having your mind and heart immersed into the truth about God, opening the heart to God and receiving the Holy Spirit to recreate the character of Christ within and enable one for duty?

Can one go through the symbolic water baptism and still not be baptized into Jesus Christ?

What does it mean by "in the name of Jesus"?

- Does it mean speaking the words "in the name of Jesus"?
- "But to pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and Spirit of Jesus, while we work his works, believe his promises, and rely on his matchless grace." {ST, August 21,



1884 par. 13}

What does, for the remission of sins mean?

What law lens are you looking through?

If through imposed law it means someone paying a penalty to the legal authorities for your sins and you by accepting that payment can have the sins erased from your legal ledger.

If you look through Design Law, you understand that remission of sin is like the remission of cancer. When cancer goes into remission it means the cancer cells have either been eliminated or remitted back to their precancerous condition. Sin going into remission is having sinfulness, fear and selfishness, in our hearts removed and our characters remit back to God's original design—like Jesus perfect love!

Read second paragraph, "Peter worked..." What are the unchangeable divine absolutes versus cultural practices?

- Covering head while in church or while praying?
- Length of one's hair?
- Growing a beard?
- Women speaking in church?
- Ordination of men or women?
- Wearing shoes in sanctuary?
- Baptism in water?
- Partaking of communion ceremony?

How much of our religious practice is simple application of divine absolutes, and how much of it is cultural rituals?

What does it look like to carry out divine absolutes?

All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go



to visit you?’

⁴⁰ “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’ MT 25:32-40

Is this what true religion looks like? Why? What divine absolute is being expressed here?

- This is the law of love in action—giving to others

What about this passage:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ ³⁹ But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. MT 5:38-45

What is divine absolute and what is cultural? What about “eye for eye”—divine absolute or cultural practice?

Some believe if God says it then it is a divine absolute, but did God ever give instructions that were cultural practices or rituals?

Why is loving others a divine absolute? What makes it so? What happens if you don’t do this?

What about this?

Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” MT 22:37-40

Is this a divine absolute? How and why?

- Law of love but also the law of worship—by beholding we become changed
- Love your neighbor, means don’t steal, murder, betray, bear false witness or covet – why? What happens to the one who breaks the law? They are damaged, they sear their conscience, warp their character, harden their heart, thus are deviant from design protocol, i.e. divine absolute. Absolute because life is absolutely created to operate upon this protocols.



Can you think of any other divine absolutes?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Jesus’ last words...” What do you think of the interpretation of “a divine mandate?” When you read Acts 1:8 do you hear a mandate?

The word “mandate” most commonly means an authoritative order or command – is that what you hear?

The authors left off the first phrase of this passage in Acts, lets hear the entire verse:

But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Does this sound like a mandate, as in authoritative order, or more like a prophecy, a description of what they would do when the Holy Spirit came upon them?

Does it make a difference if we hear it as an order or we hear Christ’s words as predictive, telling what would happen?

If a doctor had a patient with pneumonia and said to them, “I give you this mandate: You are to cough no more!” Is that the same as saying, “When the antibiotics finish their work in you, you will cough no more.”?

How do you hear the 10 Commandments—as mandates, or descriptions of what we will be like when we surrender ourselves into His hands?

Second paragraph states, “The Great Commission found its first fulfillment on the Day of Pentecost. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit had as its aim the evangelization of the world.”

Absolutely right! But what was the world to be evangelized about? What is the message that is to be taken to the world?

- We are sinners—criminals and all guilty in God’s heavenly court, sentenced to eternal punishment? But God loved us too much, so He sent His Son and punished Jesus in our place? If you accept the payment of Jesus’ blood to the Father in your behalf, you can be declared legally righteous?
- OR—God is not like you have been taught! God is not a cosmic judge waiting to sentence you and His law is not a list of imposed rules He polices. God is like Jesus and His law is love! Yes, we are sinners—which means we are sick of heart and mind, selfish rather than loving and thus deviant from God’s design. Without remedy our condition is terminal. But



God loved us too much to let us die, so He sent His Son to take this terminal condition upon Himself and cure it. And all those who trust Him will receive the Remedy of a new heart and character achieved by Jesus and applied in us by the indwelling Spirit and will be restored to harmony and unity with God and His kingdom of love.

Which message is to go to the world? Which has?

MONDAY

The story of Cornelius and his conversion – the lesson points out that the question the church struggled with then was, “Can a Gentile become a Christian without first becoming a Jew?”

Do we have similar questions today?

- Can a person be saved without being a member of our denomination?
- Can a person be saved without a baptism ceremony in the name of Jesus?
- Can a person be saved without becoming a Christian?
- Can a person be saved who tells you they reject Christianity?

What does it mean to be saved?

What law lens to you look through to answer the question?

Through the imposed law lens it means that you must accept the legal payment of Jesus in your behalf; you must publicly declare it; you must go through the ritual of baptism and if you don't then your sins remain on the record books of heaven and you will be executed by God. But if you do accept the legal payment, God declares you righteous, even though you are not.

If you look through Design law you realize that life only exists in harmony with God, who is the source of all life. Thus He created all life to operate in harmony with Himself. Deviations from His design separate us from Him and are terminal. Salvation is being reconciled to God and experiencing, via the work of the Holy Spirit the application of Christ's character into our hearts so that we have a new heart and right spirit, that we love others more than self. Such a transformation cannot be accomplished by human effort; it cannot be accomplished by religious ritual; it cannot be accomplished by psychotherapy or human philosophy—it can ONLY be accomplished by God, taking the victory of Jesus and making it real and applicable in our hearts and minds.

So this means everyone who is saved is saved only because of the Remedy achieved by Christ.

Does that mean then, that the Holy Spirit requires the right syllables (i.e. the words “In the name of Jesus”) to be spoken before the Spirit will apply Christ's victory to someone's heart? Or will the Spirit work in any heart that is willing?



For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse... All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) ¹⁶ This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares. Rom 1:20, 2:12-16

Here are two historic quotes in harmony with Romans:

Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, **but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit** they have been a blessing to those about them. **Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness;** before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them **at the peril of their own lives. Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly,** those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. **Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God.** {DA 638.2}

Among earth's inhabitants, scattered in every land, there are those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Like the stars of heaven, which appear only at night, these faithful ones will shine forth when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. **In heathen Africa, in the Catholic lands of Europe and of South America, in China, in India, in the islands of the sea, and in all the dark corners of the earth, God has in reserve a firmament of chosen ones that will yet shine forth amidst the darkness revealing clearly to an apostate world the transforming power of obedience to His law.--** Prophets and Kings, pp. 188

What does it mean to be saved? There is no legal aspect in the sense of courtrooms, legal proceedings, dealing with record books, paying penalties or anything else associated with human type law systems.

God's law is not like created beings can impose, God is Creator and His law holds the very fabric of the cosmos together! Salvation means healing those who are deviant from that Design and Jesus is our Remedy. He overcame where we could not!

Listen to this historic quote:



"In assuming human nature, that he might reach to the very depths of human woe and misery and **lift man up**, Christ has shown what estimate he places upon the human race. In this work everything was at stake. **Satan claimed to be the lawful owner of the fallen race**; [notice who takes the legal approach!] and with what persistent effort did he seek to overthrow Christ through **his subtility**! [What subtility? The subtle change in the way intelligent beings understand God's law. By making God's law appear imposed and then claiming legal rights and the need for justice. He paints God as the cosmic executioner and the entire world is drinking this poisonous view of God.] It was only by the most desperate conflict with the powers of Satan that **Christ could accomplish his purpose** [and what do you think this author says that purpose was? To regain legal rights? To make legal payments?] **of restoring the almost obliterated image of God in man, and place his own signature upon his forehead.** {General Conference Daily Bulletin, March 2, 1897 par. 17}

Or this one:

In his humanity, Christ lived a perfect life, thus elevating humanity in the scale of moral worth with God. [In His human brain Christ developed a perfect human character, thus elevating humanity from deviant to harmony with God and His law of love] With his human arm Christ lays hold of man, while with his divine arm he grasps the throne of the Infinite. **Thus he imbues man with his own spiritual nature, and lifts him to his side, to be cherished and loved as the Father loves his Son.** [What does "imbues" mean? We become partakers of the divine nature! It is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me. We are recreated within with new motives! We partake of the remedy Christ procured!] {ST, August 26, 1897 par. 6}

The atonement of Christ is **not** a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; **it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health.** It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us **but in our hearts and characters** (Letter 406, 1906). {6BC 1074.2}

Notice, it is restoration of righteousness within! This is salvation and it is only possible through Christ, even for those who don't know Christ or have never heard of Christ. If they have opened their heart to the Holy Spirit and experienced a new heart of love, it was only possible because of Christ's victory, procuring a perfect character and the Holy Spirit applying in that human what Christ achieved.

Read last paragraph, "Notice, too, what..." Did Cornelius sin when he bowed down to worship Peter? Why or why not?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Then Peter began..." What is the point of what Peter learned?

What do we learn about God from this story?

With what is God concerned?

- Occupation?
- Organizational affiliation?
- Ethnic group?
- Dress?
- Behavior?
- The name people call God in worship?
- Worship style?
- Character of the worshipper?

Which are important and why?

While all but character are ultimately not important, how can most impact what is important, namely, character?

- Occupation?
 - Are there certain occupations that make it easier or harder to develop godly character?
 - Occupations which are service oriented, health care, teaching, clergy, are these helpful? How?
 - Police, military, lawyers, politicians, pornographers, fashion designers/models, could these create obstacles? How?
- Organizational affiliation?
 - Does the religion one holds, including with which group one affiliates, have the ability to impact their character development?
 - Does the religious group to which one belongs have the ability to impact thinking or lack thereof?
- Ethnic groups?
 - Could our ethnic group, how we were raised, impact our character development?
 - Could our attitude towards those of different ethnicity affect our character development?
- Dress?
 - Can dress affect behavior?
 - Is there a objective reason for certain standards in dress?
- Behavior?
 - Do our behaviors reinforce attitudes?
 - Does behavior matter?
 - But, can one have right behavior and wrong character?
- The name people call God in worship?
- Worship style?



WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “As we saw...” What changed Peter? He had a vision, which challenged his biases.

Read last paragraph, “There is a lesson...” What do they mean “Christian uniqueness and finality”?

How do you approach non-Christian religions? What do you find lacking in the following religions?

- Judaism
 - Many Jews no longer believe in God, to them being Jewish is part of belonging to the “tribe” to the culture and practices, but believing in God isn’t necessary
 - God’s law is imposed
 - God is either disinterested or the punisher of lawbreakers
- Islam
 - God’s law is imposed
 - God is a punishing god to the unfaithful
- Buddhism
 - Has no God
 - Operates on the landscape of dualism, the eternal existence of both good and evil, which is asserted to provides balance to the universe

What about Christianity?

- Within Christianity—what makes it better?
 - God’s law is love, the protocols reality is built upon
 - God became human to reveal Himself to us in order to win us to trust and also to take our terminal condition upon Himself in order to cure His creation.
 - Is this the picture of God Christians have taken to the world?
 - What picture has been taken to the world?

How is the god, whose followers fly planes into buildings, different from the god whose followers blow up abortion clinics?

How is the god who wants his followers to enforce Sharia laws through state legislations different from the god of those who want Sunday legislation or other restrictions on liberty?

When one does believe in God, but worships a god whose law is imposed, then one becomes like that god and sees no reason why the government shouldn’t impose just moral laws.



But when one worships the God who is love and who created reality to operate in harmony with His own character of love, one realizes that love cannot be imposed, legislated or enforced, it can only be won in an environment of genuine freedom.

THURSDAY

The lesson points out that the Jews had a great regard for the Old Testament laws and rituals. What was the purpose of those laws and rituals?

- Some were good community health measures
- Some were good civil organizational measures
- Some were part of the “stage play” they were enacting
- Some were descriptions of God’s design for life

The issue is differentiating those that matter, from those that don’t.

What did the church of the New Testament come up with?

“It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. ²⁰ Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. Acts 15:19,20

From *The Remedy*:

"Therefore, it is my judgment that we should not put obstacles in the way of the non-Jews who are turning to God and desire to partake of the Remedy.²⁰ Instead, let's send them a letter advising them to live pure lives: to keep their hearts pure toward God and therefore avoid anything that leads the mind toward idols; to keep their relationships pure and therefore avoid all sexual impurity; and to keep their bodies pure by not eating blood, raw meat, or any meat from animals whose blood was not drained.

What was the purpose? To help them come to know God and not put barriers in their way.

FRIDAY

Question 1, read and discuss.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase**– ALL GLITCHES NOW FIXED in the IOS Version! So please UPDATE to latest version.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes.

September 9,10: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Baptist Boomer's Conference in San Antonio, TX.

September 12: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr., CA SDA church.

September 23-26: American Association of Christian Counselors World Convention at Gaylord Opryland Hotel, Nashville TN. Come and Reason will have a booth in the exhibit hall, and Dr. Jennings will be doing a preconference workshop and regular conference presentation, as well as commencement speaker for Light University graduation.

October 24: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Puyallup, WA.

January 9, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, California.



Biblical Missionaries 3Q 2015 Lesson 10

Philip as Missionary

SABBATH

Read Memory Text: “ ‘But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’”
Acts 1:8

What power? When you hear power what comes to mind?

What kind of power would they receive?

The power of God—but what kind of power is that?

What was the result of the power they received? In other words, what did they do with the power?

- Died to self and loved other people, lived selflessly
- Devoted their lives and resources to taking God’s Remedy to others
- Spoke and everyone heard in their own language (universal translator)
- Cast out demons
- Healed the sick
- Walked out of locked prisons
- Immune to snake bite
- Protected from storms
- Warned about threats
- Given wisdom
- Given visions and spiritual insight

What kind of power do these events represent?

- The power of truth and love! This is the power of God, the double streams of fire that fell on Pentecost. The fire of God’s presence. This is cleansing fire, cleansing from sin and deviation from God’s design.
- Thus, such a power results in physical and spiritual healing
- This power opens avenues of communication and removes obstacles to spreading the Remedy

What did we not see evidenced by this power?

- Coercion, intimidation, pressure, control, or anything that would undermine liberty
- We did not see violence, physical weapons, rioting
- We did not see fighting for one’s rights
- Deceit or manipulation



- Politics or any other attempt to change the state government

Some might be thinking, but what about Ananias and Sapphira? What do you think? Was this God acting to punish? Was God coercing? Was God putting pressure on people to give to the cause or else?

Or did these two people reap in their own selves what happens when the unhealed are faced with intense exposure to love and truth? Was their experience the shock of being exposed and confronted by the truth—what they knew and therefore, believed to be true?

What happens when people believe something strongly and are confronted in a sudden and shocking way?

- 1587 Soares de Souza—first westerner to document, amongst the Tupi-nambas Indians the sudden death of those who were condemned and given the death sentence by their medicine man.
- 1875 Varnhagen documented amongst the Brazilian Indian tribes that the chiefs or shamans could cause death by fear.
- 1906 Leonard documented in Africa amongst the Lower Niger people: “I have seen more than one hardened old soldier dying steadily and by inches because he believed himself bewitched; no nourishment or medicines that were given to him had the slightest effect either to check the mischief or to improve his condition in any way, and nothing was able to divert him from a fate which he considered inevitable. In the same way, and under very similar conditions, I have seen Kru-men and others die in spite of every effort that was made to save them, simply because they had made up their minds, not (as we thought at the time) to die, but that being in the clutch of malignant demons they were bound to die.”
- 1682 Merolla, Congo: “A young negro on a journey lodged in a friend’s house for the night. The friend had prepared for their breakfast a wild hen, a food strictly banned by a rule which must be inviolably observed by the immature. The young fellow demanded whether it was indeed a wild hen, and when the host answered ‘No,’ he ate of it heartily and proceeded on his way. A few years later, when the two met again, the old friend asked the younger man if he would eat a wild hen. He answered that he had been solemnly charged by a wizard not to eat that food. Thereupon the host began to laugh and asked him why he refused it now after having eaten it at his table before. On hearing this news the negro immediately began to tremble, so greatly was he possessed by fear, and in less than twenty-four hours was dead.”

(Psychosomatic Medicine: [May 1957 - Volume 19 - Issue 3 - ppg 182-190](#))

So, what view of God do you think Ananias and Sapphira held? Then what was a possible outcome being confronted as they were?

Acts 5:1-11 From *The Remedy*:

¹A man named Ananias and his wife Sapphira agreed to sell a piece of property and give



the entire amount to the Lord's cause. ²When the Lord blessed it and the property sold for more than expected, Ananias, with the full consent of his wife, kept back the unexpected extra and turned in only what the property was thought to be worth. As he lay the offering at Peter's feet, ³Peter said, "Ananias, why did you choose to side with Satan and fill your heart with greed? You lied to the Holy Spirit and chose to keep some of the money you received for the land. ⁴Wasn't the land yours before you sold it? You didn't have to promise to give all the money from the sale. Were you not free to promise only a portion? Why would you promise it all and then hold a portion back? You haven't lied to finite humans; you have lied to God."

⁵ When Ananias was confronted with the truth, it shocked him, and he fell down and died. All who heard what happened were overcome with fear. ⁶ The young men came right in, wrapped up the body, carried it out and buried it.

⁷ Three hours later, Sapphira, Ananias' wife came in, but she didn't know what had happened to her husband. ⁸ Peter asked her, "Is this the entire price you and Ananias received from the sale of the land?" "Yes, that's the full price," she answered.

⁹ Peter confronted her with the truth: "What were you and your husband thinking, lying to God? A few hours ago your husband, when confronted with the truth of what you have done, died. The men who buried him are coming through the door, and they will carry you out and bury you also."

¹⁰ When she heard this, it shocked her, and she fell down and died. Then the young men came in and finding she was dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹ The entire congregation and all who heard about this were gripped with fear.

Then what about this commentary found in *The Acts of the Apostles*?

Afterward, **Ananias and Sapphira grieved the Holy Spirit by yielding to feelings of covetousness.** They began to regret their promise and soon lost the sweet influence of the blessing that had warmed their hearts with a desire to do large things in behalf of the cause of Christ. They thought they had been too hasty, that they ought to reconsider their decision. They talked the matter over, and decided not to fulfill their pledge. They saw, however, that those who parted with their possessions to supply the needs of their poorer brethren, were held in high esteem among the believers; and ashamed to have their brethren know that their selfish souls grudged that which they had solemnly dedicated to God, **they deliberately decided to sell their property and pretend to give all the proceeds into the general fund,** but really to keep a large share for themselves. Thus they would secure their living from the common store and at the same time gain the high esteem of their brethren. {AA 72.1}

But **God hates hypocrisy and falsehood.** [Why does God hate it? What happens in the



character of His children to harbor such attitudes? And what influence on others do hypocrites have? What did Lucifer do in heaven?] Ananias and Sapphira practiced fraud in their dealing with God; they lied to the Holy Spirit, **and their sin was visited with swift and terrible judgment.** When Ananias came with his offering, Peter said: "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." {AA 72.2}

What do you understand this to mean "visited with swift and terrible judgment."

Does it say they were visited with swift and terrible punishment? No! What they were confronted with was immediate diagnosis, i.e. judgment, revelation of the truth of their situation. They were exposed as liars and frauds; and they were judged right then and there to be hardened against God. And what happened? They fell down and died.

They were overcome with guilt and shame—do we find this incredible to believe? Ignoring the evidence given above, do we believe that Jesus, who knew no sin, became sin for us? That He experienced what unremedied sin does in order for us to be saved? And when did this happen to Him? In Gethsemane, and what would have happened to Jesus in Gethsemane if God didn't intervene and send an angel to strengthen Him? He would have died, from what? From the mental anguish of being separated from His Father, which is the result of what unremedied sin does.

What do you think of this commentary, regarding the idea of the judgments of God:

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

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

"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of." Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

What are God's judgments? They are His accurate diagnosis of each and every heart and situation! And His actions are always in harmony with His nature, character and law of love, always designed to heal and restore, but under the principle of liberty, because love only exists in an



atmosphere of liberty. Thus, those who choose to live independently from God, will eventually be set free to experience what they have chosen, but only when they have passed the point that no amount of truth and love has any more impact upon them.

What do you think of this commentary:

Under the demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power, the Jews saw their guilt in refusing the evidence that God had sent; but they would not yield their wicked resistance. **Their obstinacy** became more and more determined, and **worked the ruin of their souls.** [what worked the ruin of their souls. What kind of law is this?] **It was not that they could not yield, for they could, yet would not.** It was not alone that they had been guilty, and deserving of wrath, but that they armed themselves with the attributes of Satan, and **determinedly continued to be opposed to God.** Every day, in their refusal to repent, they took up their rebellion afresh. They were preparing to reap that which they had sown. **The wrath of God is not declared against men merely because of the sins which they have committed, but for choosing to continue in a state of resistance,** and, although they have light and knowledge, repeating their sins of the past. If they would submit, they would be pardoned; **but they are determined not to yield.** They defy God by their obstinacy. These souls have given themselves to Satan, and he controls them according to his will. {Testimony to Ministers 74.2}

How was it with the rebellious inhabitants of the antediluvian world? After rejecting the message of Noah, they plunged into sin with greater abandon than ever before, and doubled the enormity of their corrupting practices. **Those who refuse to reform by accepting Christ find nothing reformative in sin; their minds are set** to carry their spirit of revolt, **and they are not, and never will be, forced to submission.** The **judgment which God brought upon the antediluvian world declared it incurable.** {TM 75.1}

What type of law is being described here? Why does God's wrath come? What is God's wrath? What law lens do you understand it through?

- The city of murderers is doomed! *I myself will pile up the firewood.* Bring more wood! Fan the flames! Cook the meat! Boil away the broth! Burn up the bones! Now set the empty bronze pot on the coals and let it get red-hot....You will not be pure again until you have felt the full force of my anger. I, the Lord, have spoken. The time has come for me to act (emphasis mine). (Ezek 24:2, 9-14)
- "For a fire has been kindled by my wrath, one that burns to the realm of death below. It will devour the earth and its harvests and set afire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap calamities upon them and spend my arrows against them." (DT 32:22, 23)
- "If only they were wise and would understand this and discern what their end will be! How could one man chase a thousand, or two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, *unless the Lord had given them up?*" (emphasis mine DT 32:29, 30)



- Paul makes this abundantly clear in Rom 1:18-32 when he says the wrath of God is being seen against all godlessness and he tells us three times in verses 24, 26 and 28 that God's wrath is giving people up to reap what unremedied sin does—pain, suffering and death.

So what power did the Apostles receive and wield? The power of truth and love under the principle of freedom!

They were empowered to be witnesses to Jesus – to witness what? To give witness to what?

- The truth about Jesus' resurrection
- The truth about God's kingdom of love and methods of governing
- The truth about God's Remedy to sin, procured by Christ and freely offered to all

What has been the witness of the Christian church? Has it consistently revealed the love of Jesus?

SUNDAY

Philip the Evangelist—there are two Philips in the New Testament, Philip the Apostle and Philip the Evangelist.

What do you think Philip said when he entered new areas to evangelize about Jesus?

Today, do you think John the Baptist's approach, standing on a street corner and proclaiming the need to repent, would work? Why or why not?

Was the message taken by the early church about a risen Jesus, not only true, but new and fresh and revitalizing? And what did that message focus upon? Was it not Jesus, His victory over sin and the offer for renewal of heart and mind?

Has something happened to the message since that time? What?

The message was corrupted by a system of beliefs that doesn't bring peace and joy, but fear and burdens. The "gospel" presented to the world most often today, is, functionally, no different than human systems of governing. Thus, it is not new, it is not fresh, it is not revitalizing, it is fear inducing, burden inflicting and hope destroying. When we present a god that harmonizes with Satan's view of God then our message is devoid of power. It has a form of godliness but no power thereof!

Examples:

- God's law is imposed, no different functionally than human laws
- God, therefore, is the source of inflicted punishment
- Sins are bad deeds which are being recorded and if you don't get them—each one—legally taken care of God will torture you to death



- The church is God's authority on earth and holds the keys to salvation, thus one must follow the dictates from church headquarters in order to be saved
 - Institutional ritual control (sacraments) if the institution doesn't baptize can't go to heaven, if the institution doesn't do last rights can't go to heaven, if the institution doesn't hear your confession can't go to heaven. If you don't pay your tithes to the institution you can't go to heaven...
- Once the idea of an imposed law was accepted then all types of arbitrary beliefs and rules infected Christianity:
 - Indulgences
 - Elite clergy separate from the laity
 - Holy relics with sacred powers
 - Penance
- Crusades, inquisitions, torture
- Christianity is seen as a system of coercive and arbitrary power and thus God is portrayed in this false light

Further, under this human imposed law system, many words lost their true meaning:

- Being *saved* rather than meaning being healed, renewed, reconciled in heart and mind to God to love Him and others, came to mean having your sinful deeds accounted for either in the church system of confession, penance, indulgence or in the heavenly accounting of the application of Jesus' blood to your heavenly records
- Becoming a *Christian*, rather than becoming a person who loves Jesus and His Father with all your heart and practices God's methods of love—thus revealing Christ's character of truth and freedom in dealing with others, came to mean belonging to an institutional religion and affirming their creed.
- *Christianity*, rather than being the unfolding of never-ending truth, became the bastion of closed-minded rigid thinkers who establish mountains of traditions, doctrines and beliefs designed to obstruct truth and keep people in fear of God and loyal to the institution.

MONDAY

The lesson is focused on Acts 6:1-7, which is the struggle of the rapid growth in the early church and the Apostles getting bogged down with administrative and organizational issues. They decided to select seven others who would be deacons, to take these responsibilities off the shoulder of the Apostles, so the Apostles could do their work in spreading the gospel.

I know that our ministry needs some more people who would be willing to help Dean run the equipment each week, set up, take down, control room. He would like enough people that no one would have to do it more than once a month. But recently that has not been the case. If you would be willing to help out with our broadcast team please see Dean after class.



TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read Acts 8:1-8, from *The Remedy*:

¹ And Saul stood there, applauding his murder. That very day, terrible persecution broke out against those in Jerusalem who had partaken of the Remedy and were part of the church—the Lord's 'spiritual health-care' team. They all scattered throughout Judea and Samaria—all, that is, except for the Twelve. ² Men who were loyal to God buried Stephen and grieved deeply for him, ³ but Saul set out on a mission to destroy the church. He went on a house-by-house search and dragged away any who had partaken of the Remedy, imprisoning both men and women.

⁴ Those who had scattered out from Jerusalem spread the Remedy wherever they went. ⁵ Philip took the truth of the Messiah to a city in Samaria. ⁶ When the people heard the beauty and clarity of the Remedy he presented, and saw the miraculous healings, they were riveted to his every word. ⁷ Evil spirits shouted in protest as they were driven out, and many paralyzed and crippled people were healed. ⁸ So the city was filled with great joy.

What do you think about miracles in evangelism today?

Would our efforts be helped by miracles? What is the problem with relying on miracles for evangelism?

- **Deuteronomy 13:1-3.** "If a prophet arises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder which he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the word of that prophet or to that dreamer of dreams." (*RSV*)
- **Matthew 24:24.** "If anyone says to you then, 'Look, here is Christ!' or 'There he is!' don't believe it. False christs and false prophets are going to appear and will produce great signs and wonders to mislead, if it were possible, even God's own people!" (*Phillips*)

So based on these Bible texts one of the founders of the SDA church wrote:

- "The way in which Christ worked was to preach the Word, and to relieve suffering by miraculous works of healing. **But I am instructed that we cannot now work in this way; for Satan will exercise his power by working miracles. God's servants today could not work by means of miracles; because spurious works of healing, claiming to be divine, will be wrought.** *MM* 14
- "As spiritualism more closely imitates the nominal Christianity of the day, it has greater power to deceive and ensnare. Satan himself is converted, after the modern order of things. He will appear in the character of an angel of light. **Through the agency of spiritualism, miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and many undeniable wonders will be performed.** And as the spirits will profess faith in the Bible, and manifest respect for the institutions of the church, their work will be accepted as a manifestation of divine



power." *Great Controversy* 588 (1888)

Miracles can be counterfeited—truth is truth and once one understands reality, how it works, miracles cannot persuade one away from it. Thus, truth doesn't need a miraculous sign to validate it!

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "According to Acts..." Have you ever had the difficulty of dealing with someone who restricted the evidence they would accept?

What about those who will only read the KJV of the Bible? Or those who reject the integration of science and experience, or some who reject Scripture and will only accept science and experience?

How do you approach such people? Do you understand God's design well enough in all spheres that you can speak about His kingdom to everyone?

Jesus quoted Scripture to the Pharisees and Sadducees, meeting them with what they touted as their source of authority. The people didn't know that much Scripture, so He met them with examples from nature and their own life experiences to illustrate and demonstrate the truth of God's kingdom.

Read last paragraph, "The Spirit of the Lord..." Isn't this profound? Someone was converted to Christ, based on the truth about Jesus and His accomplishments, and then was baptized into the church, without being run through the 28 Fundamentals? How could this be?

Why don't we do it this way today? Is it because we are afraid, afraid the institution will be infected and controlled by people to haven't accepted our creed?

Read bottom green section, "Philip explained to the Ethiopian..." Can anyone tell me what the central message of Jesus is?

- Jesus died for our sins?
- Jesus paid the price?
- Jesus redeems us from God's wrath?
- Jesus covers us with His righteousness?
- Jesus shed His blood for our salvation?

Are these the central message of Jesus' mission?

"I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do... ⁶ I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word." Jn 17:4,6



What did Jesus say was His primary work? Revealing the truth about God, why?

- What did the war in heaven start over?
- How did sin infect humanity?
- Lies believed broke the circle of love and trust
- Broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness
- Fear and selfishness result in acts of sin
- Acts of sin damage mind, body, character and result in death
- Healing starts with the truth about God which destroys lies and restores trust
- Restored trust results in opening the heart and God pours His love in
- Trust and love results in acts or righteousness
- Acts of righteousness result in growth in godliness and spreading His kingdom of love and truth

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “At this stage...” What do you think about the fact four of his daughters were given the gift of prophecy?

Do you think God has a different view of the role of women in the church than they did then and than we do today?

What does it say about God that He empowered women with such gifts?

What about the last sentence of that paragraph, “This testifies to good parenting and true godliness in this pioneering Christian family.”

Does it? Is the lesson suggesting then, that if children go wayward there was bad parenting?

What about God’s parenting of Lucifer and Adam and Eve? Did they go wayward because of bad parenting?

What injury do we do to people to think so narrowly?

What is the balance in the relationship between parenting and outcomes?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions

1. Is Christianity unified or fragmented? Over 34,000 different Christian groups exist. If the gospel breaks down barriers and creates unity, then what does it mean that Christianity is fractured into



over 34,000 different groups? Could it mean that Christianity is not promoting the true gospel but a false gospel?

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Biblical Missionaries 3Q 2015 Lesson 11

Paul: Background and Call

SABBATH

Before we get started I wanted to thank Cami Hilton for finding the quotation I asked about last week, she texted it to me before class was over.

We have united in earnest prayer around the sickbed of men, women, and children, and have felt that they were given back to us from the dead in answer to our earnest prayers. In these prayers we thought we must be positive, and if we exercised faith, that we must ask for nothing less than life. We dared not say, “If it will glorify God,” fearing it would admit a semblance of doubt. We have anxiously watched those who have been given back, as it were, from the dead. We have seen some of these, especially youth, raised to health, and they have forgotten God, become dissolute in life, causing sorrow and anguish to parents and friends, and have become a shame to those who feared to pray. They lived not to honor and glorify God, but to curse Him with their lives of vice. {Pr 233.1}

We no longer mark out a way, nor seek to bring the Lord to our wishes. If the life of the sick can glorify Him, we pray that they may live, nevertheless, not as we will but as He will. Our faith can be just as firm, and more reliable, by committing the desire to the all-wise God and, without feverish anxiety, in perfect confidence trusting all to Him. We have the promise. We know that He hears us if we ask according to His will.—(Counsels on Health, 378, 379.) {Pr 233.2}

When you think about Paul, his background and call, what lessons can we learn?

- How God turns enemies into friends!
 - How did God reach Paul?
 - First, by the witness of Stephen’s selfless and pure character and forgiving heart; second, by a lancing confrontation—after Saul’s conscience had been eating at him, Jesus lanced through the last layers of denial and the truth won out.
- The reality of a new life in Christ
 - What was the primary, i.e. foundational root, change in Paul when he converted? Fear and selfishness (survival of the fittest) was replaced with love for God and others. He died to self. Thus rather than seeking to use his life to destroy others, he was willing to sacrifice his life to save others.
- The ability to overcome a bad reputation
 - How did Paul do this?
 - By, over time, living and presenting the truth in love and leaving others free
- That moving forward in God’s plan may result in loss of previously valued relationships, position, authority...



- What did Paul lose? The respect and power of the institutional church, but we also learn...
- That rejection by religious authorities, arrest, criminal prosecution does not mean one is in the wrong
- The importance of thinking for oneself
 - How important is this?
 - Do you notice through history, those in the wrong try to use organizational pressure to intimidate those with the truth into conformity?
 - Ahab and Elijah (other kings and prophets)
 - Jewish leaders and Jesus
 - Roman church and Reformers
 - British Empire and Gandhi
 - Islamic terrorists and the anyone who would criticize their prophet or religion
 - What about our own church, are there elements of this behavior that creep in?
- Following Jesus, while rewarding, can be painful, costly and exhausting
- That when one understands reality, as God as genuinely created things to operate, and His character as revealed in Christ, then all loss for Christ's sake is actually gain!

Read memory text: "But the Lord said to Ananias, 'Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.'" (Acts 9:15 *NIV*)

What do you understand this to mean? What does it mean to proclaim Jesus' "name"?

- Jesus as the Savior of the world?
- Jesus as "King of Kings"?
- Jesus as absorber of wrath?
- Jesus as payer of legal debt?
- Jesus as shield from a "just and punishing god"?

If you were given 5 minutes to proclaim the name of Jesus before an audience of people who have not accepted Him, what would you say?

What do you think of Exodus 33:18,19, 34:6,7 in regard to proclaiming the name of Jesus?

Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."

¹⁹ And the Lord said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and **I will proclaim my name**, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. ²⁰ But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.... ^{34:6} And he passed in front of Moses, **proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger,**



abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished;”

Is this Old Testament text referring to Jesus? How do you know? 1Cor 10:1-3 – the rock from which Israel drank was Jesus!

One of the founders of the SDA church commented on this passage from Exodus:

The glory of God is His character. While Moses was in the mount, earnestly interceding with God, he prayed, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." In answer God declared, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." The glory of God--His character--was then revealed: "The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty" (Exodus 33:18, 19; 34:6, 7). {AG 322.2}

This character was revealed in the life of Christ. That He might by His own example condemn sin in the flesh, He took upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh. **Constantly he beheld the character of God; constantly He revealed this character to the world.** {AG 322.3}

Christ desires His followers to reveal in their lives this same character. In His intercessory prayer for His disciples He declared: "**The glory [character] which thou gavest me I have given them;** that they may be one, even as we are one; **I in them,** and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:22, 23). {AG 322.4}

What does it mean to proclaim the name of Jesus? To reveal His character!

What was Paul's mission in regard to proclaiming the name of Jesus? To reveal in every way possible, in clearest light, the truth of God's character of love as revealed by Jesus.

What is our mission today? Are we doing this?

From a book entitled *Christ's Object Lessons*:

"It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. **At this time** a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. **His character is to be made known.** Into the darkness of the



world is to be shed **the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth...The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.**" Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

Read last paragraph, "Paul is credited..."

SUNDAY

Read last, "Paul's pharisaic..." What are divine absolutes and what were some of the cultural additions which Paul differentiated?

Cultural Additions:

- Circumcision
- Ceremonial cleansing, washing, dressing
- Sacrificial system at the Temple
- Bigotry and social isolation from non-Jews
- Law-keeping as a means of salvation
- Phylacteries
- Placing prayers/scripture on the mantle of door
- Male domination of women in families, society and religious institution
- others?

Divine Absolutes:

- Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Rom 13:10
- " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." MT 22:37-40
- What about the 10 Commandments? Why are these divine absolutes?
- Any others?

What about today: are the following divine absolutes or cultural additions?

- Circumcision of the body?
 - Circumcision of the heart, cutting away ties to worldly and selfish things and establishing the heart ties to God and heavenly things?
- Baptism in water?
 - Baptism by the Spirit?
- Communion ceremony of physical bread and wine?
 - Communion with God partaking of the Word of God (bread) and character of Christ (wine)?
- Foot-washing service?



- Humbling self in love to serve others, seeking to help them experience Christ and the washing away of sin from their characters?
- Phylacteries
 - Are we to have God's word, truth, character written into our hearts and lived out in our lives?
- Attending organized religious services?
 - Fellowshiping together with those who love Christ, sharing, supporting, working together to spread the truth about God and love others in your community?
- Singing of hymns or other praise songs?
 - Having a life that praises God with a song of loving experience in the service of others?
- Avoiding work and going to church on the seventh day of the week?
 - Having God's law of love, truth, liberty written upon the heart, such that you live by presenting the truth in love, leaving others free, validating the character of God of which the Sabbath is a sign?
- Asking God for legal pardon for sin?
 - Humbling oneself in repentance before God and experiencing in one's heart rebirth, death to selfishness, and love for God and others?

What did we just do? We moved past symbol, ritual, metaphor, which are all unnecessary, to the reality to which they point! And the reality is necessary!

What about Acts 15:20: "Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood."

Are these divine absolutes? Why or why not?

- How do idols pollute food?
 - Is it a change in nutrition?
 - It is an issue of belief/worship. This is design law, by beholding we become changed and lies believed break the circle of love and trust.
 - Thus, don't believe lies and don't worship false god constructs, because doing so damages the person.
- Sexual immorality?
 - What happens?
 - It is violation of design law, altering brain circuitry, inflaming selfish and fear circuits, thus obstructing healing of mind and character.
- Meat from strangled animals or blood?
 - What is the problem?
 - It also violates design law.
 - Humans were not designed to eat meat, and the blood carries waste products, but also stress hormones, and eating raw meat, drinking blood increases disease risk, and when the body is unhealthy the mind is compromised.



MONDAY

Read top paragraph, “Personality traits...” How do you distinguish the difference between personality traits and character?

Personality traits are aspects of a person that are considered more hardwired in, whereas character traits are elements of our personhood that are developed through life experience and choice.

Personality traits:

- Openness
 - Outgoing adventurous type people, enjoy new ideas, often artistic
 - In a 2011 study people who took psilocybin, (hallucinogenic mushrooms) had increased openness lasting up to a year, why? Because the chemical made alterations in the hardwiring.
 - Recent research explored the therapeutic potential of this ability of psychedelic drugs to alter hard wiring in OCD and PTSD. In one study PTSD patients were given a single dose of MDMA (ecstasy) while two therapists spent the entire day with the patient, supporting, and working through their experience. This was repeated in one other session. A control group was given a placebo and two therapists spent the day with them working through their issues. The results were 83% of the active group experienced such a marked improvement in their CAPS (Civilian Administered PTSD Scale) score from 80, indicating significant impairment, to 25 that they no longer met criteria for PTSD. Only 25% of the control group experienced this level of improvement. Further research is ongoing. [http://www.psychcongress.com/blogs/andrew-penn-rn-ms-np-cns-aprn-bc/how-psychedelics-may-accelerate-psychotherapy-mdma-psilocybin?e=\[email\]](http://www.psychcongress.com/blogs/andrew-penn-rn-ms-np-cns-aprn-bc/how-psychedelics-may-accelerate-psychotherapy-mdma-psilocybin?e=[email])
- Conscientiousness
 - Organized, duty focused, responsible, reliable and achievement focused
- Extraversion
 - Social butterflies, outgoing, engaging, like the limelight
- Agreeableness
 - warm, kind, compassionate, hospitable
- Neuroticism
 - Anxious worrier, often struggle with anxiety and depression

Each of the above are personality types.

Character traits include:

- Love versus selfishness
 - Can either of these character traits manifest in all the personality types?

- Joy versus dissatisfaction?
- Peace versus turmoil?
- Patience versus impatience?
- Honesty versus deceitfulness?
- Kindness versus cruelty?
- Goodness versus spitefulness?
- Faithfulness versus disloyalty?
- Reliability versus unreliability?
- Gentleness versus violence?
- Self-control versus impulsiveness/emotion-control?

How does one develop mature traits of character? By a trust relationship with Jesus Christ, in which one chooses to actually live in harmony with Him and actually give, self-restrain, be patient, choose kindness, choose to forgive etc.

TUESDAY

In the second paragraph, “Paul couldn’t preach or teach about what he didn’t know. No, instead he would preach and teach out of his own experiences with, and knowledge of, the Lord, all the time in harmony with the Word of God.”

This is an excellent point on several levels:

- Lecturing or teaching material one doesn’t actually understand makes for poor teaching, and typically results in introducing errors.
- Teachers who don’t really know their material have difficulty with questions and often use words the audience doesn’t actually understand
- One sign of a great teacher (Jesus was the best ever) is the ability to explain complex topics in ways non-experts, young people and children can understand
- The lesson is also rightly promoting integrating our experience with Scripture! If we also harmonize our experience and Scripture with God’s laws in science and nature we can achieve a very health world view.

The bottom of Tuesday’s lesson identifies five results of authentic missionary work:

1. Open people’s eyes—make God real
 - a. How do we do this?
 - b. What about the integrative evidence based approach, in which we show how Scripture is demonstrated in science and works in experience?
 - c. One of the most effective ways I have found is discussing Design Law with people, helping them get their minds around living in harmony with how life was constructed to operate. Most religious people I deal with, regardless of religion, don’t view their religious beliefs this way. Most view it through the lens of imposed



laws, rules to keep based on levels 1-4:

- Get reward or avoid punishment
 - Make a deal—saw a television crime program in which a Muslim man was attacking other Muslims, and when interviewed by police his reason was, he had rigidly kept all the rules of Islam his entire life, and Allah didn't bless him like he was supposed to... How many Christians have the same struggle, go to church, pay tithe, etc. then a child gets sick and dies, or they lose a job etc. and they get angry at God? I have a patient right now who is angry at God because her son was killed in a MVA, black ice, hit by a truck. She expects, because she did right, that God was supposed to protect her son—thoughts?
 - Conform to be accepted by a group
 - Avoid legal trouble with God.
- d. Doesn't God become real when we see how His law functions in every aspect of our lives, in reality?
- e. How else can we make God real?
2. Move from darkness to light, ignorance to enlightenment
- a. What is required to move from darkness to light?
- A willingness to do so
 - This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.” John 3:19-21
 - How do you deal with those who don't want to come into the light?
3. Turn from the power of Satan to God
- a. What is Satan's power & what is God's power?
- b. Satan's power—lies, coercion, manipulation, fear
- c. God's power—truth, love, freedom
4. Receive forgiveness of sins
- a. What does this mean?
- b. Could it be presented in a way that darkens the mind rather than enlightens? how?
5. Receive a place among the sanctified; this means membership in God's church, regardless of ethnicity, gender, or nationality
- a. Does it mean membership in an institutional entity?
- b. What is it to be amongst the sanctified?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “One thing is certain...” What does it mean to keep Christ and Him crucified central to the message?



Is it possible to take Christ and Him crucified to the world, yet actually obstruct people from knowing God?

- What about promoting physical manifestations of the event, crucifixes or crosses held as magic wands, teaching these have power over demons, and wearing one protects against evil forces?
 - What do such ideas do to the mind?
 - What view of God do they generate?
- What about teaching Christ died to pay our legal penalty to an offended and angry god?
- Others?

What is an effective and healthy way to present Jesus and Him crucified?

- Before we can answer this question effectively, accurately, in a healthy and helpful way several foundational ideas must be understood—What are these ideas?
 - What was the problem that the death of Christ was designed to fix?
 - And that question requires us to understand the reality upon which God’s universe, government, kingdom operates. In other words, an understanding of God’s law.
- If we understand God’s law as functioning no different that created beings make, rules imposed, then we construe the problem of sin as a legal one, and we interpret the cross to mean something it doesn’t—dealing with legal penalties. This not only obstructs the power of what Christ accomplished at the cross, we lead people further from the true God, because we end up presenting God as the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death.
- When we understand that God is Creator, Builder of reality, and that His universe is constructed to operate in harmony with Himself, then we understand God’s law is the protocols upon which all life is built to function and sin is deviation from that design, resulting in death unless the Designer intervenes to heal and restore. We understand then, what the Bible says, “the wages of sin is death” or “sin when full grown brings forth death.” With this view in mind we realizes Christ came to heal and restore His creation back to God’s original design from the damage that sin has done to it—not to pay a legal penalty to an offended God.
- So, what was the problem sin caused that Christ addressed and fixed via His life, death and resurrection?
 - Lies about God were destroyed as Jesus revealed the truth about God and exposed Satan as a liar (Heb 2:14)
 - Destroy the infection of selfishness and fear, which is the carnal nature, thereby destroying death (2Tim 1:10)
 - Developing a perfect human character in harmony with God’s design/law of love (Heb 5:8, 1John 3:8)
- Jesus, God’s Son, who has life original in Himself, became human, partaking of our terminal condition, and died in order to cure this condition and restore humankind back to God’s original design.
- All those who trust in Him can receive freely, via the work of the Holy Spirit, a new heart with new motives, such that fear and selfishness are replaced by love and trust. Then it “is



no longer I that live but Christ lives in me.”

THURSDAY

The lesson suggests we read Galatians 2:1-17, but we will read through verse 20, this is from *The Remedy*:

Gal 2:1 It wasn't until fourteen years later that I returned to Jerusalem, and this time I took Barnabas and Titus along. 2 I went because of what had been revealed to me, and I presented to them the good news that I teach among the Gentiles—God's plan to heal and restore all humanity. I presented this good news privately to those who were looked upon as leaders, because I was concerned that my efforts to promote the freedom all humankind experiences in Christ might have been in vain. 3 But such was not the case, as evidenced by the fact that Titus, who was with me (and Greek by birth), was not required to be circumcised. 4 This issue came up because some individuals, pretending to be our brothers in Christ, had snuck in to spy on us and criticize the freedom we have in Christ, and attempted to enslave our minds again with meaningless rules and rituals. 5 But we were not swayed by them for one second, so don't waver, but cling to the truth of the good news we have presented to you.

Gal 2:6 As for those men and women in leadership, whom some consider important (their position doesn't matter to me because God does not judge by earthly, external appearances), they contributed nothing to my message. 7 On the contrary, they recognized the truth and power of my message and realized that I had been entrusted with the responsibility of taking this healing message to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been sent to the Jews. 8 For there is only one healing truth and one God—the source of this Remedy. God was working both in Peter's ministry as an ambassador of God to the Jews, and in mine as his ambassador to the Gentiles. 9 James, Peter, and John, who are considered pillars in the church, recognized God's graciousness at work in me and accepted me and Barnabas as co-workers with them in distributing God's healing Remedy. They agreed that we should take this message to the Gentiles, while they focus their energies on enlightening the Jews. 10 The only requirement they asked of us was that we remember the needs of the poor—something I was already eagerly doing.

Gal 2:11 But when Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him openly and publicly, because he was clearly wrong, and, if not corrected, would cause serious confusion. 12 You see, prior to the arrival of certain church leaders from church headquarters, who valued the Jewish traditions, he would socialize and eat with the Gentiles. But when these leaders arrived, he suddenly distanced himself and wouldn't socialize with the Gentiles for fear of what these leaders, who promoted circumcision, would think. 13 The other Jewish believers followed his lead and joined him in this hypocrisy, and there was danger of an artificial class distinction being established; and because of their inconsistent and hypocritical behavior, even Barnabas was led astray.



Gal 2:14 When I realized that they were not acting in accordance with the truth or the good news about God and his desire to freely heal all humankind, it became necessary to take a public stand, and I said to Peter in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you have experienced the freedom that Jesus brought and no longer live under the restrictions of all the Jewish traditions and rituals. Why, then, are you forcing the Gentiles into the bondage of Jewish customs and traditions?”

Gal 2:15 “We, who were born Jewish—part of God’s specially chosen educational team, blessed with the symbolic teaching tools, and not part of the ignorant Gentile world—16 clearly know that a person is set right with God not by rituals, symbols, or keeping to a certain educational script, but simply by trusting Jesus Christ. We, too, have been won back to trust by the evidence of God’s true character and methods revealed by Christ and thus our minds are set right with God by trust in Christ, and not by rituals or adhering to a certain set of rules, because it is not possible to heal the mind and set the heart right with God by behaviorally following a set of rules.

Gal 2:17 “If, while we seek to be healed and set right with God through the truth that Christ has revealed, it becomes obvious that the infection of selfishness has not been eradicated from our hearts, does that mean that Christ promotes selfishness? Absolutely not! 18 If I stop taking the Remedy and re-infect myself with selfishness, I only prove that I am sick and out of harmony with God’s law of love and life. 19 For through the written law I was diagnosed as terminal so that I might give up trying to cure myself and instead trust God and live for him. 20 The old ‘me’ who lived for self—who sought to get instead of give, the ‘me’ who lived on the survival-of-the-fittest principle—died when I recognized the true significance of all Christ has done. That old ‘me’ no longer lives, but Christ—with his character of self-sacrificing love—now lives in me. The life I now live in this body I live by trust in the Son of God, who loved me and freely gave himself to win me back to trust and to purge humanity from selfishness and death.

What was the problem Paul faced? What was the danger to Peter’s behavior?

The were allowing imposed law ideas, arbitrary rules, to creep in, rather than operating in harmony with Design Law and partaking of Christ’s victory in our behalf through trust.

Do we struggle with similar issues today?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “Read 1 Corinthians...” What does contextualization mean as it pertains to presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ?



Are there practices that hide under the guise of seeking holiness, that actually obstruct contextualization and thus obstruct the gospel?

How about insisting on using only the KJV of the Bible? Is the KJV easily understood by people today?

Question 2 states God forgave Paul and used him in a mighty way, was the problem with Paul being useful to God's cause one of God's forgiving or not forgiving?

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October 24: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Puyallup, WA:

- Friday, October 23rd at the North Hill SDA Fellowship Church at 7:00PM. Located at: 10106 36th St. E., Edgewood, WA.
- Saturday, October 24th at the Washington State Fairgrounds in Puyallup in the Expo Hall. (10:00AM - 4:00 PM)
- For more information email, Godandyourbrain@icloud.com.
- There is also a God and Your Brain Events page on Facebook.

January 9, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, California.



Biblical Missionaries 3Q 2015 Lesson 12

Paul: Mission and Message

SABBATH

Read memory text: “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil 3:13,14 NKJV)

What does this text mean? How do you hear it? What has he not apprehended? What is he forgetting? Toward what is he striving?

Here are these verses from *The Remedy*:

Brothers and sisters, I have not yet experienced this perfect, total and complete restoration but there is one thing I can do to assist God in his plan to heal and restore: I don't lament past mistakes nor grow content with past victories; rather I constantly push for the perfection that still lies ahead.¹⁴ I press forward, constantly toward the goal of Christlike perfection, one day to experience the ultimate prize for which God has called me heavenward—the joy of seeing him face to face.

What do we learn from this passage? To fix our eyes on Christ, not on ourselves, either our shortcomings or victories.

Read second paragraph, “Paul’s 13 letters...” What do you think of these sentences: “He touched doctrinal, as well as practical, topics. He counseled, encouraged, and admonished on matters of personal Christianity, relationships, and church life.”

Is there a difference between doctrines, practical topics, church life and personal Christianity?

Is there a doctrine that is impractical or not practical?

Is there a doctrine that doesn’t affect relationships or church life?

Can doctrines be taught in such a way that they become impractical?

Are any of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the SDA church impractical or don’t touch the Christian life?

1. Holy Scriptures
2. Trinity
3. Father
4. Son



5. Holy Spirit
6. Creation
7. Nature of Man
8. Great Controversy
9. Life, Death, Resurrection of Christ
10. Experience of Salvation
11. Growing in Christ
12. Church
13. Remnant and Its Mission
14. Unity in the Body of Christ
15. Baptism
 - Can this be presented in impractical ways? As having some power to cleanse the soul rather than a symbolic act demonstrating one has already died to self and been immersed into the character of Christ via the Holy Spirit?
 - How about by using baptism over and again for every shortcoming?
16. Lord's Supper
 - Can this be impractical? How? What if it stays a ceremony thought to have some mystical power and one never realizes it is symbolic of humbly serving God's kingdom to others and partaking of the cleansing Spirit yourself?
17. Spiritual Gifts and Ministries
18. The Gift of Prophecy
19. Law of God
 - Can this be impractical? How? By presenting God's law functioning like human law? Thus denying the reality in which we actually live?
 - By presenting God holding a heavenly tribunal and inflicting punishments, thus causing people to create doctrines that are designed to protect us from God rather than reconcile us to Him
20. Sabbath
21. Stewardship
22. Christian Behavior
23. Marriage and Family
24. Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary
 - Can this be impractical? How? By presenting the message in a symbolic way, but merely transferring the symbols to a location in heaven and pigeonhole Christ into the Old Testament rituals
 - How can it be presented in a practical way? By interpreting the symbols and applying them:
 - The Sanctuary is a symbolic representation for God's dwelling place—which is???? The heart of living beings!
 - The entire system of rituals and rites were symbolic representations of God's plan, through Christ, to heal and restore human beings back into His original perfection



- There is NO legal accounting of sins taking place in the system
- There is a constant cleansing from sinfulness being done; the removal of sin from the sanctuary, heart, mind, character of God's people

25. Second Coming of Christ

26. Death and Resurrection

27. Millennium and the End of Sin

28. New Earth

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read 1Cor 1:22-14: "Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,²³ but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." NIV

The lesson has an interesting insight, that because of the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt with great signs and miracles, they had come to a point they wouldn't believe truth if it wasn't accompanied by a miracle.

Good idea or bad idea to wait for miracles?

Do miracles increase thinking or decrease it?

Why did Israel in Egypt need miracles? What was the purpose of the miracles there?

- Level one thinkers—slaves view right and wrong through the lens of punishment and reward
- A sovereign demonstrates his right to rule by displays of might and power
- God used miracles in Egypt to demonstrate both the impotence of the false gods of Egypt and to reach the level one thinkers confirming for them that He is powerful
- But do miracles give us any insight into the character of the miracle worker?

Do miracles differentiate truth from error?

Can a miracle support a lie?

- Serpent talking is a miracle
- Jannes and Jambres (Exod 7:11, 2Tim 3:8)
- What about statues weeping?
- What about people being healed?
- **Deuteronomy 13:1-3.** "If a prophet arises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder which he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the word of that prophet or to that dreamer of dreams." (RSV)
- **Matthew 24:24.** "If anyone says to you then, 'Look, here is Christ!' or 'There he is!' don't



believe it. False christs and false prophets are going to appear and will produce great signs and wonders to mislead, if it were possible, even God's own people!" (*Phillips*)

Here are some quotes from one of the founders of the SDA church:

"As spiritualism more closely imitates the nominal Christianity of the day, it has greater power to deceive and ensnare. **Satan himself** is converted, after the modern order of things. He **will appear in the character of an angel of light**. Through the agency of spiritualism, miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and **many undeniable wonders will be performed**. And as the spirits will profess faith in the Bible, and manifest respect for the institutions of the church, their work will be accepted as a manifestation of divine power." *Great Controversy* 588 (1888); *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 405, 406

"The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. **By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested.**" *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 411 (1884); *Great Controversy* 593 (1888); *LDE* 170; *Maranatha* 94, 156; *RH* June 7, 1906

"**Let none cherish the idea that special providences or miraculous manifestations are to be the proof of the genuineness of their work or of the ideas they advocate.** If we keep these things before the people, they will produce an **evil effect**, an unhealthful emotion. The genuine working of the Holy Spirit on human hearts is promised, to give **efficiency through the Word**. . . . **the Bible will never be superseded by miraculous manifestations.** . . . We shall encounter **false claims; false prophets will arise**; there will be false dreams and false visions; but preach the Word, be not drawn away from the voice of God in His Word. Let nothing divert the mind. The wonderful, the marvelous, will be represented and presented. Through satanic delusions, wonderful miracles, the claims of human agents will be urged. Beware of all this. . . . We must not trust the **claims of men.** . . . **Nor can we trust impressions.** . . . **The man who makes the working of miracles the test of his faith will find that Satan can, through a species of deceptions, perform wonders that will appear to be genuine miracles.** . . . **If we accept not the truth in the love of it**, we may be among the number who will see the miracles wrought by Satan in these last days, and believe them." Manuscript 43, 1907; *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, pp. 48-53, 100; *MB* 146; *LDE* 167, 170; *Maranatha* 156; *7MR* 357

How do we test every statement and miracle? By what?

- The three threads of evidence—harmony with Scripture, God's design laws especially openness, love, truth, freedom, and experience
- If a miracle occurs and then coercive pressure is brought to bear, what conclusion do we draw?



- By their purpose—miracles that are done to prove a person's authority, for sensation, to quell questions are suspect
- Miracles done to get a person to take an action, without corroborating Scripture evidence in harmony with God's design laws are suspect

Does all of this mean there are no miracles?

Through the power of Christ, men and women have broken the chains of sinful habit. They have renounced selfishness. The profane have become reverent, the drunken sober, the profligate pure. **Souls that have borne the likeness of Satan have become transformed into the image of God. This change is in itself the miracle of miracles.** A change wrought by the Word, it is one of the deepest mysteries of the Word. We cannot understand it; we can only believe, as declared by the Scriptures, it is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). . . . {AG 107.2}

MONDAY

The lesson is about how Paul uses the metaphor of soldiers and athletes to communicate the experience of the Christian

What are the applicable points that we learn from Paul's metaphor of a race found in 1Cor 9:24-27:

²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶ Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. ²⁷ No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

What do we learn from this passage?

- They have a goal—do you have a goal in your Christian experience?
 - What is your goal?
 - What is your purpose in running the race?
- What is the prize the Christian pursues?
 - What does success look like in this race?
 - What does a victory lap look like?
 - "The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." Mt 23:11,12



- What is Paul talking about when he says running aimlessly, or a man beating the air?
 - Could this be speaking of forms of religious ritual with no power to change the life?
 - Following the law through Satan's view of imposed rules, thus worshipping a dictator?
 - Could it be religion without the knowledge of God's character and law of love?
- What is he referring to when he states he beats his body?
 - Is it some religious penance?
 - Or is it self discipline, saying no to the desires of the sinful nature?
 - "Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same intention (for whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin)" 1Pet 4:1
 - What does it mean to be done with sin? How is suffering in the flesh related? When we say no to the carnal nature it suffers, but we are not participating in sin any more!
 - 1Pet 4:1 from *The Remedy*: "Therefore model yourself after Christ, who, when tempted to save himself, chose instead to sacrifice himself thus suffering in his human nature. So, be like Jesus; love others first and say no to temptations to act selfishly. Your selfish nature will suffer but you will be done with sin."

Here is 1Cor 9:24-27 from *The Remedy*:

²⁴Don't you realize that in a race, even though all the athletes run, only one wins the race and gets the prize? Not so in God's kingdom—all who run may win the prize! So run the race in harmony with God's methods of love in order to receive the prize of reunion with God.²⁵Olympic athletes spend years in rigorous training. They work hard for a crown that will not last; but we do it to be crowned with the mind of Christ, which will last forever.²⁶Therefore I run hard, with the purpose to win. I don't shadowbox.²⁷No, I fight against self, surrendering my will to Christ, and establish reason in governance of my selfish desires, so that after having shared the Remedy with others, I will not be overcome by a resurgence of selfishness and lose the prized unity with God.

TUESDAY

Read top dark section, "Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law" (Rom 3:13 NIV).

Then the lesson asks what law the passage must be talking about?

Read first paragraph, "In English translations..." What do you think of the idea of the 10 Commandments being "in force"? What does this mean?



Which law lens are you looking through?

If looking through imposed law, then the 10 Commandments are in force because they were instituted by the heavenly government and no legal action has been done to rescind them, thus they remain “on the books” or in force and God continues to police and punish violations of this law.

If you look through the lens of Design law, what do you see?

Consider Newton’s first three laws of motion:

First Law: An object at rest remains at rest and an object in motion continues at a constant velocity unless acted upon by an external force.

Second Law: The sum of external forces F on an object is equal to the mass m of that object multiplied by the acceleration a of the object: $F=ma$.

Third Law: When one body exerts a force on a second body, the second body simultaneously exerts a force equal in magnitude and opposite in direction on the first body.

Questions about Newton’s laws:

- Are they real?
- Do they apply to our lives?
- Are they in force?
- Do they apply to everyone or only those who hear about them and choose to believe in them?
- When did they go into effect?
- Are they rules we must obey or descriptions of how reality is built to function?
- If Newton had not written them down, would that mean the laws would not exist and thus would not be in effect?
- If we decide, in committee, to change the wording of the first law to read that: “an object at rest remains at rest until it receives permission from the proper church committee to move,” what happens?
- In other words, can humans change these laws?
- Are these laws imposed law or design law?

Newton did not create or enact these laws; he merely *described* laws that were already in effect from the moment God created his universe.



The 10 Commandments are exactly like this. They *describe* but do not *create* God's law of love, just like Newton's laws *describe* but do not *create* the laws of motion. God's design law was already in effect *before* the 10 Commandments were written. But human beings, with minds darkened by sin, failed to comprehend God's design of love, so God provided a distilled version of his law specifically written for the needs of fallen human beings.

The problem is that almost the entire world has accepted the lie that God's law is merely a list of rules imposed, operationally no different than the laws created beings make; rather than realizing the 10 Commandments simply codified—put to words—the eternal law of love that all reality is built upon.

Then why were the 10 Commandments given? If they were not the enacting of the law, but merely the describing of the law in words so people could begin to understand reality, just like Newton's laws of physics, why were they given?

From *The Remedy* Romans 3:19-20:

¹⁹Now, we know that the Ten Commandments are like a medical diagnostic instrument identifying infection and exposing disease. It diagnoses accurately everyone who is infected with distrust of God, filled with selfishness and dying of sin, so that everyone who claims to be sin-free or free of selfishness will be silenced, and the entire world will recognize their need of God's healing solution.²⁰Therefore, no one will be recognized as having a healthy relationship with God and being like Christ in character by adhering to a set of rules; rather, it is through the Ten Commandments that we become aware of our sickly state of mind.

Read last paragraph, "With the moral law..." What lens do you think the lesson is looking through? The example of speed limits suggests imposed law.

How would you have described it?

WEDNESDAY

In the middle of the lesson it asks us to read 1Cor 15:12-22, in which Paul states that if Christ hasn't risen from the dead then there is no resurrection for us humans. But Christ has risen and therefore, in the future, when he returns the dead in Christ will rise again.

Then the lesson asks:



“Why is a proper understanding of death as a sleep crucial for making sense of these texts? That is, if the dead in Christ are already in heaven, what is Paul talking about here?”

So how do you understand the mortality or immortality of humanity?

Humans are tripartite, body, soul, spirit

- Body—soma—hardware
- Soul—psyche—software/individuality
- Spirit—pneuma—energy

To be operational must have all three, if your computer runs out of power it goes to sleep. How does the Bible describe those who die? As a sleep, but Jesus said those who believe in him will never die, what does this mean?

In response to the Sadducees, who just asked Jesus about the woman who married seven brothers after each died, he said: “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.”³⁰ At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.³¹ But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you,³² ‘I **am** [not I was] the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? **He is not the God of the dead but of the living.**” MT 22:29-32

Put this together with Jesus’ statement that those who believe in him will never die and we have Jesus saying that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still alive... how do we understand this?

This is where the SDA church has made an unfortunate error in communication, note, an error in communication, not doctrine. The SDA church describes death as a sleep—just as the Bible does, but communicates that the individuals sleep *in the grave*, I believe this is an error.

How can we describe it more accurately?

At death:

- The body returns to dust (Gen 3:19)
- The energy (spirit) returns to God (Ecc 12:7)
- The software/individuality (soul) safe and secure *in heaven* on God’s heavenly servers, the Lamb’s book of life (not in the grave)

Notice Paul’s description:



¹³ Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those **who fall asleep**, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. ¹⁴ We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that **God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.** ¹⁵ According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and **the dead in Christ will rise first.** ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage each other with these words. 1Thes 4:13-18

How are the righteous returning from heaven but also rising out of the earth? Their software/soul/individuality is returning with Christ, safely stored on the heavenly servers (Lamb's book of life) to be downloaded into new bodies, which are built out of dirt (coming out of the ground) and breath of life given, and they begin operating again.

Here is how one of the founders of the SDA church described it:

Our personal identity is preserved in the resurrection, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave. The wondrous works of God are a mystery to man. The spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved. In the resurrection every man will have his own character. God in His own time will call forth the dead, giving again the breath of life, and bidding the dry bones live. The same form will come forth, but it will be free from disease and every defect. It lives again bearing the same individuality of features, so that friend will recognize friend. There is no law of God in nature which shows that God gives back the same identical particles of matter which composed the body before death. God shall give the righteous dead a body that will please Him. {6BC 1093.2}

What are the problems if we conclude humans were given immortality in Eden?

- What does it say about God?
- Either no foreknowledge and also naive OR
- Malicious and sadistic, why?

Evidence from Scripture that immortality is not possessed by humans, but a gift of God to the righteous?



- After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. Gen 3:24
 - Why bar the way to the tree of life if they were already immortal?
 - How is barring the way to the tree of life an act of mercy, not a punishment for sin?
- God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, 1Tim 6:15,16
- John 3:16
- For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 6:23
- The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Gal 6:8

What are potential institutional abuses that can occur when you merge the lie that God's law is imposed with immortality of the soul?

- Church having the authority to send souls to heaven, hell, or purgatory
- People on earth can then pay money, do acts for the church, like go to war, donate land, do great works of art in order to send a soul of a loved one from hell to heaven
- Johann Tetzel—Grand Inquisitor of the Roman Church, was known for his prolific sales of indulgences. He went around sermonizing on the terrible agony and suffering of the wicked in the torments of hell, and then offered a way for his listeners to relieve the suffering of their deceased loved one: "Whenever a coin in the coffer rings, a soul from hell springs."

This was one of the points Martin Luther, the great Reformer, rejected as he rejected the doctrine the immortality of the soul:

- Luther rejected the idea of torments for the saints: "It is enough for us to know that souls do not leave their bodies to be threatened by the torments and punishments of hell, but enter a prepared bedchamber in which they sleep in peace." Weimarer Ausgabe 43, 360, 21–23 (to Genesis 25,7–10): also Exegetica opera latina Vol 5–6 1833 p. 120 and the English translation: *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols. (St. Louis: CPH), 4:313; "Sufficit igitur nobis haec cognitio, non egredi animas ex corporibus in periculum cruciatum et paenarum inferni, sed esse eis paratum cubiculum, in quo dormiant in pace."
- Luther also rejected the existence of Purgatory, which involved Christian souls undergoing penitential suffering after death. ["Smalcald Articles, Part II, Article II, paragraph 12"](#). Bookofconcord.org. Retrieved 15 August 2012.
- Luther affirmed the continuity of one's personal identity beyond death. In his Smalcald Articles, he described the saints as currently residing "in their graves and in heaven."



["Smalcald Articles, Part II, Article II, paragraph 28"](#). Bookofconcord.org. Retrieved 15 August 2012.

Luther presented it like Paul in Thessalonians and like EGW in the quote above.

FRIDAY

Read question 1 "Paul avoided..." What does it mean to water down the message? Or said another way, what is the central message that must be included?

Would we water down the message if we told people the truth about God's character of love, His methods, Design, the Great Controversy over His character, our condition being deviant from His design, our need for healing, thus repentance toward God and opening the heart, inviting Him in and how God's methods apply to our lives here and now—but don't share:

- The Beasts of Daniel and Revelation
- The State of the Dead
- The Sabbath
- The Mark of the Beast
- The Heavenly Sanctuary

Can and will people be saved who have the wrong understanding of these five areas? Will any be saved to don't love and trust God?

With that being said read question 2, "Why is the state of the dead such an important teaching?"

Is it? Yes, but is being important the same as being required for salvation? It is important because of the implications it says about God, and secondarily for the potential avenues of exploitation and deceit it can set up.

Read question 3 "Dwell more on..."

- **Proverbs 14:15.**
 - "A fool will believe anything; smart people watch their step." (*GNB*)
 - "A simple man believes every word he hears; a clever man understands the need for proof." (*NEB*)
- **1 John 4:1,2.**
 - "My dear friends, do not believe all who claim to have the Spirit, but test them to find out if the spirit they have comes from God. For many false prophets have gone out everywhere." (*GNB*)



Here are some quotes from one of the founders of the SDA church:

"God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His Word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth, will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith." *Steps to Christ* 105 (1892); *9MR* 202; compare *Education* 169

"Faith in a lie will not have a sanctifying influence upon the life or character. No error is truth, or can be made truth by repetition, or by faith in it. Sincerity will never save a soul from the consequences of believing an error. Without sincerity there is no true religion, but sincerity in a false religion will never save a man. I may be perfectly sincere in following a wrong road, but that will not make it the right road, or bring me to the place I wished to reach. The Lord does not want us to have a blind credulity, and call that the faith that sanctifies. The truth is the principle that sanctifies, and therefore it becomes us to know what is truth. We must compare spiritual things with spiritual. We must prove all things, but hold fast only that which is good, that which bears the divine credentials, which lays before us the true motives and principles which should prompt us to action." Letter 12, 1890; *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 56

"I have been shown that many who profess to have a knowledge of present truth know not what they believe. They do not understand the evidences of their faith. . . . When the time of trial shall come, there are men now preaching to others who will find, upon examining the positions they hold, that there are many things for which they can give no satisfactory reason. Until thus tested they knew not their great ignorance. And there are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe; but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness. When separated from those of like faith, and compelled to stand singly and alone to explain their belief, they will be surprised to see how confused are their ideas of what they had accepted as truth. . . .

"Believers are not to rest in suppositions and ill-defined ideas of what constitutes truth. Their faith must be firmly founded upon the word of God so that when the testing time shall come and they are brought before councils to answer for their faith they may be able to give a reason for the hope that is in them. . .



"It is important that in defending the doctrines which we consider fundamental articles of faith we should never allow ourselves to employ arguments that are not wholly sound. These may avail to silence an opposer but they do not honor the truth. We should present sound arguments, that will not only silence our opponents, but will bear the closest and most searching scrutiny." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 707,708 (1889); *GW* 297-300; *CWE* 39,40; *Maranatha* 45; *LDE* 70

"Those who cannot impartially examine the evidences of a position that differs from theirs, are not fit to teach in any department of God's cause." *Review and Herald*, February 18, 1890 (2RH 368:1:3); *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* 534; *ISM* 411

THURSDAY

Explores the breakdown in working relationship between Paul and Mark, when Mark became discouraged and wavered. But Barnabas believed Mark was still a member of God's team and supported Mark's inclusion in the gospel ministry.

What lesson's do we learn from this?

Who was more inspired, Paul or Barnabas?

What is the lesson?

How do we treat people who waver?

Read bottom green section, "We all make..." thoughts?

Is there a difference between forgiving someone and trusting them? What is the difference?

Is there a difference between making mistakes and choosing evil? What is the difference?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase**– ALL GLITCHES NOW FIXED in the IOS Version! So please UPDATE to latest version.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes.

September 9,10: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Baptist Boomer’s Conference in San Antonio, TX.

September 12: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr., CA SDA church.

September 23-26: American Association of Christian Counselors World Convention at Gaylord Opryland Hotel, Nashville TN. Come and Reason will have a booth in the exhibit hall, and Dr. Jennings will be doing a preconference workshop and regular conference presentation, as well as commencement speaker for Light University graduation.

October 24: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Puyallup, WA:

- Friday, October 23rd at the North Hill SDA Fellowship Church at 7:00PM. Located at: 10106 36th St. E., Edgewood, WA.
- Saturday, October 24th at the Washington State Fairgrounds in Puyallup in the Expo Hall. (10:00AM - 4:00 PM)
- For more information email, Godandyourbrain@icloud.com.
- There is also a God and Your Brain Events page on Facebook.

January 9, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, California.



2015 Q3 Biblical Missionaries Lesson 13

Must the Whole World Hear?

This lesson, perhaps more than any other I have taught, seems to walk the tightrope/balance between the natural and imposed law constructs, probably without meaning to...because when they come to a conclusion that can't quite be explained by imposed law or penal substitution, they literally turn to the "God's ways are higher than our ways and whatever He decides, it will be just and fair and every knee will bow." But, invariably, the default position seems to return to support the penal substitution and imposed law model. Did anyone study this week's lesson and find this to be true? See if you can pick up on some of these dichotomies.

So, what comes to your mind first when you hear that question? Hear **what**? If the answer is "the gospel"...does it matter what gospel the whole world hears?

Let's take a look at the memory text in Sabbath's lesson...it is taken from Romans 16:25-27,

"Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen."

The 1st paragraph in Sabbath's lesson asks two critically important questions. Would someone please read that 1st paragraph loudly for us?

As we have seen, the Lord uses people to bring the message of the gospel to others. However, throughout the ages, millions have died without knowing the biblical plan of salvation. The fact is that a majority of those who have ever lived have not heard the story of redemption or known about the good news of God's grace as revealed in Jesus Christ. This leads to two persistent questions. First, on the day of judgment, how is God going to deal with these billions who have not known Him? Second, is there salvation outside of someone's knowing the plan of salvation as it is in Jesus?

What do you think? On the day of judgment, how is God going to deal with these billions of folks who do not know Him?

Is there salvation outside of someone's knowing the plan of salvation as it is in Jesus?
Naman/Nebucadnezer/Enoch/entire OT/folks in Romans 2:14-16



“When outsiders who have never heard of God’s law follow it more or less by instinct, they confirm its truth by their obedience. They show that God’s law is not something alien, imposed on us from without, but woven into the very fabric of our creation. There is something deep within them that echoes God’s yes and no, right and wrong. Their response to God’s yes and no will become public knowledge on the day God makes his final decision about every man and woman. The Message from God that I proclaim through Jesus Christ takes into account all these differences.”

The last paragraph in the lesson starts out really well...and then basically asks us to suspend our reason and judgment, as the penal substitution model falls short of being able to explain this concept. “In the end, the crucial point to remember is that Jesus has revealed to us the character of God, and this tells us a lot about His love for all humanity and His desire for as many as possible to be saved.” I would submit that what Jesus revealed to us about the character of God...doesn’t just tell us a lot, it tells us **everything** about his love for all humanity. “God is a God of justice, and *however He works it out*, the shout will be heard across heaven: “ ‘Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!’ ” (Rev. 15:3, NKJV). However He works it out? Will He really be “working anything out at that point? Or will He simply be accurately diagnosing reality, and giving up/letting go of those folks who refused to love the truth and thus be healed? (2 Thes 2:10).

SUNDAY

No Other Name Under Heaven

The lesson states that some folks, called “Exclusivists”, believe that only those who hear and respond positively to “the Christian gospel” can be saved. What “Christian gospel” do you believe the quarterly is referencing here?

The lesson then says that some Christians take it a step further and claim there is no salvation outside their particular denomination and doctrines, even for other professed Christians, and it mentions the Pope’s declaration in 1302 “that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff.” But, are Protestants immune to this concept? Acts 4:12 is referenced and we are asked what this text is saying and what we think it means. Would someone read Acts 4:12 loudly for the class?

NIV: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ¹¹Jesus is “the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.” (PS 118:22) Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.



MSG: By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the One you killed on a cross, the One God raised from the dead, by means of his name this man stands before you healthy and whole. Jesus is ‘the stone you masons threw out, which is now the cornerstone.’ Salvation comes no other way; no other name has been or will be given to us by which we can be saved, only this one.

The quarterly cautions against reading more into these texts than is actually written, but what does it mean...and how then can we explain texts like Zechariah 13:6 and Romans 2? What if I said, “Salvation from polio comes by no other name but Jonas Salk”? Why is that? Because he is the one who procured the remedy! Is it necessary for me to know Jonas Salk or have met him or have even heard of him...in order to benefit from what he achieved? Our salvation comes by no other name...because He is the one who achieved the remedy – the cure for our terminal condition...and He is the only one who could. He is “the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6).

Did anyone read the analogy the lesson provided at the bottom of Sunday’s lesson? Someone please read the 4th and 5th paragraphs, start with the one beginning with “Imagine a man...” Any thoughts? Is this an accurate analogy?

Sunday’s lesson ends with a beautiful quote from the Desire of Ages that makes reference to the folks in Romans 2 we just discussed, but I am including a couple more paragraphs than what is in the quarterly:

“Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God,” p. 638.

Do these sound like unconscious victims of smoke inhalation? Or like folks who discern God’s character in the things He has made, and have cooperated with the promptings of the Holy Spirit to have their fearful and selfish characters transformed – as is evidenced in their “works”? I believe this is a more accurate description of how salvation can happen – for all of us. Many in non-heathen



“religious” or even Christian circles...are still ignorant and would do well to adopt this basic approach of worshipping the creator designer, and hearing “His voice speaking to them in nature.”

MONDAY

How Much Must One Know?

Interesting couple of paragraphs in Monday’s lesson. “Although the work of Christ provides the only means of salvation, some believe that explicit knowledge of Chris is not necessary in order for one to be saved. This does not imply that salvation is available apart from Christ but that God is able and willing to apply the merits of Christ’s work to whomever He wishes.” Is that true?! While this is the traditional way we have heard this taught, what does it mean? What are the merits of Christ’s work? It seems important that those be clearly defined:

- Living revelation of God’s character in order to win us back to trust and show us what the Law of Love looks like
- Defeated the infection of fear and selfishness in his humanity, thereby procuring a remedy for our terminal condition and offering an alternate outcome/trajectory
- Promised to reproduce everything Christ achieved via the power of the Holy Spirit...not in “whomever He wishes”, but in anyone who trusts and chooses and *cooperates* with that character-transforming power

“God ‘will repay each person according to what they have done.’ To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life” Romans 2:6-7.

What do these concepts mean? Is God going to make sure everyone gets every bad thing done to them that they have done to others? What about those being “given” eternal life...is this an arbitrary declaration?

Also in the Desire of Ages on page 239,

“Our standing before God depends, not upon the amount of light we have received, but upon the use we make of what we have. Thus even the heathen who choose the right as far as they can distinguish it are in a more favorable condition than are those who have had great light, and profess to serve God, but who disregard the light, and by their daily life contradict their profession.” Churches are full of folks who have heard hundreds of sermons, who hear Scripture read publicly each week, but whose hearts and minds and lives and actions remain unchanged – perhaps because of what is being preached and what kind of God is being portrayed? Having a form of godliness but denying the power?



TUESDAY

Universalism and Pluralism

“Universalists” believe that in the end God is going to save all human beings, regardless of what they believed or even how they lived – because we are so closely related to God, we will all be saved no matter what. The quarterly also points out how one false doctrine of eternal torment leads to another false doctrine of universalism, because if “God so loved the world”, then how can anyone be lost, especially if being lost means eternal torment in hell? How could God burn someone He loves forever?! Obviously, because He loves them, he will only burn them for as long as they deserve. I kid. How does natural law explain why **not** saving the lost **is** the only and most loving thing God can do?

Related to universalism is “pluralism,” which is the belief that all religions are equally valid and lead equally to God and to salvation. So, no religion is inherently better than, or superior to, any other religion. For pluralists, the vast range of religious rituals and beliefs, symbols, and metaphors, are mere surface differences concealing a similar core of all religions. According to them, all faiths, at the core, teach basically the same thing – love for God/higher power, love for fellow human beings/golden rule, and hope for a blessed future life – so it would be very chauvinistic and arrogant to try to push Christian beliefs upon those who are members of non-Christian faiths.

What do you think about this philosophy that all religions teach basically the same concepts and are therefore all equally valid? If only we knew someone who could speak to this subject...if only we had a reference or a resource to go to that could tell us if **what** we believe really matters...oh wait. We do!

“You have power over what you believe, but what you believe has power over you!”

We have illustrated many times in this class how believing a lie literally changes us – neurologically, physiologically. Some of you may remember a story Dr. Jennings has told about attending a conference several years back at Harvard University called Spirituality in Medicine, where representatives of all religious backgrounds were allowed to speak on their spirituality and how it impacted their parishioners. At this conference a woman got up and extolled the virtues of her Wiccan faith – the pagan religion of white witchcraft – and apparently all 1,300+ folks in attendance broke out into massive applause of her and her Wiccan ways. Tim spoke at some point after her, and when he got to the podium he said something like, “While we absolutely want to support the freedom for anyone to believe as their conscience leads them to believe, but we should not confuse people’s freedom to believe whatever they want to believe...with the idea that all beliefs are equally healthy...they’re not!” An earnest belief that smoking helps you breathe easier...does not make it true.



Earnestness and sincerity do not make a misguided belief any more right or healthy. So believing in false God concepts, regardless of which specific denomination is responsible, is damaging, promotes fear, and destroys love. Belief in a loving, beneficent God is the only one shown to be healing and restorative to our minds and bodies. You can find a bunch more on this topic in both of Dr. Jennings' books, as well as in the "Healing the Mind" and "God and Your Brain" DVDs.

One other Desire of Ages quote that supports this concept:

"In all ages, philosophers and teachers have been presenting to the world theories by which to satisfy the soul's need. Every heathen nation has had its great teachers and religious systems offering some other means of redemption than Christ, turning the eyes of men away from the Father's face, and filling their hearts with fear of Him who has given them only blessing. The trend of their work is to rob God of that which is His own, both by creation and by redemption. And these false teachers rob man as well. Millions of human beings are bound down under false religions, in the bondage of slavish fear, of stolid indifference, toiling like beasts of burden, bereft of hope or joy or aspiration here, and with only a dull fear of the hereafter. It is the gospel of the grace of God alone that can uplift the soul. The contemplation of the love of God manifested in His Son will stir the heart and arouse the powers of the soul as nothing else can. Christ came that He might re-create the image of God in man; and whoever turns men away from Christ is turning them away from the source of true development; he is defrauding them of the hope and purpose and glory of life. He is a thief and a robber," p. 239.

WEDNESDAY

Sinners in Need of Grace

This lesson begins by quoting John 3:17, which is part of a very familiar passage I will read in context:

"In the same way that Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert so people could have something to see and then believe, it is necessary for the Son of Man to be lifted up—and everyone who looks up to him, trusting and expectant, will gain a real life, eternal life.

This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son.

And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life.

God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again (according to his original design). Anyone who trusts in him is acquitted; anyone who refuses to trust him has



long since been under the death sentence without even knowing it. And why? Because of that person's failure to believe in the one-of-a-kind Son of God when introduced to him. This is the crisis we're in: God-light streamed into the world, but men and women everywhere ran for the darkness. They went for the darkness because they were not really interested in pleasing God. Everyone who makes a practice of doing evil, addicted to denial and illusion, hates God-light and won't come near it, fearing a painful exposure. But anyone working and living in truth and reality welcomes God-light so the work can be seen for the God-work that it is."

What a loaded passage! Let's work through it...why didn't God send His Son into the world to condemn it?

- Being out of harmony with natural laws does not require external policing, condemnation, or punishment
- Our condition is not our fault – HIV-infected mom and dad have an HIV-infected baby...what did the baby do? Is the baby still terminal?
- Love, mercy, desire to be in relationship with us, heal us, set everything "right"

Why is anyone who trusts in Him acquitted...and why is anyone who refuses to trust Him already under the death sentence (or condemned) without even knowing it?

Why is anyone with pneumonia who refuses treatment and antibiotics already condemned without even knowing it? We are all born in sin, conceived in inequity...we are all born terminal. Anyone who refuses to trust God and take the healing remedy remains condemned – not by God, but by their original terminal condition.

The last part of this text really struck me, "Everyone who makes a practice of doing evil, addicted to denial and illusion, hates God-light and won't come near it, fearing a painful exposure. But anyone working and living in truth and reality welcomes God-light so the work can be seen for the God-work that it is." It says anyone working and living in truth and reality welcomes God-light...it does *not* say anyone who behaves perfectly or never makes a mistake or who never, like Paul, does the very thing they don't want to do and acts out of fear and selfishness. So while their performance is not perfect, they have moved from darkness to light, they have "crossed over" from death to life (John 5:24), and their *characters* are being perfected by first trusting in God and then by working and living in truth and reality – natural laws, foundational design protocols are the basis for how reality even works!

There is a sobering quote at the bottom of Wednesday's lesson from *the Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9:



“The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God’s plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to *show forth His glory*. (What is His glory?) The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to ‘the principalities and powers in heavenly places,’ the final and full display of...what? God’s might and power? God’s judgment? God’s destruction of the wicked? No...the final and full display of the love of God.”

What “church” do you believe Ms. White is talking about here? Is she pointing to a specific denomination? And what an incredible responsibility...and opportunity. What kind of job are we doing at showing forth his glory/His character...and making manifest to the universe the final and full display of God’s love?

THURSDAY

The Mission Call

I looked up the 1 Corinthians text referenced in Thursday’s lesson, and the subtitle read “Paul’s Use of his Freedom”, which I thought was neat. 1 Cor 9:19-23 in MSG reads:

“¹⁹ Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. ²⁰ To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. ²¹ To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. ²² To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³ I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.”

Wow. What an amazing way to use his freedom! What sort of reaction might he receive from a church board today for employing these methods? Would they be heartily endorsed and supported?

The first paragraph reads, “The Lord of missions, in His wisdom, chose to work through humans to bring the message of forgiveness and salvation to the world. God chose men and women, despite their weaknesses (or *because* of them), to work together with the Holy Spirit and the angels. Why?

The lesson then goes on to highlight the progression from Israel being a steady light to other nations in OT times, to the salt methodology of the NT where His followers were commissioned to “go into all



the world and make disciples”. How extensive was “the whole world” for the first Christians? Within a few years of the crucifixion, they had reached modern-day Cyprus, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Macedonia, Greece, and Italy. There is evidence that they propagated the gospel as far as southern Russia (ancient Scythia) in the north, Ethiopia in the south, India in the east, and Spain in the west...which is mind-boggling to me. If the first church was so keenly aware of the worldwide extent of its mission back then, how much more so should we be today?

Doesn't “the whole world” sometimes sound rather daunting and overwhelmingly big? One of the founders of our church has this to say about your “mission field”:

“Do not pass by the little things, and look for a large work. You might do successfully the small work, but fail utterly in attempting a large work, and fall into discouragement. Take hold wherever you see that there is work to be done. Whether you are rich or poor, great or humble, God calls you into active service for Him. It will be by doing with your might what your hands find to do that you will develop talent and aptitude for the work. And it is by neglecting your daily opportunities that you become fruitless and withered. This is why there are so many fruitless trees in the garden of the Lord. The Lord desires us to use every gift we have; and if we do this, we shall have greater gifts to use. He does not supernaturally endow us with the qualifications we lack; but while we use that which we have, He will work with us to increase and strengthen every faculty. By every wholehearted, earnest sacrifice for the Master's service, our powers will increase. We need not go to heathen lands, or even leave the narrow circle of the home, if it is there that our duty lies, in order to work for Christ. We can do this in the home circle, in the church, among those with whom we associate, and with whom we do business.” Christian Service 103

The quarterly asks this rather thought-provoking discussion question:

“If people can be saved without ever having heard the gospel, what's the point of risking life and limb in order to spread it to them?”

Is the command to “go” for the benefit of those going...or for those being reached? What impact or difference does it make in your life when you witness or share your faith? Can you truly be Christ-like...and not share your faith? What about the practical impact that can be made on a person's life who hears the truth about God's character of love, perhaps for the first time?

It also goes through some common human shortcomings and obstacles that have obscured some of our mission success stories, including:

- Poor planning for outreach, inadequate understanding of the task;



- Narrow focus on mission only as education, health care, disaster relief, and development, which overshadow preaching the gospel...can't all those things be considered preaching the gospel? In fact, can narrowly focus on those things with a servant mindset...without preaching the gospel?
- Underfunding and understaffing by the sending organizations;
- Missionaries unsuited to the task;
- Nations that forbid the preaching of the gospel.



Jeremiah 4Q 2015 Lesson 1

The Prophetic Calling of Jeremiah

SABBATH

Second paragraph states, "Despite decades of fervent warning and pleadings, the people for the most part didn't listen to the messages he gave them from the Lord."

Why do you think they didn't listen?

- Do you think they thought, "We know we are wrong, we know we are fighting against the Lord, but we don't care"?
- Do you think they didn't believe Jeremiah?
- Why might they not have believed him?
- Did they have some prophecies or other Scripture they pointed to that caused them to reject Jeremiah?
- And did their misunderstanding of Scripture eventually cause them to reject Jesus?
- I was reading in the book *The Desire of Ages* this a.m. and came across this quotation. The context is Jesus was eating at the feast with tax collectors after calling Matthew and the Pharisees were criticizing Him to His disciples for not fasting and not following their traditions:

Jesus pointed out **the power of false teaching to destroy the appreciation and desire for truth.** "No man," He said, "having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better." All the truth that has been given to the world through patriarchs and prophets shone out in new beauty in the words of Christ. But the scribes and Pharisees **had no desire for the precious new wine. Until emptied of the old traditions, customs, and practices, they had no place in mind or heart for the teachings of Christ.** They clung to the dead forms, and turned away from the living truth and the power of God. DA 279

It was this that proved the ruin of the Jews, and it will prove the ruin of many souls in our own day. Thousands are making the same mistake as did the Pharisees whom Christ reproved at Matthew's feast. **Rather than give up some cherished idea, or discard some idol of opinion, many refuse the truth which comes down from the Father of light.** They trust in self, and depend upon their own wisdom, and do not realize their spiritual poverty. They insist on being saved in some way by which they may perform some important work. When they see that there is no way of weaving self into the work, they reject the salvation provided. **A legal religion can never lead souls to Christ; for it is a loveless, Christless religion.** DA 280



- What was it about how the Jews at the time of Jeremiah used Scripture that prevented them from accepting Christ and hearing God's message?
 - Holding to previous interpretations and traditions and refusing new truth and light
 - What aided in the ability to resist the light?
 - Failure to interpret symbols, metaphors, object lessons, types into reality
 - Refusing to incorporate the interpretations of Scripture with nature and experience (The Integrative Evidenced-Based Approach), which is what Jesus did
 - Failure to grow past levels 1-4 in moral decision making, which resulted in seeing God as arbitrary and God's law as imposed
 - These combined errors led to believing law keeping, rule keeping of some sort, behavior, carrying out rituals, observing Sabbath and feast days, doing sacrifices (some legal religion) made them "safe."
 - Thus they had religion, claimed to be God's people, but were actually, according to Jesus, of their father the devil

Are we doing better today?

- Could Christianity be caught into a similar situation today, claiming a belief in Scripture but denying the truth about God?
 - Jesus said: "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" Mt 7:22,23
 - But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. 2Tim 3:1-5
- Could the SDA church be vulnerable to this same problem, believing we are secure because we have certain Bible interpretations we cling to, but in reality we are stuck in metaphor and have failed to grasp the reality to which the metaphor points, and have also accepted an imposed law construct while refusing the integrative evidenced based approach? And with these errors could the SDA church be trapped into a false security believing we are special because of law keeping, observing a certain religious day?

What is the message of God for this time in human history?



“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth... The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.” Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

Why is this the last message to be given? How is this message connected to Bible prophecy, such as Daniel 8:14 and the 3 angels messages of Revelation 14 and the message of Revelation 18? And how has the message been corrupted by a false law construct and remaining stuck on metaphor?

One of the founders of the SDA church wrote the following:

The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by Malachi, are descriptions of the same event; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25. {FLB 207.4}

What are these prophecies about? How are they taught? What law lens do you understand them through?

If we look through imposed law:

- God has a law that has been broken, the broken law requires just punishments
- God sent Jesus to take our punishment and God put all our sins on Jesus and punished Him in our place paying the proper legal price for the sins of humanity
- God, in order to be just and only give the proper amount of inflicted punishment to the unrepentant, keeps records of all our sins
- Those records are recorded in the heavenly sanctuary
- At the end of the 2300 year prophecy, the sanctuary is to be cleansed, thus the records are opened and a heavenly tribunal takes place in which sins are examined and those legally pardoned, because the sinner claimed the legal payment of the blood of Jesus, are removed from the record book. But any sin not legally pardoned (not repented of) is retained on the books and God will inflict the appropriate amount of punishment on judgment day.
- Jesus is right now in the Most Holy Place in a building in heaven, leading out in this examination, and whenever we pray for forgiveness, He pleads His blood to the Father and



reminds the Father of His merits and the Father grants pardon and the sins are removed that that person's ledger and placed upon the shoulders of our sin bearing High Priest Jesus, who carries our sins out of the sanctuary in heaven and will one day place them on the head of Satan and punish Satan for our sins

- Further, when Jesus entered the Most Holy Place, the ark of the covenant was kept there, and in that ark is kept the 10 Commandment law, and on those tables of stone is written the Sabbath Commandment. So, those who follow their High Priest into the Most Holy Place by faith recognize the continued obligation of the Sabbath Commandment and observe the seventh day of the week. These people are God's end time remnant people, because they observe the right day of the week and trust Jesus to legally pardon their sins and remove them from the records in heaven.
- This people then is to give a message to the world, that all too often comes across like this: "Be afraid of God and worship Him as Creator by observing the seventh day Sabbath, because we are now in the antitypical day of atonement in which God is judging sinners and if you don't worship on the right day your sins will not be removed out of the record books and you will receive the mark of the beast."

This state of being is the exact state of being that Jesus faced 2000 years ago when He faced a religious community, who kept the Sabbath, observed the sanctuary law in dealing with their sins and thus felt secure in the fulfillment of their legal obligations—yet rejected Jesus and crucified the Savior of the world.

How do we see these issues if we view them through Design Law?

- God has a law, which is the protocol of love upon which life is constructed to operate. Mankind is deviant from this law and in a terminal condition. This condition requires God (the Designer) to heal and restore lest death ensue.
- God sent Jesus to take our terminal condition upon Himself and cure the condition, forge a new humanity thus achieving remedy for us
 - For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Eph 2:14-18
 - Here is this same passage from *The Remedy*: "For Christ himself is the Remedy that heals the species and brings peace. He has removed fear and selfishness that cause



division, mistrust, prejudice and hostility.¹⁵ He did this by partaking of our human condition, and—via the exercise of his human brain—he loved perfectly, thereby destroying in his flesh (in the humanity he partook) the selfish survival-of-the-fittest drive along with the lies of Satan. In this way, he destroyed the need for the law (with all its regulations) to expose Satan’s lies and methods. His purpose was to be the template of a new humanity born out of the unification of the two—our selfish, infected condition merged with his sinless state—thereby purging selfishness from the human heart, and transforming, healing, renewing, regenerating and recreating humanity back to God’s original ideal.¹⁶ And in this new being, to reconcile the human race—regardless of ethnic background—into loving unity with God and each other through the revelation of truth at the cross, by which he destroyed the lies of Satan, reestablished trust, and removed fear, selfishness and hostility.¹⁷ He came and demonstrated the truth of God’s true character and the offer of peace available to all humanity—to those far away in darkness and those blessed with the truth of God’s word.¹⁸ For Jesus reveals the truth about God to all, and—through what Jesus has done—all have access to the Father by one Spirit.”

- God, in order to refute the lies of Satan and reveal His true character has kept records, but not to judge us by, but to demonstrate that all those who are lost are lost because they have refused God’s remedy.
- There is also another set of records in which our sins are recorded, but these records are not judicial records; they are the actual individualities of each person whose characters are perfectly recorded in heaven. In other words, every unrepented sin is recorded in the character of the unrepentant. This is why Jesus says, “Let him who is righteous be righteous still...” Here is a quote from one of the founders of the SDA church, because this is what was supposed to be understood in teaching the sanctuary message:
 - Remember, your **character is being daguerretyped [photographed] by the great Master Artist in the record books of heaven**, as minutely as the face is reproduced upon the polished plate of the artist. What do the books of heaven say in your case? Are you conforming your character to the Pattern, Jesus Christ? Are you washing your robes of character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb? "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" [Revelation 22:12]. . . . {Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce 62.1}
 - Every passing hour of the present is shaping our future life. These moments spent in carelessness, in self-pleasing, as if of no value, are deciding our everlasting destinies. The words we utter today will go on echoing when time shall be no more. **The deeds done today are transferred to the books of heaven, just as the features are**



transferred by the artist onto the polished plate. They will determine our destiny for eternity, for bliss or eternal loss and agonizing remorse. Character cannot be changed when Christ comes... {Testimony to Ministers 429.3}

- You must remain pure and true and firm, **remembering your character is being imprinted upon the books of heaven.** {Our High Calling 317.4}
- Those records (of a person's character) are recorded in the heavenly sanctuary—because the heavenly sanctuary is constructed out of living stones, the actual people who make up the temple where God lives by His Spirit.
- At the end of the 2300 year prophecy, the sanctuary is to be cleansed, and this cleansing is the cleansing of the hearts, minds, characters of His people:
 - “See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. **Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple;** the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty. ² But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; **he will purify the Levites** and refine them like gold and silver. Mal 3:1-3
 - “In the building of the sanctuary as a dwelling place for God, Moses was directed to make all things according to the pattern of things in the heavens. God called him into the mount, and revealed to him the heavenly things, and in their similitude the tabernacle, with all that pertained to it, was fashioned.

“So to **Israel**, whom He desired to **make His dwelling place**, He revealed His glorious ideal of **character**. The pattern was shown them in the mount when the law was given from Sinai and when God passed by before Moses and proclaimed, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." Exodus 34:6. ..

“Through Christ was to be fulfilled the **purpose** of which the **tabernacle was a symbol**--that glorious building, its walls of glistening gold reflecting in rainbow hues the curtains inwrought with cherubim, the fragrance of ever-burning incense pervading all, the priests robed in spotless white, and in the deep mystery of the inner place, above the mercy seat, between the figures of the bowed, worshiping angels, the glory of the Holiest. **In all, God desired His people to read His purpose for the human soul.** It was the same purpose long afterward set forth by the apostle Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit:

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17. (Education 34-36)



- “In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. **That temple**, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, **was designed to be an object lesson** for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was God's purpose that *every created being*, from the bright and holy seraph to **man**, **should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator**. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and **through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple**. God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every soul. But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. **In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,--from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul**. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." Mal. 3:1-3. (DA 161).
- Jesus is right now in the Most Holy Place in heaven, leading all the agencies at His disposal in the work of cleansing the minds, hearts, and characters of His people from the lies about God, the removal of selfishness, and the restoration of righteousness. They are the building blocks of His heavenly sanctuary.
 - “**The cases of all are pending in the heavenly sanctuary**. Day by day angels of God are watching the *development of character*... All defects must be remedied. **The character must be assimilated to the character of Christ**... At an infinite cost a fountain has been prepared for *our cleansing*. **In the blood of the Son of God we may wash our garments of character, and make them white**.” (ST, April 17, 1901).
 - What is the reality these symbols point toward?
 - Blood of Jesus = Character of Jesus
 - Garments = Our character
 - Washing in the blood of Jesus = Remove selfishness and assimilate the selfless character of Jesus
- "Fear God and give him **glory**, because the hour of **his** judgment has come.” (Rev. 14:7).



- What is God's glory? His character, and how do we give Him glory? By allowing Him to heal us so we reveal His character at the time of *His* judgment! **“Through trial and persecution the *glory*--the *character*--of God is revealed in His chosen ones.”** (AA 576).
- And this people who are being cleansed from lies about God—realize His true character of love, and His design for His universe, the law of love, of which the Sabbath is a sign, begin living lives that reveal the truth about God in their characters while leaving everyone free. The methods of presenting truth, in love while leaving others free is symbolized by the Sabbath, the day in which God rested from presenting the evidence of His character. The Sabbath is the evidence of Design law—created at the end of Creation week, built as a day of reflection and consideration and worship of God.

Which message are we presenting to the world? Are we today listening to God's prophets? Or are we like Israel, stuck in misunderstanding of metaphor and blinded with a penal/legal theology because of accepting the imposed law construct?

We cannot do our mission as an end time people until we come back to the truth about God—His character and law of love!

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “The prophets...” What do you hear the authors emphasizing? The need for people to realize their sin—no doubt, but do you hear them suggesting this is a condition of heart and mind that needs healing, or a legal problem that needs a legal solution?

Read second paragraph, “God's judgment was not...” How do you understand “God's judgment” referred to here? In other words, how do you understand God's actions in Old Testament times?

Do you see it as God evaluating the behavior of Israel, keeping track of the number of sinful acts, and when the bad deeds reached a certain intensity, without proper elimination through the sanctuary service, then God was required by justice, to pronounce them guilty of treason against the divine government and impose just punishments? Such descriptions are level 1-4 thinking and are based on Satan's view of God's law.

Understanding God as Creator and Builder of reality, we understand that:



- God was diagnosing the situation and intervening with loving education (His prophets telling them of the tragic results of continuing out of harmony with God's design) and when they refused to following God's treatment plan God either:
 - set them free to their own choices OR
 - Intervened with therapeutic actions intended to heal and restore all who would allow it, including at times excising malignant and necrotic lesions
- That those who refuse treatment, are eventually given up to their own choices and reap the results... slavery in Babylon etc.

Read fourth paragraph, "This task involved..." What motivation do you hear being cited here? This is level one thinking, reward and punishment—better do what God says because He can inflict more severe judgments than human beings—and provide better rewards.

Bottom pink read, "What are the prophets..." Consider these messages from Micah, Isaiah and Amos, three of God's spokespersons—what are they saying God wants?

With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

⁸ He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Mic 6:6-8

Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah!

¹¹ "The multitude of your sacrifices— what are they to me?" says the Lord.

"I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.

¹² When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts?

¹³ Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me.

New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations— I cannot bear your evil assemblies.

¹⁴ Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.

¹⁵ When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen.



Your hands are full of blood; ¹⁶ wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong,

¹⁷ learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

¹⁸ “Come now, let us reason together,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

ISA 1:10-18

“I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies.

²² Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them.

²³ Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps.

²⁴ But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!

AM 5:21-24

What is the message? The Lord does not want a legal religion; He doesn't want formalism, ritual; He wants healing of the inner man, a restoration of true righteousness, which is the law of love being written on the heart and mind. (Heb 8:10)

MONDAY

Last paragraph states the priests were to be moral and spiritual leaders... What is the lesson we are to learn from them?

In the Old Testament drama—the sanctuary stage play—who do the priests represent?

- The priesthood of believers; if you are a believer in Christ you are a priest.
- The white robes symbolize the character of Christ we are to assimilate into our hearts. Thus, we are to be spiritual leaders in the world.
- As the Levites camped between the other tribes and the sanctuary, leading the other tribes closer to the sanctuary (reunion at-one-ment with God) so too, we are standing as God's envoys to the world and are to be leading the peoples of the world back to a knowledge of God.

But the priests of Israel became infected with a legal religion and failed to actually know God and thus they led people into such darkness they rejected their Creator—the one to whom all the symbols pointed.



Is Christianity doing a better job of leading people to the truth about God than the priests of Old Testament Israel? Are we doing this or are we obstructing people from knowing God by perpetuating the false legal view of God that presents Him as cosmic executioner and the one from whom we must be protected? Did Christianity become infected with an imposed law concept and the world fell into an age of darkness, from which it still hasn't exited?

The Bible predicted this, "See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. ³ Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn." ISA 60:2,3

What is the darkness that covers the people? It is, as we read earlier today, darkness about God! We are to be lights, we are to take the knowledge of His true character and His design law of love to the world. This is the three angels messages, we are to be giving glory to God by revealing His true character to the world! What obstructs us? The infection of imposed law—which distorts everything, clinging to metaphor and symbol, and rejecting the integrative evidenced based approach!

TUESDAY

The first paragraph tells us that Jeremiah was speaking "the word of the Lord." What does this phrase mean? Does it mean the literal words were chosen by God? Or does it mean a message from God was being communicated?

When we read the Bible and understand it is the word of God, do we view the words as inspired or the people who wrote those words as inspired and thus it is about the message not the specific words chosen?

Here is an historic quote from Ellen White about inspiration. Do you agree?

The Bible is written by **inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression**. It is that of humanity. **God, as a writer, is not represented**. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But **God has not put Himself in words**, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. **The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen**. Look at the different writers. {1SM 21.1}

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is



combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.--
Manuscript 24, 1886 (written in Europe in 1886). {1SM 21.2}

Then, can we feel comfortable using different words as long as we communicate the same message?

WEDNESDAY

The last paragraph states, “Imagine having to stand before hostile leaders or unruly people and give them sharp words of rebuke and warning.”

For whom are sharp words of rebuke necessary? For the immature, the hard of heart, those who don’t want to listen or think or reason.

People have different levels of psychological development, which generally means their ability to assimilate and deal with truth. People develop what are called defense mechanisms to, according to modern theory; protect the ego, the self, from disintegration. In reality, it is to protect selfishness from being removed from the heart, for these mechanisms are about denying truth, avoiding reality that would bring conviction and lead one toward maturity and healing. Those with the most primitive defenses often need strong confrontation—rebukes. If someone is wrong, but has an open heart and is willing to listen and learn, such words are not needed.

Here are some of the defense mechanisms:

Pathological:

- **Denial:** Refusal to accept external reality because it is too stressful, anxiety provoking (Addicts, narcissists, antisocials -- “I don’t have an addiction problem, I can handle it, It wasn’t me...”)
- **Distortion:** Twisting the mind around truth in order to avoid it (“This only happened because my boss doesn’t like me...”)
- **Splitting:** Extreme segregation of events into all good or all bad categories (black and white thinking)

Immature Defenses:

- **Acting out:** Unconsciously acting out in behavior unresolved emotional distress—a person who was molested and has unresolved issues might act out with promiscuity



- **Wishful thinking:** Making decisions on what one wishes life would be like instead of evidence and facts. Choosing to stay in a relationship based on wishing it will turn out right or he/she really loves you rather than based on the evidence of their conduct
- **Idealization:** Investing someone with greater virtue, intelligence, authority, value, than they rightly possess—thus deferring to their opinion and seeking their approval
- **Projection:** Seeing in others one's own defects and fears. A person who doesn't like to go to the store because of fear or feeling of others looking at them critically.
- **Passive aggression:** Anger toward others manifested passively, rather than directly admitting anger and dealing with it, one presents as supportive or not angry, but then undermines, often through procrastination or failure to do a good job.
- **Somatization:** Experiencing psychological distress with physical symptoms

Neurotic:

- **Displacement:** Separating emotions from real target, angry at boss but yells at wife
- **Hypochondriasis:** Insecurity about self manifested as excessive worry and preoccupation with one's health
- **Intellectualization:** Avoiding uncomfortable emotions via intellectual examination
- **Isolation:** Separating emotions from events, describing a traumatic event in great detail but showing no emotion about it
- **Rationalization:** Justifying one's actions as right or not having done a wrong, excuse making
- **Comparing self with others:** Finding someone who is worse in some trait of character and comparing self to that person as a means of avoiding dealing with one's own defect
- **Regression:** Reverting to behaviors that were appropriate at an earlier stage of development, whining, temper tantrums, rather than mature communication

Mature:

While the previous are all about avoiding the truth, the mature are all about assimilating and dealing with truth and overcoming defects of character:

- **Respect:** Recognizing the value and worth of others and the legitimacy of their thoughts and ideas
- **Acceptance:** Admitting and dealing with reality
- **Patience:** Willingness to delay gratification for a greater good
- **Courage:** The mental ability to stand one's ground and deal with issues
- **Moderation:** Self-restraint, keeping to reasonable limits, avoiding extremes not just in behavior, but beliefs
- **Humility:** Recognition of one's limitations and while healthy self-value, doesn't over esteem oneself



- **Mindfulness:** Ability to live in the here and now, rather than stuck in past (either past victories or failures) or living in future fantasy, either of success or failure.
- **Gratitude:** Have a thankful heart or mind toward life
- **Altruism:** Seeking to help others, valuing others more than self
- **Tolerance:** The exercise of the law of liberty, deliberately allowing others the freedom to do what you disapprove of
- **Mercy:** Compassion, grace, kindness to those under one's power or authority
- **Forgiveness:** Relinquishing one's desire for vengeance or retribution
- **Anticipation:** Realistic planning for future problems or needs—using seat belts
- **Humor:** Processing distressing emotions with witticism and humor

Which mechanisms do you use?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “The prophet is...” Would it be better to say Jeremiah’s mission was to transmit a message from God rather than the words of God?

What do you think about the idea “The emphasis here is not on the human or on human potential; it is on God’s sovereignty and power alone.”?

What does this mean? If it is about God’s sovereignty and power, why does Zechariah say “not by might nor by power but by my Spirit says the Lord?” 4:6

Is God sovereign? ABSOLUTELY! But how does His sovereignty work? Always through HIS law and design, which is the law of love and liberty, as love cannot exist without freedom. Thus coercive power or threat or might is never used. Here is an historic view:

“Earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power; **but from Christ's kingdom every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion, is banished.**” AA 12

Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. **Compelling power is found only under Satan's government.** The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power. E.G. White Desire of Ages 759



God could have destroyed Satan and all his sympathizers as easily as one can pick up a pebble and cast it to the earth. But by so doing he would have given a precedent for the exercise of force. **All the compelling power is found only under Satan's government.** The Lord's principles are not of this order. He would not work on this line... This principle is wholly of Satan's creation. E.G. White Review & Herald, September 7, 1897

Read third paragraph, “One could argue...” Did you notice how the lesson rightly said, “He does not force anyone to obey and be healed.” ?

But what then does it mean “If His people will not respond to Him, His words of judgment and punishment will certainly be fulfilled as His words against Israel were fulfilled in the book of Jeremiah.”

Can God be saying, “You are free to decide, but if you decide against me I will judge you and punish you”? Is that freedom?

This is the problem of imposed law, it always puts God in the wrong light as a dictator, which is Satan’s view of God.

FRIDAY

read and discuss question 1



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase**– ALL GLITCHES NOW FIXED in the IOS Version! So please UPDATE to latest version.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes.

September 23-26: American Association of Christian Counselors World Convention at Gaylord Opryland Hotel, Nashville TN. Come and Reason will have a booth in the exhibit hall, and Dr. Jennings will be doing a preconference workshop and regular conference presentation, as well as commencement speaker for Light University graduation.

October 24: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Puyallup, WA:

- Friday, October 23rd at the North Hill SDA Fellowship Church at 7:00PM. Located at: 10106 36th St. E., Edgewood, WA.
- Saturday, October 24th at the Washington State Fairgrounds in Puyallup in the Expo Hall. (10:00AM - 4:00 PM)
- For more information email, Godandyourbrain@icloud.com.
- There is also a God and Your Brain Events page on Facebook.

January 9, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, California.



Jeremiah 4Q 2015 Lesson 2

The Crisis (Within and Without)

SABBATH

1. Memory Verse: "Israel was holiness to the Lord, the first fruits of His increase All that devour him will offend; disaster will come upon them," says the Lord" (Jeremiah 2:3 NKJV)
 - a. (GW) "Israel was set apart for the Lord. It was the best part of the harvest. All who devoured it became guilty, and disaster struck them," declares the Lord.
2. Read the first paragraph:
 - a. The crisis of the human condition since the fall.
 - b. What do you think of the extreme measures that it took to solve the crisis.
 - c. What all did they include?
 - d. Was Christ's death on the cross just for this human condition?
 - e. What else was done to solve a crisis?
 - f. What did Christ's death on the cross solve? (GWTrans)
 - i. Heb 2:14 – "Since all of these sons and daughters have flesh and blood, Jesus took on flesh and blood to be like them. He did this so that by dying he would destroy the one who had power over death (that is, the devil).By His death Christ destroys the devil"
 - ii. John 17:3 – "This is eternal life: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you sent."
 - iii. 2 Tim 1:10: "Now with the coming of our Savior Christ Jesus, he has revealed it. Christ has destroyed death, and through the Good News he has brought eternal life into full view."
 - g. What is the sequence of events of Sin?
 - i. Rebellion by Lucifer
 - ii. Miscommunication by Lucifer to other angels
 - iii. Open rebellion in heaven between God and His angels
 - iv. Expulsion of 1/3 of heavenly beings from heaven
 - v. Creation of the earth
 - vi. The Tree of Good & Evil within the Garden of Eden
 - vii. Temptation and fall
 - viii. The subsequent history of mankind
 - ix. God's wooing influence throughout the pre-Children of Israel time
 - x. Abraham's separation
 - xi. The selection of a family for God
 - xii. The ups and downs of Abraham's offspring
 - xiii. The land of Canaan and the settlers



- xiv. Apostasy
- xv. Christ's life and death

- h. This weeks lesson
 - i. The apostasy of the next generations after entry into Canaan
 - ii. The division of Israel into two kingdoms
 - iii. The types of evil
 - (1) Abandonment of God (Living water John 4:10)
 - (2) Creation of a false form of religion
 - iv. The Babylonian Threat
 - v. Swearing Falsely
 - vi. The source of truth and your willingness to obey truth.

- 3. Read the third paragraph from Sabbath Afternoon's Lesson
 - a. What do you call it when an individual is not listening and is no longer susceptible to the wooing of the Holy Spirit?
 - i. The Unpardonable Sin.
 - ii. Do you/ Does a person commit the unpardonable sin?
 - (1) Is it something you can do? No
 - (2) It is a condition
 - (a) You become the unpardonable sin
 - (3) Does it have anything to do with your actions? Yes
 - (a) Thoughts create actions
 - (b) Actions create habits
 - (c) Habits create character
 - (d) Our character not only is a picture of who we are, but in and of itself alters the way we think, hear and see things in our environment and perceive the influence of God.
 - (4) The unpardonable sin is a condition of the heart and mind.
 - (5) The thoughts that are the foundation of this are both **active** and **passive**
 - (a) That is why it is so important to guard the avenues that we take things into our souls / ourselves.

- 4. New physician behavior
 - a. Impulsive
 - b. Undisciplined
 - c. Reactive
 - d. Selfish
 - e. Little self control



5. SUNDAY

A Quick History

- a. “All it took was for a new generation to arise, one that didn’t “know the Lord” (Judges 2:10) and a spiritual crisis started that, in many ways, infected the nation all through its history.”
- b. How does that happen?
- c. At the highlighted section at the bottom of the page:
 - i. “Think about the problem of the next generation not having values and beliefs of the one before it. How have we, as a church, dealt with this issue?”
 - ii. What values and beliefs did your generation have that the next generation did not have?
 - (1) dress
 - (2) respect
 - (3) paying tithe and offerings
 - (4) music
 - (5) work ethic
 - (6) worship style
 - (7) reading God’s word
 - (8) rest
 - (9) recreation
 - (10) Sabbath
 - iii. Behavior can be driven by values, culture, beliefs, guilt, coercion, habit
 - iv. Which of these things listed in “5,C,ii” above are values and which are culture?
 - v. Is behavior important?
 - vi. How do you transmit values without transmitting behavior?
 - vii. 2 Corinthians 3:17, 18 “This Lord is the Spirit. Wherever the Lord’s Spirit is, there is freedom. As all of us reflect the Lord’s glory with faces that are not covered with veils, we are being changed into his image with ever-increasing glory. This comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.



6. MONDAY

The Two Kingdoms

- a. The day's lesson discusses some of the trends toward idolatry after the division of the kingdom of Israel
 - i. The Northern Kingdom
 - (1) twin capitals: Bethel and Dan
 - (2) Golden Calves for worship
 - (3) Why did the king do this?
 - (a) Fear
 - (b) Selfishness
 - ii. The Southern Kingdom (Judah)
 - (1) The stories of multiple wicked kings and their reproofs from the prophets.
 - (2) The story is of an ever seeking God
 - (3) The way for a redeemer was being preserved, but at what cost?
 - (a) It is easy to misinterpret God's tolerance as approval
 - (b) It is often thought that the Bible depicts what God wants, instead of His loving dealings with an errant people; what was necessary for preservation of an option for healing.
- b. Bottom highlighted section:
 - i. "Why, then, must we constantly test our lives against the standard of the Bible? What other standard do we have?"
 - ii. How do we do that?
 - iii. What are we testing?
 - (1) Behavior?
 - (2) Motives?
 - (3) Did you ever notice that we can only test our own motives, but we tend to test other peoples' behavior?
 - (4) Much of our culture / behavior / options are not directly discussed in the Bible due to the culture of the their time vs ours.
 - (a) Smoking or legalization of marijuana
 - (b) Abortion
 - (c) Single parent issues



- (d) Much of the discussion regarding women's ordination within the Adventist church is 21st century people having little guidance in their decisions, because of incomprehension of how to use 1st century writings in guiding our thoughts.
- (e) We have as much difficulty with 19th century guidance in this current culture.
 - (i) It has become largely irrelevant to the current generation.

7. TUESDAY

Two Evils

- a. "My people have done two things wrong. They have abandoned me, the fountain of life-giving water. They have also dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that can't hold water."
- b. Two evils
 - i. Abandon God (The source of living water John 4:10)
 - ii. Made their own cisterns (source of water)
- c. How is our church any different?

8. WEDNESDAY

The Babylonian Threat

- a. History of the kingdom of Judah and its relationship with Egypt, Assyrian Empire, and Babylon
- b. Read last paragraph: "Again and again. . ."
- c. Highlighted questions at the bottom of the page:
 - i. "When was the last time you believed what you wanted to believe, no matter how obviously wrong that belief turned out to be?"
 - (1) Have you ever done that?
 - (2) Have you ever believed something that later turned out to be false?
 - (3) Do you have any examples?
 - (4) Why did you do that?
 - (a) Blinded by love
 - (b) Blinded by something you wanted to be true

9. THURSDAY

Swearing Falsely

- a. Read Jeremiah 5:1 (GNT) "People of Jerusalem, run through your streets! Look around! See for yourselves! Search the marketplaces! Can you find one person who does what is right and tries to be faithful to God? If you can, the Lord will forgive Jerusalem."



- b. The first paragraph
 - i. Two stories
 - (1) Diogenes, Greek philosopher of 4th Century, looking for honest man
 - (2) Abraham and God: Is there 10 righteous people in Sodom?
 - ii. The point of the quest?
 - (1) The complete loss of integrity of the people
 - (2) The right judgment of God
 - (3) The yearning of God's heart for His people
 - (a) Ezekiel 18:23 "Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked," declares the Lord God, "rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?"
 - (b) Ezekiel 18:31 & 32 "Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! **For why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,**" declares the Lord God. **"Therefore, repent and live."**
 - (c) Ezekiel 33:11 "Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord God, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?'"
- c. Middle of the page: Jeremiah 5:2,3 "Even though you claim to worship the Lord, you do not mean what you say. Surely the Lord looks for faithfulness. He struck you, but you paid no attention; he crushed you, but you refused to learn. You were stubborn and would not turn from your sins."
- d. "No matter how deeply fallen the nation had become, many of the people believed that they were still faithfully following the Lord!"
 - i. How does that happen?
- e. Read the last paragraph before the highlighted section. "The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord"
- f. As a member of a given church, I have often thought, "I am part of the remnant church."
- g. What is your magic?
 - i. The Sabbath?
 - ii. 2nd coming of Christ?



- iii. 3 angels messages?
- h. James 1:26, 27 (GW) “If a person thinks that he is religious but can’t control his tongue, he is fooling himself. That person’s religion is worthless. Pure, unstained religion, according to God our Father, is to take care of orphans and widows when they suffer and to remain uncorrupted by this world.”
 - i. There is no discussion here of the Sabbath
 - ii. 28 Fundamental beliefs
 - iii. 2300 days prophecy
 - iv. Correct interpretation of the end times
 - v. Micah 6:8 “You mortals, the Lord has told you what is good. This is what the Lord requires from you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to live humbly with your God.”
- 10. Many people have as their favorite verse Jeremiah 29:11 but do not read the next two verses.
 - a. Jeremiah 29:11 - 13 (NASB) “For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.”
 - b. Or Christ’s statement in John 7:16 - 17 (NASB) “So Jesus answered them and said, “My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.”
 - i. We are blinded when we are unwilling to follow God’s word with repentance and humility follow its correction.



4th Quarter 2015 – Jeremiah: Lesson 3

Jeremiah is considered one of the “major prophets”. What is a prophet? Do his/her prophecies have to “come true” for the prophet to be genuine? Are their prophecies accurate 100% of the time? How do we discern between true and false prophets? Do we have a “prophecy” to deliver? What is it?

1. a person who speaks for God or a deity, or by divine inspiration.
 - a. a person chosen to speak for God and to guide the people of Israel: *Moses was the greatest of Old Testament prophets.*
 - b. (often initial capital letter) one of the Major or Minor Prophets.
 - c. one of a band of ecstatic visionaries claiming divine inspiration and, according to popular belief, possessing magical powers.
 - d. a person who practices divination.
2. one of a class of persons in the early church, next in order after the apostles, recognized as inspired to utter special revelations and predictions. 1 Cor. 12:28.
3. **the Prophet**, Muhammad, the founder of Islam.
4. a person regarded as, or claiming to be, an inspired teacher or leader.
5. a person who foretells or predicts what is to come:
 - e. *a weather prophet; prophets of doom.*
6. a spokesperson of some doctrine, cause, or movement. Source: dictionary.com

SABBATH

“He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?” (Jeremiah 22:16, NIV).

How eloquent.

How many times, during Old Testament history did God try and reveal Himself to his children this way? How many times did He try to reveal His Natural Law of other-centered-giving and contrast it with the pagan worship practices of the time? Has anything really changed here in the 21st century?

We can see genetics and epigenetics at work here in this lesson with “...visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.” Ex. 20:5.

We also see the Law of Worship at work here? Any specific examples?

From Sabbath’s lesson:

“One after another, these men [Judah’s Kings] seemed totally unrepentant for their actions, even as it became clearer and clearer that their actions were bringing the calamities that the Lord, through Jeremiah, had warned would come.”



I'm not sure it became "clearer and clearer" to those involved. And, isn't that just the nature of sin? To cloud reason, dull discernment, and sear conscience? To the "wicked" their way seems the correct way [Prov. 14:12, 16:25].

SUNDAY

Under the Rule of Josiah.

Read Eccl. 10:16. How do we understand this verse in light of Josiah's history?

He was at driving age when he started to "seek God", and in his 20's when he began purging the kingdom of its idols, and repairing the Temple.

During the reconstruction of the Temple, the Book of the Law was discovered and Josiah used it as it was intended – AS A DIAGNOSTIC INSTRUMENT. He was convicted of Judah's sin and the **natural** consequences of living outside of "the Law", and he witnessed to his subjects by reading the book of the Law and endeavored to follow the commandments [even knowing that destruction and captivity would eventually be come about].

The lesson makes a nice point about leading by example. Do we need any of that in Christianity today?

Josiah's death marks a troubling departure from his life of following God's commandments [see 2 Chron. 35:20-24]. Any insights on this?

MONDAY

Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim: Another Descent

Jehoahaz was 23 at the time of his succession to the throne. Has anyone done the math on this? Josiah's reign was 31 years starting when he was 8. $31 - 23 = 8$. Did Josiah father Jehoahaz at 8 years old? If so, might this explain some things?

Jehoahaz only reigned 90 days, and was replaced by his brother for political reasons. Any contrasts between God's Kingdom and Earthly kingdoms noted?

Following are some selections from Jer. 22.

3 This is what the Lord says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place. 4 For if you are careful to carry out these commands, then kings who sit on David's throne will come through the gates of this palace, riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by their officials and their people. 5 But if you



do not obey these commands, declares the Lord, I swear by myself that this palace will become a ruin.”

13 “Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his own people work for nothing, not paying them for their labor.

14 He says, ‘I will build myself a great palace with spacious upper rooms.’ So he makes large windows in it, panels it with cedar and decorates it in red.

15 “Does it make you a king to have more and more cedar? Did not your father have food and drink? He did what was right and just, so all went well with him.

16 He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?” declares the Lord.

17 “But your eyes and your heart are set only on dishonest gain, on shedding innocent blood and on oppression and extortion.”

This sounds suspiciously like a “liberal” political argument. Any contrast between “Natural Law” and “imposed law”?

TUESDAY

The Short Reign of King Jehoiachin of Judah

We can see in God’s Words through Jeremiah, that his anger [turning away, letting go, giving up, discipline, etc.] has a purpose for ultimate restoration. God told the Jews that their exile had a finite time period, and if they submitted and conducted themselves as good citizens, they would prosper and be returned from exile. This was Truth.

Contrast this with the experience of Saul meeting Satan in the cave of the witch of Endor [see I Sam 28: 16-20]. Satan told Saul the “truth” as well, didn’t he?

How are we to discern Truth from truth?

WEDNESDAY

At the End of the Dead End

Consider this passage:

15 The Lord, the God of their ancestors, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, **because he had pity** on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they mocked God’s messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets **until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.** 2 Chron. 36:15, 16. [emphasis added]



Here we have a clear OT reference to God's wrath and his Character of Love. He tried "again and again" to reach his children "because he had pity on his people..." His wrath was aroused because "there was no remedy." Any parallels for the Day of Judgment?

From the lesson:

"There they were, hundreds of years after the Exodus, hundreds of years as the covenant people who were to be a light and a beacon to the nations (Deut. 4:5–8), and yet they were still so caught up in the prevailing culture, so caught up in the cultural and religious environment of their neighbors, that they were doing "all the abominations" of the pagans. Might there be a message there for us?"

Excellent question. Consider this:

Through the long centuries that have passed since Elijah's time, the record of his lifework has brought inspiration and courage to those who have been called to stand for the right in the midst of apostasy. And for us, "upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11), it has special significance. History is being repeated. The world today has its Ahabs and its Jezebels. The present age is one of idolatry, as verily as was that in which Elijah lived. No outward shrine may be visible; there may be no image for the eye to rest upon; yet thousands are following after the gods of this world—after riches, fame, pleasure, and the pleasing fables that permit man to follow the inclinations of the unregenerate heart. **Multitudes have a wrong conception of God and His attributes, and are as truly serving a false god as were the worshipers of Baal. Many even of those who claim to be Christians have allied themselves with influences that are unalterably opposed to God and His truth.** Thus they are led to turn away from the divine and to exalt the human [emphasis added]. PK 177.

THURSDAY

The Dark Years

From the lesson:

"Everything that God had warned them would happen to them is exactly what happened."

Who determined Israel's & Judah's destiny? Who determines ours? [see Matt. 12:37 & Luke 6:45].

This lesson asks us to look at Jeremiah 23. This should give us some pause [especially those of us "leading a flock"].

Jeremiah 4Q 2015 Lesson 4

Rebuke and Retribution

SABBATH

Read Memory Text: “Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for you are my praise.” (Jer 17:14 NKJV)

What does this text tell us? Have you heard of something called parallelism? It is the method of writing where the same idea is repeated in different words. In this case the idea of healing and saving. The Scripture does this because these two ideas are synonyms, i.e. they mean the same thing.

When you consider healing—do you think this is metaphor or reality?

Why is it important to recognize salvation is healing and healing is not metaphorical?

- In the passage who does the healing?
- Who is in need of healing?
- Who gets the praise and credit for the healing?
- What role does the sin-sick person play?
- What law does healing operate upon?
- Where is the place for legal action?
- Do doctors ever give their patients rules to follow? Why?
- Did God give His patients rules to follow? Why?
- What if a patient refuses to follow the doctor’s instructions, what does the doctor do? What happens to the patient?
- What does God do to those who refuse to follow His instructions? What happens to the sinner? Why?

Read first paragraph, “What has been...” What do you understand this to mean? Why does history repeat itself? Because all human history has been a battle between two opposing principles or methods, and these methods operate in constant predictable patterns.

- Satan’s methods: Lies, selfishness, coercion, imposed law with imposed punishments
- God’s methods: Truth, Love, Freedom, Design law with natural consequences

Notice this description of how things began in heaven, what the allegations were, what Christ accomplished to deal with the crisis, and how God’s law is contrasted from Satan’s representation of God’s law. From the book *The Desire of Ages*:



In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice.** [What kind of law is Satan describing? A law which created beings can make, a system of rules that require oversight and coercive enforcement. This is Satan's lie about God's law and as we look through history we see this repeats itself over and over again.] **...God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner.** [What is the basis of this allegation? What kind of justice is this? What level of thinking? What law is this based upon? Again this is imposed law, and thus the allegation to not impose punishment is to not uphold the law. However, when we understand Design law, we realize that justice is not about punishment, but restoring/healing back to harmony with the design.] {DA 761.4}

But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. [Different position how? Different legal position? Or different position in objective reality? Note how] Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. **There was no more that God could do to save him.** [Why? Was Jesus unwilling to give His life for Lucifer? Was Jesus unwilling to pay a "legal penalty"? Did God love Lucifer less than humans? Was God playing favorites? No! No! It was because Lucifer had destroyed in himself the capacity to respond to truth and love. He had seen, understood, and participated in God's love and rejected it. This again, is design law. It would be like a person refusing the only antidote to poison.] But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. **The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.** [What is it man needs? Is it a legal penalty? No, that is what is needed if one is operating under Satan's false view of God's law. But when we understand the truth we need to be set right in heart and mind with God, meaning we need the lies removed and truth and love restored within] {DA 761.5}

Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; **but mercy does not set aside justice.** [What does this mean? Do we view justice through imposed law or design law? What difference does it make?] **The law reveals the attributes of God's character, [which is what?]** and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. [Why? For the same reason the law of respiration cannot be changed to meet a person drowning. God's law is the protocol upon which life is actually constructed to operate.] God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption. **"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."** 2 Corinthians 5:19. {DA 762.1} [Which means that Christ was carrying out God's purpose to fix what sin did to humanity, set humanity back into harmony with God's law—design! Notice the next description about justice.]



The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. **But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty.** [Notice this is Christ developing a perfect human character and then healing humans back to this perfect state. This is literal not metaphorical.] **Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ.** God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2} [If you see someone drowning, is it right or just to pull them from the water and administer CPR to revive them? What law are you operating under? Why, if you want them to live, must you do this? This is God's justice and what He accomplished for us through Christ.]

God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan's purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God's law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Psalm 85:10. {DA 762.3} [How does Satan attempt to divorce mercy from justice? By an imposed law construct, which results in a split Godhead in which Christ in mercy dies to pay a legal penalty for our sins to a wrathful father who is the administrator of just punishments. Thus, justice is separated from mercy in the way we perceive and describe God—leading to theologies in which Jesus must protect us from the Father. 1. Jesus pleads His blood to the Father. 2. Jesus covers us with His blood so the Father can't see us. 3. Jesus applies His blood to our record books so the Father can't punish us for our bad deeds. 4. Jesus is our heavenly attorney to argue our case before the Father to protect us from His judgment and punishment. 5 Jesus took our place and was executed by His Father on the cross to pay for our sins. All of this is the divorcing of mercy from truth and justice by created a false caricature of the Godhead.]

By His life and His death, Christ proved that God's justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed. Satan's charges were refuted. [How?] God had given man unmistakable evidence of His love. {DA 762.4}

Another deception was now to be brought forward. [History now repeats itself] Satan declared that mercy destroyed justice, **that the death of Christ abrogated the Father's law.** [What kind of law can be rescinded, changed, or abrogated? Imposed law, the kind of laws created beings make. Design law cannot be changed or abrogated. Thus Satan's allegations that began in heaven that God's law requires punishment, i.e. imposed law, now repeats itself and is accepted by the vast majority of humans, including Christians.] Had it been possible for the



law to be changed or abrogated, then Christ need not have died... **It was because the law was changeless, because man could be saved only through obedience to its precepts, that Jesus was lifted up on the cross.** [Why? Because the law is the protocol of life, and only in harmony with it is there salvation, or healing!] Yet the very means by which Christ established the law Satan represented as destroying it.[How? Twofold, one by declaring the law is no longer binding, which is only possible if the law were imposed rules. But, also, amongst those who claim the law is still binding, by tricking them into accepting the imposed construct, thus they claim loyalty to God's law and all the commandments, while they present it as imposed rules requiring God to inflict punishment. They, thereby misrepresent God, the Cross and God's law and ultimately practice Satan's methods of coercion as they will one day force other to worship as they do.] Here will come the last conflict of the great controversy between Christ and Satan... [This is where we are today in Christianity, fighting a battle over God's law, not which day of worship, but which law—imposed or Design law. We are to call people back to worship Him who made the heavens... to Designer worship.] {DA 762.5}

By substituting human law for God's law, Satan will seek to control the world. [How? Not simply by a change in rules, but a change in the entire idea of law from the law the Creator builds life upon, to imposed rules.] This work is foretold in prophecy. Of the great apostate power which is the representative of Satan, it is declared, "He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand." Daniel 7:25. {DA 763.1}

Men will surely set up their laws to counterwork the laws of God. They will seek to compel the consciences of others, and in their zeal to enforce these laws they will oppress their fellow men. [Here we have it—the use of compelling power, which is always used in imposed law systems. This is how Christianity, including our church presents God today. That God, in order to be just, must punish sin, just as Satan declared in heaven, thus history repeats itself.] {DA 763.2}

The warfare against God's law, which was begun in heaven, will be continued until the end of time. Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world. All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men. Here the dividing line will be drawn. There will be but two classes. Every character will be fully developed; and all will show whether they have chosen the side of loyalty or that of rebellion. {DA 763.3} [Notice the paragraph, it is about developing character, character of love like Jesus, in which we sacrifice ourselves for others, present truth in love and leave others free. Or, character like the beast, where we use compelling power to coerce conformity!]

Then the end will come. God will vindicate His law and deliver His people. Satan and all who have joined him in rebellion will be cut off. Sin and sinners will perish, root and branch... [Why?] {DA 763.4}



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

At the beginning of the great controversy, the angels did not understand this. **[What did angels not understand? God's law as design law, as an outworking of His character of love. They were confused by Satan's lies that God's law functions like human law. Thus history repeats itself as humans suffer the same confusion.]** Had Satan and his host then been left to reap the full result of their sin, they would have perished; **but it would not have been apparent to heavenly beings that this was the inevitable result of sin. A doubt of God's goodness would have remained in their minds as evil seed,** to produce its deadly fruit of sin and woe. **[How many Christians today, including in our own church, fail to understand this and instead teach the same distortion that God must kill the wicked, rather than the truth that sin itself, unremedied results in death!]** {DA 764.2}

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

Where do we find ourselves now? Do you see history repeating itself over and over again? And here at this time in history God is preparing people to come back to the truth about His character and law of love, and teach the truth about Him and His Design for life!

In the next paragraph it states, "prophets, who were often called to deliver words of warning and rebuke to those who should have known better." Do we have message of warning to give to the world, to our own church and leaders? What is that message?

It is the truth about God's law of love being design law, and the need to free our minds from the imposed law, penal substitution distortion that has infected the world! To worship Him who made...

The last sentence states, "Jeremiah, whose ministry seemed to consist of nothing but rebuke and retribution: he giving the rebuke, and the leaders giving him retribution."



Is this also history repeating itself—with those who call leaders to reject the penal legal views of God with the arbitrary rules and regulations experiencing retribution from those same leaders?

SUNDAY

First paragraph states: “From the earliest chapters of Genesis to the last chapters of Revelation, the Bible presents to us only two options on how to live: we either follow the Lord with all our heart and soul, or we don’t.” What happens if we don’t?

How we answer this questions reveals much about the way we view God’s law and God’s character? Is it:

1. Like a patient who refuses to follow the treatment of the doctor and is given up to die as a result of their unhealed condition? OR
2. Like a criminal who refuses to accept the legal payment to the court and therefore the ruling authority uses its power to inflict punishment and death?

Read Jeremiah 17:5-10:

This is what the Lord says: “**Cursed** is the one who trusts in man, who **depends on flesh** for his strength and whose heart **turns away from the Lord**.⁶ He will be **like a bush in the wastelands**; he will not see prosperity when it comes. **He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives**.⁷ “But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.⁸ He will be like a **tree planted by the water** that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”⁹ **The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?**¹⁰ **“I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.”**

What do you hear being described? What does “cursed” mean? What is the curse of sin? Notice the description, of plants in wastelands...this is Design law, a plant cut off from its source of nurturance and it will wither and die!

This is what happens to people who reject God, they cut themselves off from the source of life, from the living water, and dying they die.



But those who trust God are like plants that are by water, they are connected to God, the source of life, and no difficulty can destroy them.

What do you understand regarding the condition of the human heart?

What does it mean that God searches the hearts? For what purpose? Like a judge looking for reasons to reward or punish, or like a doctor seeking to heal all defects in those who will permit Him to do so?

Why the language which looks on the heart to find out the deeds? Do we have to look at the heart to find the deeds or conduct? Why this language?

Because God is speaking to children, who focus on deeds, and He is trying to teach them what Christ taught in the Beatitudes that the deeds are the outgrowth of the condition of the heart, or make a tree good and its fruit will be good. Thus, the condition of the heart will ultimately determine the actions and deeds of the life. Further it isn't about the specific deeds but the motives for those deeds, thus God looks to the heart to remove selfishness and write His character/law of love there.

How does the human heart deceive? What causes such deception?

Is this talking about simple finiteness of ability and an inability to understand complex ideas or processes, or even believing things one was taught in childhood? For instance, believing that the earth was flat at some time in the past, or coming to the wrong answer on a calculus test or physics exam?

I don't think so, I believe this text is referring to how the human mind is capable of deceiving itself about the true condition and motives of one's actions.

- A person who beats his wife but says he does it only because he loves her.
- A person who buys gifts for their spouse—telling themselves it is because they love them, but in reality it is to offset guilt, or make themselves feel better.

MONDAY

Read Jeremiah 17:1-4:

“Judah’s sin is engraved with an iron tool, inscribed with a flint point, on the tablets of their hearts and on the horns of their altars. ² Even their children remember their altars and Asherah poles beside the spreading trees and on the high hills. ³ My mountain in the land and your wealth and all your treasures I will give away as plunder, together with your high places, because of sin



throughout your country. ⁴ Through your own fault you will lose the inheritance I gave you. I will enslave you to your enemies in a land you do not know, for you have kindled my anger, and it will burn forever.”

What does it mean that sin is engraved on their hearts and the horns of their altars?

The heart is symbolic of the mind/character of the person. The horns of the altar are symbolic of the character/motives of a person. Thus, a person’s decisions determine the character they develop.

What does God do? He removes His protection and lets them reap what they have chosen, the care of their false gods, and what does sin always lead to? Pain, suffering, loss and slavery. How does sin lead to slavery today?

- Are people who indulge addictions free or slaves?
- Are people who abuse their bodies free or slaves?
- Are people who cheat, free or slaves?
- Are people who violate any aspect of God’s law free or slaves?

Where is the highest freedom found? In harmony with God’s design. Anything that deviates from God’s design law results in loss of autonomy and freedom, i.e. enslaves us.

What of the idea of God’s anger burning forever? How do we understand this?

What law lens do we look through? With what or whom is God angry?

God is angry at sin, like a doctor is angry at disease, thus His anger never ends. Good doctors always hate disease, but love their patients. God will always hate sin, which damages and destroys, but He loves sinners, even those who die in the end.

Thus Oswald Chambers wrote regarding God’s wrath:

“When we speak of the wrath of God we must not picture Him as an angry sultan on the throne of heaven, bringing a lash about people when they do what He does not want. There is no element of personal vindictiveness in God. It is rather that God’s constitution of things is such that when a man becomes severed from God his life tumbles into turmoil and confusion, into agony and distress; it is hell at once, and he will never get out of it unless he turns to God; immediately he turns, chaos is turned into cosmos, wrath into love, distress into peace.



“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord” we persuade men to keep in touch with Him.”
Conformed to His Image, pg 363

TUESDAY

Read John 3:19:

And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

What does this mean?

Again from Oswald Chambers:

The Bible does not say that God punished the human race for one man’s sin, but that the nature of sin, namely, my claim to my right to myself, entered into the human race through one man. But it also says that another **Man took upon Himself the sin of the human race and put it away** — an infinitely more profound revelation...

Sin is something I am born with and cannot touch— only God touches sin through redemption. It is through the Cross of Christ that God redeemed the entire human race from the possibility of damnation through the heredity of sin. **God nowhere holds a person responsible for having the heredity of sin, and does not condemn anyone because of it.** Condemnation comes when I realize that Jesus Christ came to deliver me from this heredity of sin, and **yet I refuse to let Him do so**. From that moment I begin to get the seal of damnation. **“This is the condemnation [and the critical moment], that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light . . .” (John 3:19)** Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*, <http://utmost.org>

What does this mean? We are not condemned because we are born sinners, but because we refuse the only Remedy to this condition.

Read Jeremiah 11:18-23:

¹⁸ Because the Lord revealed their plot to me, I knew it, for at that time he showed me what they were doing. ¹⁹ I had been like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter; I did not realize that they had plotted against me, saying, “Let us destroy the tree and its fruit; let us cut him off from the



land of the living, that his name be remembered no more.”²⁰ But, O Lord Almighty, you who judge righteously and test the heart and mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you I have committed my cause.²¹ “Therefore this is what the Lord says about the men of Anathoth who are seeking your life and saying, ‘Do not prophesy in the name of the Lord or you will die by our hands’—²² therefore this is what the Lord Almighty says: **‘I will punish them. Their young men will die by the sword, their sons and daughters by famine.’**²³ Not even a remnant will be left to them, because I will bring disaster on the men of Anathoth in the year of their punishment.’ ”

What do you understand is happening here? What is God doing? What is their punishment? Why does it come? Who inflicts it? What kind of law is being described here?

WEDNESDAY

Read Jeremiah 12:1-4:

You are always righteous, O Lord, when I bring a case before you. Yet I would speak with you about your justice: Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the faithless live at ease?² You have planted them, and they have taken root; they grow and bear fruit. You are always on their lips but far from their hearts.³ Yet you know me, O Lord; you see me and test my thoughts about you. Drag them off like sheep to be butchered! Set them apart for the day of slaughter!⁴ How long will the land lie parched and the grass in every field be withered? Because those who live in it are wicked, the animals and birds have perished. Moreover, the people are saying, “He will not see what happens to us.”

What does it mean?

The lesson states this is a legal problem with legal language? Is it?

What is happening in the lesson is a classic error many people make when reading Scripture—they read a Scripture and believe it is communicating God’s truth. Not in these verses, in these verses what is being communicated is Jeremiah’s heart, position, attitude. And Jeremiah was a sinful human being, with a selfish carnal nature in need of healing. He, like Jonah, Peter, David, Saul and so many more of God’s prophets had sin problems and understanding problems and often wanted vengeance upon their enemies.

Remember Psalm 137:8,9:



Babylon, you will be destroyed. Happy are those who pay you back for what you have done to us-⁹ who take your babies and smash them against a rock.

Should we take this to be an expression of God's will?

But God contrasts Jeremiah's plea with his answer in verses 7-12:

"I will forsake my house, abandon my inheritance; I will give the one I love into the hands of her enemies. [What does God do? He sets them free to their own choice. And what happens when God sets free? Why does He do this? What is the only action love can take when one insists, after all entreaties, on leaving?]⁸ My inheritance has become to me like a lion in the forest. She roars at me; **therefore I hate her. [What does this mean? He hates the separation, the hostility, the rebellion in the heart that prevents them from unity with God, thus God hates watching the pain and suffering and death which is the only outcome of separation from Him]**⁹ Has not my inheritance become to me like a speckled bird of prey that other birds of prey surround and attack? Go and gather all the wild beasts; bring them to devour.¹⁰ Many shepherds will ruin my vineyard and trample down my field; they will turn my pleasant field into a desolate wasteland. **[What is this referring to? To Israel being trampled by paganism and rebellion]**¹¹ It will be made a wasteland, parched and desolate before me; the whole land will be laid waste because there is no one who cares.¹² Over all the barren heights in the desert **destroyers will swarm, for the sword of the Lord will devour** from one end of the land to the other; no one will be safe. **[What is the sword of the Lord? It is what the truth brings, the unavoidable results of truth. If one rejects God and chooses a path without Him, what truthfully happens? Destruction, but not at God's hand!]**

THURSDAY

Read fourth paragraph, "Jeremiah understood, too..." What does this remind you of? This is a legal religion, feast days, Sabbath keeping, dressing rigidly, observing rituals, washing correctly, doing communion, claiming legal payments, all designed to legally merit some benefit from the ruling authority.

The last sentence states, "They were looking only to remove the results of the problem, not the problem itself, which was their sin and disobedience."



This is exactly what Penal Substitution Theology leads to, a legal accounting to get rid of the penalty, which in that construct is the legal (just) punishment for our sins. Thus, we get rid of the record of our sins, and get declared righteous, “even though we are not.” It is a fraud, a grand deception, which keeps good people trapped in addition and violence cycles.

The Good News is that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, not the punishment for sin. (Jn 1:29) God wants to give us new hearts and right spirits, not new records. He wants to heal our minds and characters not give us laundered clothing.

The last paragraph quotes Jeremiah stating, “our iniquities testify against us.” What does this mean?

How do our iniquities testify against us?

If we claim to be healthy, but are sick with smallpox would the small pox lesions testify against us?

FRIDAY

The question of trying to make sense of evil comes up and they quote EGW, read first two paragraphs, “In this regard...” Did EGW say that evil and the pain and suffering caused by it is not understandable? No, she said the REASON for evil is not understandable. But evil is understandable, it is the violation of God’s design law and it results in pain and suffering.

For instance, it is understandable that if a person pokes themselves in the eye with a knife they will suffer pain, loss of vision, and perhaps death. But, why would someone do this? What reason can be given that makes it right or understandable? None—there is no reason for sin, but we can understand that sin is deviation from God’s design and always results in pain and suffering and unless remedied—death.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

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April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.



Jeremiah 4Q 2015 Lesson 5

More Woe for the Prophet

SABBATH

Read memory text: “O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, Every one mocketh me.” Jer 20:7 KJV

- Should we take the Bible as it reads?
- Do we believe if the Bible says something it must be true?
- What do we do with passages like this?
- What is the purpose of the Bible?
- Was Jeremiah inspired when he wrote the book of Jeremiah?
- How does inspiration work? Does it mean everything he wrote was directly from God?
- Does it mean that Jeremiah understood everything correctly?
- Should we believe something written by one of God’s prophets over our own understanding of God’s character, methods and principles?
- The Bible says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;” Prv 3:5 Does this mean we are not to understand or think?
- What does it mean to not trust our own understanding, and how do we understand texts like Jeremiah 20:7?
- Who has a clearer understanding of Scripture—the ones who wrote it, or those Spirit led persons who read it years later? One Bible commentator thinks those who read it later have clearer understanding—this is from the book, the *Desire of Ages*:
 - They realized that the mighty God, clad in the garb of humanity, was among them. Jesus rejoiced that though this knowledge was not possessed by the wise and prudent, it had been revealed to these humble men. Often as He had presented the Old Testament Scriptures, and showed their application to Himself and His work of atonement, they had been awakened by His Spirit, and lifted into a heavenly atmosphere. **Of the spiritual truths spoken by the prophets they had a clearer understanding than had the original writers themselves.** Hereafter they would read the Old Testament Scriptures, not as the doctrines of the scribes and Pharisees, not as the utterances of wise men who were dead, but as a new revelation from God. {DA 494.3}

What is the purpose of Scripture? This is a key question to understand what is written there.

- Scripture’s primary purpose is to reveal the truth about God to us
- But what is the setting?



- It is the context of a war over lies about God that allege He misuses power and cannot be trusted and in a world in which people are filled with selfishness
- So, what does Scripture reveal? God dealing with people who are infected with fear and selfishness and who have many false ideas operating in their heads. We see God, always patient, gracious, kind, loving, working to heal and save, but we also see God's own helpers on earth are all infected with fear and selfishness and at times struggle with these symptoms which cause them to have doubts and uncertainties and even choose poorly:
 - Abraham—doubts the promise and takes Hagar, and lies to Pharaoh—but is father of the faithful
 - Jacob—doubts the promise and connives with mother to deceive father—but is father of the twelve tribes
 - David—struggled with fear and selfishness, lusts, cheats, then murders to protect self—but is a man after God's own heart
 - Solomon—pride, lust, and even worshipped false gods—but after all this is one of the holy men who wrote Scripture
 - Elijah—ran away in fear and discouragement wishing to die—but was taken to heaven without seeing death
 - Jonah—was a racist who wanted the Ninevites killed—but was used of God to save a city
 - Peter—denied Jesus three times with cursing and the rest ran away in fear for self—but was an Apostle of Christ

In Scripture we find real people dealing with the reality of the sin condition, which infects their hearts, tempts them, and at times discourages and even wins momentary battles in their lives. But, we also see God, who loves us for who we are, who understands our weakness, our infected state, and has a plan, worked out through Jesus, to heal and restore all who trust Him!

Read second paragraph **TUESDAY's** lesson: "What comes after, though, comes directly from Jeremiah's own heart, written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is the heartfelt cry of a human being who simply doesn't like the situation he is in and is crying out about it."

What did the Holy Spirit inspire Jeremiah to write? The truth of his own heart's struggles, not a reflection of cosmic reality or God's actions!

This is critical to understand when reading Scripture—far too many people read proof-texting style, find a verse, the Bible says it, well there you have it.



SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Removed as we...” This is well said... any examples from the OT you would like to explore?

The lesson asks us to read Jeremiah 23:14,15:

And among the prophets of Jerusalem
I have seen something horrible:
They commit adultery and live a lie.
They strengthen the hands of evildoers,
so that no one turns from his wickedness.
They are all like Sodom to me;
the people of Jerusalem are like Gomorrah.”
¹⁵ Therefore, this is what the Lord Almighty says concerning the prophets:
**“I will make them eat bitter food
and drink poisoned water,**
because from the prophets of Jerusalem
ungodliness has spread throughout the land.”

What do you understand they were doing? What is the adultery to which the prophet speaks?

Many people take the Bible just as it reads and read sexual misconduct in this text, is that the problem?

What is adultery? It is betrayal! It is giving your heart, devotion, loyalty to another and betraying the one to whom you are committed.

From the SDA Bible Commentary on this passage:

The hypocritical boldness of the false prophets that led them to prophesy in the Lord’s name while they transgressed the Lord’s commandments was more “horrible” to Jeremiah than even the open worship of Baal. Because of the very nature of the sin of hypocrisy, there is more hope for the open sinner than for hypocrites. (Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1977). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 4, p. 441). Review and Herald Publishing Association.)

What do you think of God’s words to *make* them eat bitter food and poisoned water? To what is this referring?



Bread and water are symbols of God's word and Spirit—thus if they reject the truth from God and prefer lies, they will receive that which they have chosen, poison and bitterness.

Why do you think the Bible says it as if God is going to use His power to make it happen that way?

Any other examples of this and why?

This is because of the maturity level of the audience to whom God is speaking. He is speaking to people operating at level 1 moral development, where right and wrong is determined by reward and punishment. At this level the ruler to worship is the one with the most power because that ruler can punish all who disagree and reward those who agree. Thus, God presents Himself as powerful and throughout much of the OT you see God's spokespersons using such language. Remember Micaiah talking to Ahab?

Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left.²⁰ And the Lord said, 'Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?'

"One suggested this, and another that.²¹ Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the Lord and said, 'I will entice him.'

²² " 'By what means?' the Lord asked.

" 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,' he said.

" 'You will succeed in enticing him,' said the Lord. 'Go and do it.'

²³ "So now the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The Lord has decreed disaster for you." 1Kings 22:19-23

Here again is Scripture—do we take it as it reads, or do we understand something else is happening here? Does God lie? Do God's agents lie?

Who is the father of lies? Satan—so what is going on in this passage?

God, through Micaiah, is speaking to Ahab, king of Israel. God is merciful; God wants to avoid destruction of His people; God wants to send a message of warning to Ahab to cause Ahab to reconsider his choice and not go to war. So, how will God have to communicate to a worshipper of Baal? With a message that God is powerful and therefore God takes ownership, in this context, of the false message and Ahab is given a warning that the other prophets have lied and he will be killed if he goes to war.



Read Jeremiah 15:26-31:

“Among my people are wicked men who lie in wait like men who snare birds and like those **who set traps to catch men.** ²⁷ Like cages full of birds, their houses are full of deceit; they have become rich and powerful ²⁸ and have grown fat and sleek. Their evil deeds have no limit; **they do not plead the case of the fatherless to win it, they do not defend the rights of the poor.** ²⁹ Should I not punish them for this?” declares the Lord. “Should I not avenge myself on such a nation as this? ³⁰ “A horrible and shocking thing has happened in the land: ³¹ The prophets prophesy lies, the priests rule by their own authority, and my people love it this way. But what will you do in the end?”

They set traps to catch people—what is this talking about? What kind of traps?

- ponzi schemes?
- bait and switch?
- emails of missionary stranded and needs money?
- emails of won millions of dollars but held up for taxes and if pay the \$10,000 tax will get the money?
- emails purporting to be from your credit card company and reporting someone has misused your card and needing to get the number and security code to ensure it is in your possession?
- What about religious traps?
 - How about you have alien neural programming in your brain causing you to do bad things and if you want to live free you must get this foreign programming out of your brain, it will only cost you \$10,000 per treatment session to get this done?
 - How about systems that say if you donate we will send you a healing cloth that we have prayed over?
 - How about systems that say God is wrathful and angry and something must be done to turn away His anger and wrath?
 - From George Knight’s book, *The Cross of Christ*, which many theologians hold up as the best explanation of the atonement, we read:
 - “*God is angry and His anger is personal and active...* God’s wrath must be propitiated or turned away from the sinner. That was one aim of Christ’s self-sacrifice on the cross.” p 63,64 (emphasis in original text)
 - “The second Armageddon engagement [end of 1000 years] finds God executing His ultimate wrath not only on Satan, but on those sinners who have refused to accept (1) His principles into their lives and (2) Christ’s vicarious sacrificial propitiation (the basis of grace) that turned aside the divine wrath (judgment on sin).” p. 107



We find ourselves in the same position today as the Israelites in Jeremiah's day...people purporting to speak for God, yet telling lies about Him. This view of God is Satan's lies about God, it is all based on accepting the lie that God's law is like the laws fallen human beings make, rules without inherent consequence, which requires enforcement of penalties.

- It makes God out to be the source of pain, suffering and death.
- It undermines trust in God.
- It leads to theologies that function to protect us from God
- Here are the lies of this view:
 - God's law is imposed
 - God must inflict punishment
 - God is angry and must have something done to him to turn His anger and wrath aside or else He will lash out and destroy His children
 - Christ has a more gracious and tender character than the Father and died to save us from the Father
 - Grace wouldn't exist if Jesus didn't die to propitiate the Father
 - Divine wrath is the same as judgment on sin
 - Judgment is judicial

We, today, must learn to think for ourselves, must come to know God as Jesus revealed Him to be, must come to know God's law as the law of love, the design protocols reality functions upon and know our place in the history of the world, so that we can participate with God in telling the truth about Him to free people from enslavement to this false view—just as Jeremiah and the prophets of old were trying to do for Israel!

Back to the Jeremiah passage: What is the idea being expressed in “they do not plead the case of the fatherless to win it, they do not defend the rights of the poor”?

This is saying they are not “just” which is “right” or “righteous,” because righteousness is being and doing what is right or just. And the right or just way to be is like Jesus or God, and God is love. So God's justice is always an expression of love, which is restorative and entails all actions designed to deliver people from oppression, no punish oppressors.

But if that is so, how do we understand verse 29: “Should I not punish them for this?” declares the Lord. “Should I not avenge myself on such a nation as this?”

What is God's punishment? And what is His vengeance?



God's punishment is exactly what love does—it let's go to reap what one chooses, thus God warned them that He would punish by bringing the Babylonians, i.e. God would remove His protective hand at their insistence to be free from Him and they would end up slaves in Babylon—this is the punishment that sin itself brings, it is not inflicted by God.

And what then of vengeance? What would be the vengeance of God?

Before we read the Bible text, what was the result of their going into captivity? Did it result in humbling them and a remnant being saved and returning to the land?

Therefore the Lord, the Lord Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: “Ah, I will get relief from my foes and **avenge myself on my enemies.** ²⁵ I will turn my hand against you; **I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities.** Isa 1:24,25

What is God's vengeance? Upon what does God take vengeance? God takes vengeance upon sin like a doctor does disease! God's vengeance is upon sin! God work's to save sinners, not punish them!

Second to the last sentence in the Sunday's lesson states, “That despite all these evils, and more, He was willing to forgive them, heal them, and even restore them.”

Willing to forgive, does that mean He didn't forgive, refused to forgive, or remained unforgiving in some way?

This sounds again like viewing through human imposed law lenses where forgiveness takes on legal parameters and cannot be extended without proper legal aspects, including confession and repentance on part of the offender.

However, under design law, we realize that God forgives always, but His forgiveness doesn't always result in the offender accepting into their hearts His forgiveness—think of those who crucified Christ. He forgave them, but they wouldn't open their hearts, thus their condition remained in an unforgiven state, but God had forgiven them thus God was and is forgiving.

MONDAY

Read top paragraph, “The job...” Why do you think this is the case? What is it about us humans, that makes it hard to hear what God's spokespersons are saying?



Consider, however, Revelation 7, at the end of time the Bible predicts that the message given by God's spokespersons will result in a huge multitude from all over the world accepting the truth and being saved—what makes the difference?

- It will be given in a time of great tribulation or stress so people will be seeking answers
- It will be the most complete, evidenced-based, sensible and reasonable presentation of the truth about God ever given in human history
 - Even what Jesus presented when on earth was couched in parables, metaphors and symbols—but the final message is to be articulated in the most clear, reality based language possible.

In Jeremiah chapter 20 verses 1-6, Jeremiah prophesies against Pashur, telling him he will be taken off into captivity and he along with his family and friends will all die. Then the lesson asks, at the bottom, “Imagine hearing something like that prophesied against you. What would you think your initial reaction would be, as opposed to what it should be? (What should it be, anyway?)”

Isn't the first question—who is giving the prophecy? Is everyone who claims they come with a message from the Lord, really speaking for God? If a message is from God—doesn't God somehow make that apparent?

When Elijah faced the 450 priests of Baal didn't God make it apparent which of the spokespersons spoke for Him?

Was it only on that day with fire, or had God been making it apparent for some time? How?

- In the books of Moses with explicit guidelines and instructions regarding truth and lies
- With 3.5 years of drought

Other examples? When we read in Scripture where Jeremiah or other prophets say God deceives or lies—should we take this at face value and conclude, “they are speaking for God, who am I to question?” Or, something else?

So if someone prophesies against you, what is a healthy reaction?

- From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks—consider the source, who they are, their motives, what does it say about them?
- Step back and humble talk to God yourself and ask God to lead you to know the truth—and study God's word in Scripture, Nature and Experience to evaluate if your life is living in harmony with God's design



- Other courses of action?

But what about the church, Jeremiah's prophecy was about the entire nation, what about saying such things about the church today?

WEDNESDAY

The first paragraph, starting in the middle states:

“As stated before, the God these prophets served is perfect; the prophets who served Him were not. They, like the rest of us, were sinners in need of the **righteousness of Christ to be credited to them by faith** (see *Rom 3:22*). From Noah to Peter, and everyone in between, all were sin-damaged creatures whose only hope was, as Ellen G. White says, to go before the Lord and say: ‘I have no **merit** or goodness whereby I may **claim salvation**, but I present before God the **all-atoning blood of the spotless Lamb of God**, which taketh away the **sin of the world**. This is my only **plea**. The **name of Jesus gives me access to the Father**. His ear, His heart, is open to my faintest pleading, and He supplies my deepest necessities.’ *Faith and Works*, p. 106.”

The lesson authors use language crafted by and is an outgrowth of accepting the imposed law construct, the false legal gospel that came from the Dark Ages in these words “the righteousness of Christ is credited to them by faith.”

I looked at every use in EGW's writings of “credited” and not once does she use it to suggest Christ's righteousness is credited to us.

In the book, *The Cross of Christ*, by George Knight, we have a typical presentation of justification based on Satan's view of God's law, the idea that God's law functions like human law, rules imposed that require punishment.

Paul coined the metaphor of justification to meet the problem of the legal curse of the law with its death penalty...justification brings us to the courtroom... Is a person righteous or guilty before the divine judge? In Romans 3 justification does not mean “to make righteous,” but rather “to declare righteous.” “The root idea in justification,” George Eldon Ladd writes, “is the declaration of God, the righteous judge, that the man who believes in Christ, sinful though he may be,... is viewed as being righteous, because in Christ he has come into a righteous relationship with God.”... One would expect a just God to punish those who deserve it. That is what justice means. p. 71, 72.



This is the typical view one holds when one believes God's law functions like human law, but an entire new reality opens upon us when we realize the truth that God is Creator and His law is the protocols upon which reality functions, deviations of which are incompatible with life.

Biblical justice as we have pointed out many times is delivering the oppressed, not punishing the oppressor. This idea that sin is breaking rules which requires the ruling authority to inflict punishment is satanic!

Before I read any more EGW quotes about righteousness by faith (which is justification), let's decode the quote the lesson used. First, note there is much symbolic language or ill-defined language:

- Merit—some objective fact or state of being which is worthy of reward, acknowledgment, praise
- Claim—to demand by right or by inherent fact
- Salvation—which law lens? If one uses imposed law then this takes on legal connotations, but design law this is restoration and healing
- Atonement—which law lens? appease, or restore to unity?
- Blood—symbol for life
- Lamb of God—sinless Jesus
- Sin of the world—which law lens? If imposed this is read to mean every bad act was placed upon Christ and God punished Christ for those bad acts. Under design law we realize Christ took away the terminal condition, the sinful state of being was removed by Christ!
- Plea—which law lens? Impose law then we read this as a legal plea, "Based on the innocence of Jesus who paid my penalty, I plead not guilty." But through design law we read this as a patient calling out to the doctor "save me!"
- Name of Jesus—legal view—the legal accomplishments of Jesus, speak the right name and we are granted access because Jesus has met the legal requirements in our behalf. Design law we realize name is symbolic of character and thus we have Christ's character within—it is only those who are like Christ who can actually enter God's presence, why? Because the others don't want to be there, it is torture to them because their condition is out of harmony with God, thus they run and hide and beg mountains to cover them!

So in decoded language we read:

'I have no healthiness of character or goodness of heart whereby I may claim to be in harmony with God's design and thus eternally well, but I present before God the all-healing and restoring life of the perfect Son of God, which removes all defects and deviations



from God's design. This is my only hope of life, for which I call out in need. The character of Jesus heals me and enables me to enter the Father's presence.'

So the Bible teaches that justification is a change in the heart of the believer from our natural state of enmity (Rom 8:7) to a state of trust. Romans 4 states, Abraham trusted God and after his heart changed from distrust to trust, then God recognized him as righteous. One has to read into the text some legal accounting or crediting elements that do not exist in God's reality.

Here are several EGW quotes that make this quite clear:

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. **But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty.** [Notice this is Christ developing a perfect human character and then healing humans back to this perfect state. This is literal not metaphorical.] **Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ.** God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2} [If you see someone drowning, is it right or just to pull them from the water and administer CPR to revive them? What law are you operating under? Why, if you want them to live, must you do this? This is God's justice and what He accomplished for us through Christ.]

Many who hold to the imposed law concept, and thus to the false legal view, have made a big deal out of the difference between "imputed" and "imparted" righteousness. Notice EGWs use of imputed:

The great work that is wrought for the sinner who is spotted and stained by evil is the work of justification. **By Him who speaketh truth he is declared righteous. The Lord imputes unto the believer the righteousness of Christ and pronounces him righteous before the universe. He transfers his sins to Jesus, the sinner's representative, substitute, and surety.** Upon Christ He lays the iniquity of every soul that believeth. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Corinthians 5:21. . . . {FLB 112.4} [Those who hold the legal view want to stop right hear, with this very symbolic language, rather than allowing the author who wrote those words to explain.]

Through repentance and faith we are rid of sin, and look unto the Lord our righteousness. Jesus suffered, the just for the unjust. . . . {FLB 112.5} [note we are rid of sin, not the punishment of God for sin]



Having *made us righteous* through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just. [what comes first? The actual change of heart of the believer from distrust to trust, which is setting the heart right, which is justification.] He looks upon us as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds. Where does sin abound, in record books or in hearts? Where is Christ working against the power of sin, in the courtrooms of heaven or in characters of people? Is the power of sin at work in heaven? Or is He working in our hearts and minds? "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Romans 5:1, 2. {Faith I Live By 112.6}

By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him. {God's Amazing Grace 96.4}

Abundant grace has been provided that the believing soul may be kept free from sin; for all heaven, with its limitless resources, has been placed at our command... In ourselves we are sinners; but in Christ we are righteous. Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just. He looks upon us as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds. Where does sin abound, in books or hearts? Where does grace abound? {AG 181.4}

We aim too low. The mark is much higher. Our minds need expansion, that we may comprehend the significance of the provision of God. We are to reflect the highest attributes of the character of God. . . . The law of God is the exalted standard to which we are to attain through the imputed righteousness of Christ. {Our High Calling 364.2}

He would have us comprehend something of His love in giving His Son to die that He might counteract evil, remove the defiling stains of sin from the workmanship of God, and reinstate the lost, elevating and ennobling the soul to its original purity through Christ's imputed righteousness. That I May Know Him 206

Revelation teaches that the entire world will end up worshipping Satan, other than a remnant who remain loyal to Jesus and adhere to God's commandments—what does this mean?



The entire world will worship a god who imposes laws and must punish law breakers, who have accepted the legal payment of their sins to appease and propitiate the heavenly judge—all except those who are loyal to Jesus and live in harmony with His law of love!

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Despite all the evil...” Does God every stop giving people a chance to repent?

Which law lens do we look through?

What is the obstacle that stops people from repenting? Their own hard hearts!

FRIDAY

Read top paragraph, “In Jeremiah 18....” If God knows the future choices of people, why warn them when He knows they won’t listen?

Read and discuss question 1



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The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
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January 9, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, California.

January 29-30, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven Church in St. Helena, CA.

March 11-12, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Village Church, College Place, WA.

April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.



Jeremiah 4Q 2015 Lesson 6

Symbolic Acts

SABBATH

We have talked a little bit about where the time of Jeremiah's prophetic calling fits in Israel's history as a nation, it is important to understand the time of Jeremiah within the context of the wider history of Israel – which was characterized by seemingly endless repetitions of apostasy and rebellion. Those rebellious repetitions included a partially completed conquest; the time of Judges with all its atrocities; the united monarchy with Saul's apostasy; David's adultery and Solomon's idolatry, followed by the divided monarchy (when Judah split off), with endless lists of bad kings, interrupted by a few good ones; the Assyrian captivity of the northern tribes; and the degradation of Judah that finally led to the Babylonian exile.

“During all these times, God had sent men, women, judges, prophets, priests, and kings to bring about Israel's repentance and return to the Lord, but without success. It should not surprise us that God finally used symbols and messages that pointed to the *irreversibility of His judgments*.”

The validity of this statement, of course, depends on how one defines “His judgments”. If these are defined as accurate diagnoses of hearts, minds, and characters...then the statement is correct –

“Israel is stubborn as a mule. How can God lead him like a lamb to open pasture? Ephraim is addicted to idols. Let him go.” Hosea 4:16-17 MSG

The impending Babylonian captivity was **NOT** God's inflicted punishment or judgment on Israel. It was the inescapable consequence of repeatedly ignoring God's instructions, his natural laws (letting the land rest from farming), and removing themselves from His protection and blessing.

“Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?” After all, the man who makes the pots has the right to use the clay as he wishes, and to make two pots from the same lump of clay, one for special occasions and the other for ordinary use. (GNT)

Is that crystal clear for everybody? Paul is referencing some of the symbolism used both by and for Jeremiah, and we will talk more about that in a bit, but wanted to read this text in context from The Remedy New Testament paraphrase starting with verse 16:

“Our healing doesn't depend on some effort, desire, or work on our part, but on the fact that God is merciful and offers the Remedy freely to everyone. For the Scripture says of Pharaoh, “I raised you up so that I might pour out my truth upon you and that my character might be known throughout the entire world. And even though you resisted me and fought against me, I was patient and merciful with you.” Therefore, God is merciful to whom he chooses, and stern to those he chooses. One of you might protest and say, “Then why does God still blame us, if he does whatever he wants?” But, this complaint



only shows how little you know about God and his methods and purposes. You confuse God's desire to heal and restore everyone to his original ideal with his wise plan to assign different duties and responsibilities to different individuals. You also fail to realize that different conditions require different applications of the Remedy. Doesn't the potter have the right to use some clay to make pottery for noble uses, and from the same clay to make pottery for ordinary purposes? What if God, choosing to reveal what will happen, patiently continued to offer treatment to those who refuse his healing Remedy, and yet they refused to take his free cure anyway? What if, in this way, God revealed that such people prepare themselves for death and destruction? What if he did this to make the richness of his character known to those who would accept the Remedy, and thus, by the revelation of the truth about himself, prepare them to be fully transformed into Christlike glory? This is what he has done! He has called all people, both Jews and Gentiles, to healing and restoration into Christlikeness of character and into partnership with him to spread the Remedy."

Do those texts take on different meaning using this perspective?

Three symbols from Jeremiah were chosen this week to illustrate God's lessons from Jeremiah to the citizens of Judah

- The Potter's Clay
- Smashing a Clay Jar
- The Linen Belt

Read the first paragraph from Sabbath afternoon's lesson...

"The significance of the Jewish economy is not yet fully comprehended. Truths vast and profound are shadowed forth in its rites and symbols. The gospel is the key that unlocks its mysteries. Through a knowledge of the plan of redemption, its truths are opened to the understanding." Christ's Object Lessons, p. 133.

This was written at least one hundred years ago. Do we now "fully comprehend" the significance of the Jewish economy?

What direction of revelation is this going?

What is the reality and what is the symbol?

What is the clearest presentation of the "gospel" that has been presented so far?

Who is the most reliable witness about what God is really like? "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." John 14:9

Most Christians do not really believe this. Who would you rather see and greet in heaven? If someone were to invite you to go to see God, who would you ask for?

Would you need someone to go with you into God's presence?

Many see God with a split personality: both good and bad in the same person, almost as if there were two faces on His Head. When God separates those on His right hand from those on His left: Matthew 25:31 – 46 What will His face look like when He sends those who have not chosen Him to eternal destruction? "They insist on turning away from me... How can I give you up, Israel? How can I abandon you?" Hosea 11:7, 8

What sorrow God has for the loss of His children

The life of Christ sheds light on the Old Testament, not the other way around. Many people have devised or



understood how the plan of salvation works from looking at the sanctuary service and then interpreted Christ and His Mission from that perspective. Rather than looking at Christ and understanding the sanctuary service based on the clarity revealed by the life of Christ.

What are some common problems that come from extensive use of symbols and symbolic language?

- Focusing too much or exclusively on the symbol rather than on the object or reality it points to. If you have a real, physical object...and you have a shadow of that object, which is another definition for a symbol...what is the best way to learn more about the physical object? Spend time studying the shadow or symbol of the object...or spend time studying the actual object? Can you think of any Biblical examples of when this happened?
- There is also significant opportunity for misunderstanding both the symbol and the object. If we misunderstand the ultimate reality, we will likely misinterpret the symbols...and vice versa. Look at how a misunderstanding of the penal substitution/atonement model of salvation can cause the earthly sanctuary symbols and rituals to be misinterpreted – and that can go both ways as well. The quote from COL in Saturday's lesson speaks effectively to this subject, but as I read the entire chapter...the paragraphs before and after really spoke to me and encouraged me in my study – especially when studying some of these symbols or beasts or prophecies...I can get frustrated, so hopefully they can encourage you as well:

• “The words of truth will grow in importance, and assume a breadth and fullness of meaning of which we have never dreamed. The beauty and riches of the word have a transforming influence on mind and character. The light of heavenly love will fall upon the heart as an inspiration. The appreciation of the Bible grows with its study. Whichever way the student may turn, he will find displayed the infinite wisdom and love of God. The significance of the Jewish economy is not yet fully comprehended. Truths vast and profound are shadowed forth in its rites and symbols. ***The gospel is the key that unlocks its mysteries.*** Through a knowledge of the plan of redemption, its truths are opened to the understanding. Far more than we do, it is our privilege to understand these wonderful themes. We are to comprehend the deep things of God. Angels desire to look into the truths that are revealed to the people who with contrite hearts are searching the word of God, and praying for greater lengths and breadths and depths and heights of the knowledge which He alone can give. In giving us His word, God has put us in possession of every truth essential for our salvation. Thousands have drawn water from these wells of life, yet there is no diminishing of the supply. Thousands have set the Lord before them, and by beholding have been changed into the same image. Their spirit burns within them as they speak of His character, telling what Christ is to them, and what they are to Christ. But these searchers have not exhausted these grand and holy themes. Thousands more may engage in the work of searching out the mysteries of salvation. As the life of Christ and the character of His mission are dwelt upon, rays of light will shine forth more distinctly at every attempt to discover truth. Each fresh search will reveal something more deeply interesting than has yet been unfolded. The subject is inexhaustible. The study of the incarnation of Christ, His atoning sacrifice and mediatorial work, will employ the mind of the diligent student as long as time shall last; and looking to heaven with its unnumbered years he will exclaim, “Great is the mystery of godliness.” COL pp 132-133



So...if you ever feel like your Bible study is futile...that you're not getting it? Or if you read almost weekly in your lesson quarterlies that we are not capable of or meant to understand how God works...God's ways are higher than our ways, etc., this author says "We are to comprehend the deep things of God."

Symbols: Their meaning - Past, Present, and Future

- Past: reminders of something that happened in the past
 - Abraham's altars
 - The parts of the Passover service. We often think of this as a temple service, but for many it was a local, home service/ritual (see Deut 14:22 - 26)
 - Pillar of stones at the Israeli side of the Jordan River where the Children of Israel crossed over
 - Emblems instituted at the Last Supper
- Present: Warnings, knowledge, guidance/instruction/explanation
- Future: Hidden meanings, convey information not comprehended at that time (jets, rockets, TV)
 - Daniel
 - Revelation
 - Matthew 24

Some symbols have all three meanings:

- Wedding ring
- The Sabbath has very similar qualities

Some biblical symbols are used for two different (almost contradictory) meanings.

- Lion: Christ, Satan
- Snake: Christ, Satan

What is more important: the symbol or the reality to which it points?

SUNDAY

Truth in Symbols

Read Genesis 4:3-7 story of Cain and Able's sacrifices

Read paragraph #2. Do you really think either Cain or Able understood the situation in those terms?

Why did Able's sacrifice satisfy the requirement and Cain's did not? Was it because God demanded it or was there something intrinsic within the sacrifice itself that made Cain's offering unacceptable?

"Why this frenzy of sacrifices?" God's asking. "Don't you think I've had my fill of burnt sacrifices, rams and plump grain-fed calves? Don't you think I've had my fill of blood from bulls, lambs, and goats? When you come before me, whoever gave you the idea of acting like this, Running here and there, doing this and that—all this sheer commotion in the place provided for worship? "Quit your worship charades. I can't stand your trivial religious games: Monthly conferences, weekly Sabbaths, special meetings—meetings, meetings, meetings—I can't stand one more! Meetings for this, meetings for that. I hate them! You've worn me out! I'm sick of your religion, religion, religion, while you go right on sinning. When you put on your next prayer-performance, I'll be looking the other way.



No matter how long or loud or often you pray, I'll not be listening. And do you know why? Because you've been tearing people to pieces, and your hands are bloody. Go home and wash up. Clean up your act. Sweep your lives clean of your evil doings so I don't have to look at them any longer. Say no to wrong. Learn to do good. Work for justice. Help the down-and-out. Stand up for the homeless. Go to bat for the defenseless." "Come. Sit down. Let's argue this out." This is God's Message: "If your sins are blood-red, they'll be snow-white. If they're red like crimson, they'll be white like wool." Isaiah 1

So what is God looking for in a sacrificial offering?

- Romans 12:1 – Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. The Message says, “Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.”
- 1 Peter 2:4-5 – As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him — you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- Psalm 51:17 – My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

Read Numbers 21:4 - 9: The Bronze Snake on a pole/standard

- People believed God and looked and were healed
- Came at some cost of commitment
- You had to go to a place where you could see the snake or the snake could come to you. You had to get out of your tent.
- The story of my back pain and inability to move. If Sharon had called an ambulance, how was that going to help?

Earthly sanctuary service: Read the 4th paragraph “All through the Old Testament, the earthly sanctuary service was the most detailed symbolic representation of the plan of salvation.” “The most important of all truths taught there: . . .”

What do you think is the most important truth taught by the sanctuary service?

The people must make a sacred Tent for me, so that I may live among them. Exodus 25:8

“For sin pays its wage—death; but God's free gift is eternal life in union with Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23

Christ / God should be in the center of our camp / lives, and he is continually ministering to our needs and best interest. God is Holy and yet in the midst of our daily lives.

What we do (whether in worship or daily live) means everything to God

“Great peace have the which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. Those who love your law have perfect security, and there is nothing that can make them fall.” Psalms 119:165

“In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed,



that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice.**” DA 761.4

Read next paragraph: “In fact, through the sanctuary. . .”

- What went wrong?
- What needs to be “put right”
- What is God like?
- What is God doing to restore the universe
- Can God be trusted with power
- How do you define love

How you understand these symbols will largely determine your view of these current “God actions”

Most people define love as something that is inward focused: about themselves

- Love is the outward focus of the mind for the benefit of others
- Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.” John 3:3

Unless we are born again we cannot even understand God’s perspective, let alone go to where God is.

I like the quote from PP 431 in Sunday’s lesson that reads:

“The Israelites saved their lives by looking upon the uplifted serpent. That look implied faith. They lived because they believed God’s word, and trusted in the means provided for their recovery.”

That faith and trust in the means provided for our recovery - the remedy - is still how we are saved today.

MONDAY

The Potter’s Clay

The lesson gives us 6 texts that compare God’s children to clay (including the creation of man). Is God maybe pointing out some differences between a creator and his creations?

Isaiah 29:16
(MSG) Doom to you! You pretend to have the inside track. You shut God out and work behind the scenes, Plotting the future as if you knew everything, acting mysterious, never showing your hand. You have everything backward! You treat the potter as a lump of clay. Does a book say to its author, “He didn’t write a word of me”? Does a meal say to the woman who cooked it, “She had nothing to do with this”? (NIV) Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the Lord, who do their work in darkness and think, “Who sees us? Who will know?” You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, “You did not make me”? Can the pot say to the potter, “You know nothing”?

Isaiah 45:9



(MSG) That I've singled you out, called you by name, and given you this privileged work. And you don't even know me! I am God, the only God there is. Besides me there are no real gods. I'm the one who armed you for this work, though you don't even know me, So that everyone, from east to west, will know that I have no god-rivals. I am God, the only God there is. I form light and create darkness, I make harmonies and create discords. I, God, do all these things. "Open up, heavens, and rain. Clouds, pour out buckets of my goodness!

Loosen up, earth, and bloom salvation; sprout right living. I, God, generate all this. But doom to you who fight your Maker— you're a pot at odds with the potter! Does clay talk back to the potter: 'What are you doing? What clumsy fingers!' Would a sperm say to a father, 'Who gave you permission to use me to make a baby?' Or a fetus to a mother, 'Why have you cooped me up in this belly?'" (NIV) "Woe to those who quarrel with their Maker, those who are nothing but potsherds among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?' Does your work say, 'The potter has no hands'?"

Isaiah 64:8

(MSG) Still, God, you are our Father. We're the clay and you're our potter: All of us are what you made us. Don't be too angry with us, O God. Don't keep a permanent account of wrongdoing. Keep in mind, please, we are your people—all of us.

(NIV) Yet you, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be angry beyond measure, Lord; do not remember our sins forever. Oh, look on us, we pray, for we are all your people.

The quarterly mentions that Jeremiah faced nearly constant rejection and persecution for his message of warning and repentance...he was undoubtedly discouraged and may have wondered at times whether saving the Israelite nation was worth the struggle and the fight.

Read the second paragraph: "No question. . ." Do you believe "the Lord is in control of the world."?

Do you believe "He will triumph, regardless of appearances now."? Why? What kind of power will he use? What kind of power has he used?

Radio station on Friday said that God is in control and just as he "forced" Saul to be converted he could force any of us at any time. Is that true? If that is true, why did He not do it in the past all the time? Why does He not do it now? (Or is He doing it now and I / we are missing it?) What of free will?

What kind of power has God so far used in this world?

- creation
- flood
- release of restraint
- Christ's life

Has God ever forced people to do His will? examples?

Will God change His tactics?

What do we do with the concept of God's sovereignty?

Monday's lesson concludes with:



"We can rest assured that, despite the reality of human free will and free choices, and the often calamitous results of abusing that free will, in the end, we can hope in the absolute sovereignty of our loving and self-sacrificing God, whose love is revealed on the cross. Evil won't triumph; God and His love will."

TUESDAY

The Degeneration of a Nation

What a timely title, right? As a nation, Judah was kind of in a downward spiral...they had forsaken God, they were offering incense to other gods, shedding innocent blood with human sacrifices, and had "estranged" the physical temple and/or their spirit temples.

"The crucial point, though, is that the nation was to be holy, special to the Lord, something different and distinct from the nations around them. But that's not what happened. They lost their unique character, the distinctiveness that would have made them a witness to the world. They became just like everyone else."

The quarterly asks, what lessons are here for us? Should there be a difference in divorce rates in Christian versus non-Christian homes? Should Christian homes have lower rates of domestic violence than non-Christian homes?

"I am going to do this because the people have abandoned me and defiled this place by offering sacrifices here to other gods—gods that neither they nor their ancestors nor the kings of Judah have known anything about. They have filled this place with the blood of innocent people, and they have built altars for Baal in order to burn their children in the fire as sacrifices. I never commanded them to do this; it never even entered my mind." Jeremiah 19:4, 5

Last sentence of the first paragraph:

"They lost their unique character, the distinctiveness that would have made them a witness to the world. They became just like everyone else."

How did they do that?

- Dress
- Music
- Culture

Why is that important? What is important about being different? In what ways were they to be different?

Story of surgery frustrations/behavior/speech

- This "Moses" had much less provocation than Moses did with the COI at the rock.
- "Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. . . And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry," Ephesians 4:23, 24, 26 (NLT)-
- Had to apologize
- Statements of those to whom I offended.

How are we truly to be different from the world?



“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!” Galatians 5:22 (NLT)

“Behold,” said Jesus, “I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” Christ did not suppress one word of truth, but He always spoke it in love. He was never rude, never gave needless pain to a sensitive soul. He did not scold human weakness. He fearlessly condemned hypocrisy and evil, but tears were in His voice as He spoke His sharpest rebukes. Every person was precious in His eyes. The servants of Christ need to have close fellowship with God, or else when others irritate them self may rise up and they release a torrent of words that are not like the dew or the soft showers that refresh the withering plants. God’s servants are to fasten their eyes on Christ’s loveliness. Then they can present the gospel with divine tact. And the spirit that is kept gentle when dealing with difficult people or circumstances will speak more effectively in favor of truth than any argument, no matter how strong.” {HH 160.3}

How did Judah offend God? Jeremiah 19:4

- Forsaken me (God)
- Estranged this place
- Burned incense to other gods
- Filled this place with blood of innocents

Ways I offend God

- Poor
- Aliens
- “Others”
- Abortion
- Workers who are in different jobs than I am
- Administration personnel

Read 1 Corinthians 13

Last night, the strongest hurricane that has ever been measured and recorded in the Western Hemisphere slammed into the western coast of Mexico. What did you do when you heard about it?

- Shook your head
- Thanked God for it being somewhere else,
- Did you do anything positive, physically, to assist with this disaster?

The Lord condemned Israel for forgetting the poor, the widows, the orphans. We do not have poverty of the widows and orphans in this country like they did in ancient Israel. We do have poverty, poor education, poor career opportunities for:

- single mothers
- 80 percent of children born in the United States have minimal health insurance
- CDC 2013: 40% of children are born to unmarried mothers

Children born to unmarried mothers are more likely to grow up in a single-parent household, experience unstable living arrangements, live in poverty, and have socio-emotional problems.[1] ,[2] ,[3] ,[4] As these children reach adolescence, they are more likely to have low



educational attainment, engage in sex at a younger age, and have a birth outside of marriage.[5] ,[6] ,[7] ,[8] As young adults, children born outside of marriage are more likely to be idle (neither in school nor employed), have lower occupational status and income, and have more troubled marriages and more divorces than those born to married parents.[9]

Women who give birth outside of marriage tend to be more disadvantaged than their married counterparts, both before and after the birth. Unmarried mothers generally have lower incomes, lower education levels, and are more likely to be dependent on welfare assistance compared with married mothers.[10] ,[11] ,[12] ,[13] Women who have a nonmarital birth also tend to fare worse than childless single women; for example, they have reduced marriage prospects compared with single women without children.[14] ,[15] - See more at: <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=births-to-unmarried-women#sthash.UHQ4Su4W.dpuf>

There are more people in poverty in the US now than anytime within the last 50 years.

“We love because God first loved us. If we say we love God, but hate others, we are liars. For we cannot love God, whom we have not seen, if we do not love others, whom we have seen. The command that Christ has given us is this: whoever loves God must love others also.” 1 John 4:19, 20

WEDNESDAY

Smashing the Jar

God instructs Jeremiah to go buy a clay pot, then invite a few of the city leaders and church elders out to the city gate...go over the bullet list of atrocities we just covered in Tuesday’s lesson, warn of the impending catastrophes... and then smash the clay pot into a gazillion pieces and say,

“This is what God-of-the-Angel-Armies says: I’ll smash this people and this city like a man who smashes a clay pot into so many pieces it can never be put together again. They’ll bury bodies here in Topheth until there’s no more room. And the whole city will become a Topheth. The city will be turned by people and kings alike into a center for worshiping the star gods and goddesses, turned into an open grave, the whole city an open grave, stinking like a sewer, like Topheth.”

This behavior did not appear to win Jeremiah any friends, and sadly failed to serve its symbolic purpose to wake up or convict the Israelites. In fact, Prophets and Kings p.432 says,

“The prophet’s words, instead of leading to confession and repentance, aroused the anger of those high in authority, and as a consequence Jeremiah was deprived of his liberty. Imprisoned, and placed in the stocks, the prophet nevertheless continued to speak the messages of heaven to those who stood by. His voice could not be silenced by persecution.”

Read the highlighted box at the bottom of the page

“Think of something ruined - ruined beyond repair. What was it originally made for and what happened to it that now rendered it useless? How careful we need to be that this doesn’t happen to us!”

Did the thing get ruined because it was stated to be so? Or did it not have inherent qualities that made it so. We believe something is good, bad / useful or not useful because of its inherent qualities: not because someone declares it to be so. Something remains useful unless the declaration changes us, our perceptions, so that it is no



longer useful. Just because something is declared correct, does not mean it is correct and vice versa.

THURSDAY

The Linen Belt

Read Jeremiah 13:1 – 11

- The story of the linen waistband
- Buy belt / girdle / innermost piece of clothing / underwear / loincloth
- Wear belt next to himself / contact / close to him
- Journey 350 miles, 1 month long?
- Bury the linen sash in the River Euphrates
- Travel back Home
- Travel back to the River Euphrates
- Dig up the sash
- The sash is ruined

FRIDAY

Further Thoughts

David Livingstone was a missionary in Africa at a time when that was very difficult to do. He eventually died in Africa. You could say he paid the highest price possible for the gospel of Christ, yet, there was no debt that he was paying.

“To many minds the origin of sin and the reason for its existence are a source of great perplexity. They see the work of evil, with its terrible results of woe and desolation, and they question how all this can exist under the sovereignty of One who is infinite in wisdom, in power, and in love. Here is a mystery of which they find no explanation. And in their uncertainty and doubt they are blinded to truths plainly revealed in God’s word and essential to salvation.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 492.



Jeremiah 4Q 2015 Lesson 7

The Crisis Continues

SABBATH

Read memory text: “But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I *am* the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,” says the Lord.” Jer 9:24 NKJV

What do you understand this text to be saying?

Does it resonate with an end time prophecy for an end time people? “Fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment has come...” Rev 14:7

Could this text give insight and enlighten us as to what Rev 14:7 means?

What is the Jeremiah text telling us is necessary in order to glorify God? And what is to be the basis for our glories? The knowledge of God—can a person glorify God if they don’t actually know Him? Will this be an issue at the end of time to which Revelation points?

So, what is the Jeremiah text telling us about God, that we are supposed to know and be the basis of our glorying in Him?

From the SDA Bible Commentary on Jeremiah 9:24:

The truly wise ascribe praise to God alone, never to self (see on v. 23). The knowledge of God is the only true ground for glorying (see 1 Cor. 1:31; 2 Cor. 10:17). That man alone is truly wise in whose heart such knowledge is treasured, for it is life eternal (John 17:3). **This knowledge has an intellectual aspect involving the understanding. Man’s relationship to God has a reasonable and intelligent basis. It is no blind discipleship.** Man is to serve God with all the mind (Matt. 22:37). **But knowing God goes beyond a merely theoretical understanding. It is an experimental knowledge. It is practical.** It manifests itself in walking in God’s ways (see Job 22:21; Jer. 22:16).¹

¹ Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1977). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 4, p. 398). Review and Herald Publishing Association.



This is well said—the knowledge of God includes knowing God’s character, methods, design. It is an intelligent appreciation of and participation in God’s ways of doing things. This is the integrative evidence-based approach. If our understanding of God has no applicable and practical aspect then there is something wrong with our understanding.

So, the commentary, is describing Design law, not imposed law.

With this in mind, let’s unpack the further descriptors of God in the passage: “That I *am* the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.”

- Lovingkindness—what is this describing? Agape love, God is love!
 - The law of love—as Jesus said God provides the sun and rain to all people without regard. God’s love and truth is poured out from heaven upon all humanity, as is the Remedy for sin—it is up to us to partake.
- What about Judgment—what is this referring to?
 - the Hebrew is *mishpat* and is the same Hebrew is used in Jer 5:4: “Therefore I said, “Surely these *are* poor. They are foolish; For they do not know the way of the LORD, The judgment of their God.” NKJV
 - Then I thought, “These are only the poor and ignorant. They behave foolishly; they don’t know what their God requires, what the LORD wants them to do. Jer 5:4 GNB
 - Then I said, “These are only the poor, they have no sense; for they do not know the way of the LORD, the law of their God. Jer 5:4NRSV
 - What is the word “judgment” referring to in our memory passage? God’s design law. It is saying we cannot glorify in God unless we know God’s character of love, and also His design law of love upon which life is built to operate
- Righteousness—means what? Doing what is right, knowing, in this context, that God always does the right thing, which is an expression of His character of love and in harmony with His law of love!

The problem we face is that these texts get translated and interpreted through the false law lens, the imposed law lens and thus all types of legal connotations, based on sinful human beings ways of making laws, gets projected onto God.

Here is our memory text from *The Message*:



“If you brag, brag of this and this only: That you understand and know me. I’m God, and I act in loyal love. I do what’s right and set things right and fair, and delight in those who do the same things. These are my trademarks.” God’s Decree.”

Doesn’t this sound a lot different than the typical judicial way of reading it? This is the message we are to be taking about God and the end of earth’s history—because the hour in which God’s character is being judged has come!

Read second paragraph, “Imagine what would...” Why would the crisis have been averted?

The lesson suggests the door to salvation had not been closed, what closes the door to salvation? Who closes the door to salvation?

Does God have a time on a celestial calendar and He is counting down to it and when we reach that time He shuts down opportunity? Or, is it that events transpire on earth that bring a crisis and each person either embraces truth and is transformed or rejects it and is hardened?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “In Jeremiah 9...” What do you understand the lesson is trying to say? What are they saying about God? What kind of God are they describing?

Let’s first evaluate their assertions—when God says something He does it—is this an absolute truth, or does God say something, but if circumstances change, God adapts and changes?

- Did God tell Jonah that He was going to destroy Nineveh? Did God give Jonah any caveats that needed to be met to avert the action?
- Did God tell Moses He was going to destroy Israel and start over with him? Did God tell Moses any caveats that needed to be met in order to avert the action?
- Why does God say things and then change based on what happens? God speaks in the way that is most effective to bring about God’s purposes—to heal, save, reveal truth etc.

So, is the statement by the authors “when God says something He does it,” a completely accurate description of God? What is wrong with what they have said? They have made God out to be arbitrary and dictatorial, rigid, inflexible...

Now, let’s be fair, I think the authors are trying to make God out to be reliable, dependable, constant, predictable, a God who never changes, the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. The problem is that



they focus on behavior rather than character. If they focus on God's character and methods then we find the solid Rock, the reliable, never changing gracious God of love, truth and freedom, but love changes its ACTIONS based on the needs of the situations.

When we view God's law as functioning like our own, then we make these errors of creating a dictator, rigid god.

How does the lesson make God's judgments sound? Do they sound like punishments inflicted? I find this sounding a lot like level one speech, the idea that right and wrong is determined by reward and punishment. At this level a ruler establishes the right to rule by displays of power. So the authors are describing a powerful God who can punish.

Notice the huge difference in how EGW describes these events in the next paragraph:

"The cross is a **revelation to our dull senses** of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God. **Every departure from the right, every deed of cruelty, every failure of humanity to reach His ideal, brings grief to Him.** When there came upon Israel the **calamities that were the sure result of separation from God,—subjugation by their enemies, cruelty, and death,**--it is said that "His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." "In all their affliction He was afflicted: . . . and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old." Judges 10:16; Isaiah 63:9. {Ed 263.1}

Notice—the judgments of God as described by EGW are not inflictions to punish, but setting them free to experience what they have persistently chosen, separation from Him. And when one separates from God, the source of life, when one deviates from the law upon which life is constructed, the only result is pain, suffering and death.

Read bottom pink section: "What does the Cross tell us about the loving-kindness, the justice, and righteousness of God?"

- God so loved the world...His love is manifest is His giving His life for us
- Justice—is doing what is right—and thus Christ did what was right, He perfectly revealed God's character, developed a perfect human character, rejected the temptations of fear and selfishness and cured the human sin condition—all in harmony with the law upon which life is designed
- Righteousness—the perfection of God's character and methods lived out by Christ (in the Greek Justice and Righteousness are the same)



MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “As we have seen...” The lesson says the people were steeped in paganism, idolatry, and false teachings.

- Who were the people who were steeped in paganism, idolatry and false teaching? They were God’s chosen, the church on earth at that time.
- Is it possible Christianity today is steeped in paganism and idolatry?
- What do you understand the essence of paganism and idolatry to be?

Idolatry and paganism, at its essence is worshipping a lie—a false view of God:

Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshipping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshipping the true God. {FLB 59.8}

What are the elements that have been accepted by Christians, that actually cause Christianity to teach a false view of God, and thus lead people into paganism?

- 1. God’s law is imposed—thus God must inflict punishment, and requires appeasement or payment
 - Yesterday I was speaking with a man who has studied God’s word and taught others his entire life, a good man, I believe one like Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea. Yet this professor told me that the ransom metaphor of Scripture means that Satan laid legal claims to planet earth and a payment had to be made to free earth from Satan’s possession. And when asked to whom, he said to God.
 - Satan’s claim is a lie and it is based on a lie.
 - When Satan declared to Christ, The kingdom and glory of the world are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it, he stated what was true only in part, and he declared it to serve his own purpose of deception. **Satan's dominion was that wrested from Adam, but Adam was the vicegerent of the Creator. His was not an independent rule. The earth is God's, and He has**



committed all things to His Son. Adam was to reign subject to Christ. When Adam betrayed his sovereignty into Satan's hands, Christ still remained the rightful King. Thus the Lord had said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." Daniel 4:17. Satan can exercise his usurped authority only as God permits. {DA 129.4}

- If Christ remained the rightful king, then did any legal action have to be taken to legally obtain rights to earth? No! This entire idea is based on the false law infection.
- What does the Ransom metaphor actually mean? Ransom is the price necessary to free someone held in bondage. What holds us in bondage? The lies about God we believe and our carnal natures. Then what is the price necessary to free us? The truth about God and a new nature, both of which Christ achieved. And who is this price provided (i.e. paid) to? You and me!
- 2. Pursuit of government support (i.e. systems of the world) for religious institutions and beliefs
 - Satan tempted Christ by offering Him the power and authority of the earthly governments
 - The church is tempted in the same way, to join with the governments of earth, and they have accepted this temptation and rather than saying, as Jesus did, "my kingdom is not of this earth" have sought to get governmental authority and practice the methods of earthly governments—in two ways:
 - one, by joining with them to pass laws in the land enforcing legal religion
 - two, by in their doctrines teaching God's government functions and operates like earthly governments—so even those churches who promote separation of church and state still fall into this trap IF they teach God's law operates like man's law!
- 3. I found this quote in the book, *The Great Controversy*: "**The theory of the immortality of the soul was one of those false doctrines that Rome, borrowing from paganism, incorporated into the religion of Christendom.** {GC88 549.3}
 - Do you agree?
 - How does immortality of the soul lead one to pagan god concepts?
 - First it colludes with Satan's lie in Eden, "you will not surely die." and makes God out to be a liar
 - Second—what kind of being would God be if immortality of the soul is true?
 - Naïve—He didn't think about the awful things that could happen if humans rebelled



- Incapable—God didn't have the ability to know what humans would do
 - Cruel and sadistic—God did know they would rebel but made them immortal anyway knowing billions would suffer eternally
 - The doctrine of immortality of the soul leads people to conceive of God in a light other than love, a cruel tyrant who is unworthy of our love and trust—and thus create theologies designed to protect us from God
- 4. Any theology that requires appeasement, propitiation, or any other action be taken to influence or persuade, or enable, or permit God to forgive and save and/or not lash out with judgment and punishment. Here are three quotes from one of the founders of the SDA church, teaching this idea:
 - With intense interest he [Satan] watched the sacrifices offered by Adam and his sons. In these ceremonies he discerned a symbol of communion between earth and heaven. **He set himself to intercept this communion. He misrepresented God, and misinterpreted the rites that pointed to the Saviour.** Men were led to fear God as one who delighted in their destruction. **The sacrifices that should have revealed His love were offered only to appease His wrath.** {DA 115.1}
 - Determined to keep the people in deception, the priests of Baal continue to offer sacrifices to their gods and to call upon them night and day to refresh the earth. **With costly offerings the priests attempt to appease the anger of their gods;** {PK 124.2}
 - Speaking of the Dark Ages this author writes of Christians:
 - They were taught not only to look to the pope as their mediator, but to trust to works of their own to atone for sin. Long pilgrimages, acts of penance, the worship of relics, the erection of churches, shrines, and altars, the payment of large sums to the church,—these and many similar **acts were enjoined to appease the wrath of God or to secure his favor; as if God were like men, to be angered at trifles, or pacified by gifts or acts of penance!** {GC88 56.1}Get quote from Knight

Do you see at the root of every pagan system is a god who must be appeased, propitiated, paid off, an angry, revengeful god whose law operates like those of sinful beings?

The lesson emphasizes the point that pagan gods cannot create and the true God is the Creator God—absolutely true—how can we apply this knowledge? By understanding the protocols upon which creation operates, i.e. realizing God's laws are never imposed rules, but always the laws that life is built upon!



When we use the fact God is Creator to appeal only to power, we revert to level one thinking and incite fear of God instead of bringing people back to love and trust in God.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “The inhabitants...” What does “undeserving” mean and what does it not mean?

- It means they didn’t possess healthiness or goodness in and of themselves
- It does not mean they are worthless worms
- It does not mean that if they were loyal to God, observed His laws and followed the rules then they would be deserving—this is a great falsehood that many Christians buy into
- All our righteousness is filthy rags (Isa 64:6)
- All have sinned and fall short of God’s glory Rom 3:23

God doesn’t give up because they are still healable, not because they are good. God only gives up and lets go when we are beyond healing, i.e. when we have destroyed the faculties that respond to love and truth.

The last paragraph states, “Old Testament, New Testament—in the end, the message of God is the same to all of us: we are sinners, we have done wrong, we deserve punishment.”

I can’t say this more emphatically—THIS IS PAGANISM, THIS IS IDOLATRY, this is the infection of the beastly system into Christianity. It is a perversion, a distortion, a corruption of reality that in the end represents God with the attributes of Satan—but it is subtle. One can only discern the difference between the truth and the lie if one understands God’s character and law of love. Without this, then one doesn’t understand God’s methods and when reading Scripture or other Christian writings will read through human law lens and misunderstand.

I want to expose how Christian writings get misunderstood and used to present the pagan view of God, and from the same author show how the writings used to support the pagan view of God, actually mean something else entirely:

From one of the founders of the SDA church we read some quotations that are used to promote the pagan view:

- God has given in His word decisive evidence **that He will punish the transgressors of His law. Those who flatter themselves that He is too merciful to execute justice upon the sinner, have only to look to the cross of Calvary.** The death of the spotless Son of God



testifies that "the wages of sin is death," **that every violation of God's law must receive its just retribution.** Christ the sinless became sin for man. He bore the guilt of transgression, and **the hiding of His Father's face, until His heart was broken and His life crushed out.** [What God did is stated here for those who have insight to understand] All this sacrifice was made that sinners might be redeemed. In no other way could man be freed from the penalty of sin. [The penalty of sin, not of God—what does sin do?] **And every soul that refuses to become a partaker of the atonement provided at such a cost must bear in his own person the guilt and punishment of transgression....** {Darkness Before Dawn 16.4}

- The history of Israel was to be placed on record for the instruction and warning of coming generations. **Men of all future time must see the God of heaven as an impartial ruler, in no case justifying sin.** But few realize the exceeding sinfulness of sin. **Men flatter themselves that God is too good to punish the transgressor.** But in the light of Bible history it is evident that God's goodness and **His love engage Him to deal with sin as an evil fatal to the peace and happiness of the universe.** {PP 420.2} [what do you hear? why is sin fatal to the peace and happiness of the universe? why must God deal with it?]

We see in God's universe (i.e. under God's rulership/government/the way He has constructed His kingdom—reality to work) there is a punishment for sin—the question is what does it mean and what method does God use? Are God's ways like human governments and God uses power to inflict punishment or something else entirely?

So from the very same author of the previous two quotes, we read:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice.** {DA 761.4}

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. **By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.** {1SM 235.2}



David had neglected the duty of punishing the crime of Amnon, and because of the unfaithfulness of the king and father and the impenitence of the son, **the Lord permitted events to take their natural course, and did not restrain Absalom.** When parents or rulers neglect the duty of punishing iniquity, **God Himself will take the case in hand. His restraining power will be in a measure removed from the agencies of evil, so that a train of circumstances will arise which will punish sin with sin.** {PP 728.1} [Wow—did you hear that? How does God punish sin? By setting people who choose to sin, which is separation from Him, to have what they have chosen and thus they are punished by sin. This is exactly what Scripture teaches, “the wages of sin is death,” “sin when full grown brings forth death” “the one who sows to the carnal nature, from that nature reaps destructions”]

As Paul thus approaches Corinth, **how striking the contrast to the close of a former journey,** when Saul, "**breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,**" drew near to Damascus! How widely different the appearance, purposes, and spirit of Saul and Paul! Then he was **intrusted with the sword of secular power,** he was the agent of the Sanhedrim, the Jewish inquisitor, the exterminator of heretics, seeking victims to imprison, to scourge, or to stone. Filled with pride, he rode toward Damascus, with servants at his command to convey his prisoners to Jerusalem. Now he journeys on foot, with no outward tokens of rank or power, and no officers of justice to do his bidding. **The utmost that he can do to punish those who disregard his authority, is to separate them from a society whose members are everywhere regarded as ignorant and degraded.** His enemies declare that his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible. Yet the apostle is not so powerless as he is represented. He bears a commission from the King of kings. All Heaven is enlisted to sustain him. His weapons are not carnal, but mighty through God to overthrow the strongholds of sin and Satan. {Sketches from the Life of Paul 185.1}

The world is soon to be left by the angel of mercy, and the seven last plagues are to be poured out. Sin, shame, sorrow, and darkness are on every side; but God still holds out to the souls of men the precious privilege of exchanging darkness for light, error for truth, sin for righteousness. **But God's patience and mercy will not always wait.** Let not one soul think **that he can hide from God's wrath behind a lie,** for God will strip from the soul the refuge of lies. **The bolts of God's wrath are soon to fall, and when He shall begin to punish the transgressors,** there will be no period of respite until the end. **The storm of God's wrath is gathering,** and those only will stand who are sanctified through the truth in the love of God. They shall be hid with Christ in God till the desolation shall be overpast. He shall come forth to punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity, {TM 182}



Wow, again this sounds like some direct infliction—if one is reading this through the lens of sinful human law. But if one knows God, His character and methods, then one realizes reality doesn't work the way human law works, so notice how this same author describes the method, mechanism by which this occurs:

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

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

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

Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

This description is in perfect harmony with Revelation chapter 7, when the angels let loose the winds of strife they have been restraining and calamities occur.

We, as Christians, have presented such a distorted picture of God to the world that millions have either rejected Him, or live in fear of His return.

It is time to come back to the truth—yes there is a punishment for sin that can only be avoided through Jesus—why? Because reality cannot be set aside to allow a person out of harmony with God's design for life to live in health, it simply isn't possible.

The great problem many have is they have never understood the truth about God's law and character and live in the darkness of human law constructs.



WEDNESDAY

Read last sentence of first paragraph, “The gospel provision, which would eventually come through the sacrifice of Jesus, would be enough to forgive all their sins and restore the people.”

What is meant by the idea that the provision would be enough to forgive all their sins?

It sounds quantitative—i.e. the sacrifice is sufficient to provide pardon for all the bad deeds?

Was the problem that God was unable to forgive without the death of Christ? No! “God so loved the world...” God forgave before Christ came, but we were still alienated in our hearts, minds, and state of being. We didn’t know or trust God and we didn’t operate in harmony with Him. Thus Christ came to reveal the truth to win us back to trust, and provide us a new humanity in perfect harmony with how God built life to exist. We, through Christ, don’t get new legal documents, we get new hearts and right spirits, we become partakers of the divine nature!

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “As we saw yesterday...” What is the punishment for spilling innocent blood?

How do we understand it?

Is sin a crime that must be punished? Or is sin a condition of being that if unremedied destroys, thus bringing its own punishment.

The legal way of seeing it is what leads so many young Christians to engage in sin.

America, the nation in which more than 82%² of people identify themselves as Christian, has the highest rate of teen pregnancy and abortion than any westernized country in the world.

- 34% of American teenage girls will get pregnant before the age of 20.
- Teen pregnancy in the United States is ten times that of Japan where less than three percent of the population is Christian,
- Four times that of France and Germany, and nearly twice that of Great Britain.³

² Baylor University Survey, p. 6 <http://www.baylor.edu/mediacommunications/news.php?action=story&story=41678>

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2007," *Surveillance Summaries*, Vol. 58, No. SS-4 (June 6, 2008)



Why? When preparing to do a lecture on human sexuality to a group of Christian HS students I asked them to write down any question they had and turn it in anonymously. This question appeared more than once: “If I love my girlfriend very much, and she loves me, and God will forgive us for having premarital sex, what is wrong with premarital sex?”

The student understands correctly there is no problem with God forgiving, and there never was and never will be—but the student fails miserably in understanding the reality of God’s law and the nature of sin.

It would be like asking if God will forgive me for jabbing myself in the eye with a pencil, what’s wrong with jabbing myself in the eye with a pencil. Think about it—is the problem with such behavior, or smoking, drugs, or any other violation of God’s law a problem with getting God to forgive? No! The problem is the damage it does to us!

Second paragraph states, “How fascinating that the priests and the prophets, the ones who were supposed to be the spiritual leaders, had to be rebuked and challenged by mere ‘elders’ and ‘regular people’ who came forward in defense of Jeremiah.”

Has such a problem been true throughout human history?

- In the days of Christ did the spiritual leaders need rebuke by the common people—remember the man born blind?
- In the days of the Apostles—did they have to rebuke the spiritual leaders?
- In the Dark Ages?
- What about today?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase– ALL GLITCHES NOW FIXED in the IOS Version! So please UPDATE to latest version.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes.

January 9, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, California.

January 29-30, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven Church in St. Helena, CA.

February 20, 2016: Class will meet at Hamilton Community Church due to the Courthouse being unavailable.

March 11-12, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Village Church, College Place, WA.

April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.



Jeremiah 4Q 2015 Lesson 8

Josiah's Reforms

SABBATH

Who was Josiah?

His great-grandfather was Hezekiah. Hezekiah was King of Judah from 715–686 BC, Hezekiah became king at age 25 and ruled for 29 years. Judah was in a weakened state at that time, and the prophets Amos and Hosea were active during Hezekiah's rule warning of impending disaster if reform did not occur. Hezekiah initiated reform in Israel. He opened the Temple, which had been closed, brought the priests back, and began religious services again. He invited the nation to celebrate the Passover, which had not been celebrated in years, and invitation was also sent to the tribes in Israel to the north.

Interestingly, that Passover was celebrated a month later than the prescribed time because the people could not get ready for it sooner. Many interesting lessons in that...

After that Passover they set about destroying the altars to the false gods, and Hezekiah even destroyed the bronze serpent Moses had made (around 1500BC), because it had become associated with a pagan god and was being worshipped.

Isaiah became active as God's spokesperson during Hezekiah's rule, and Hezekiah became sick and Isaiah told him to prepare for death. Hezekiah prayed for extension in life and was granted 15 more years.

Josiah's grandfather (Hezekiah's son) was Manasseh, who became king at age 12 and reigned over Israel longer than any other king 55 years—but who did wickedly before the Lord. He reversed the reforms of his father Hezekiah, brought in fertility worship and prostitutes into the temple, sacrificed his own son to pagan gods and was taken captive by the Assyrians who put fishhooks in his skin and drug him away. He repented sincerely and was restored to his throne and went about making reforms, but the nation never fully recovered.

His son Amon (Josiah's father), was worse than Manasseh and was so wicked that he was assassinated by his advisors after only two years on the throne and thus Josiah became king at the age of eight.

Josiah reigned from 640-609 BC. During his reign Babylon increased in power and attacked Assyria, destroyed Nineveh, which had been the capital of Assyria, and significantly decreased the ability of Assyria to maintain its control over Judah. Neco II of Egypt decided to either attack Assyria or lend



aid to Assyria (most likely aid Assyria), the commentators have it both ways, but regardless needed to cross through Judah to get to Assyria. Josiah opposed him and was wounded and died from wounds suffered in the battle.

Josiah was relentless in his goal to exterminate idol worship from Judah. So intense was his desire to do this that he opened the tombs of the false prophets and had their bones burned on the altars of the false gods, desecrating them, before destroying those altars and places of worship. At age 26 he launched a project to repair and rebuild the temple and in that project the books of the law, most believe containing some portion of the first five books of Moses, were discovered hidden away in the temple. When he heard the law read to him he sent for the prophetess Huldah, asking if the judgments could be avoided, she said they could not but that they would not occur in his lifetime. He re-intensified his efforts to eliminate pagan worship and destroyed the shrines that Solomon had erected and which were still in existence in his day. (Solomon reigned from 971-931 BC)

His death was mourned deeply in Israel and Jeremiah wrote lamentations about his death:

The Lord's anointed, our very life breath,
was caught in their traps.
We thought that under his shadow
we would live among the nations. Lam 4:20

Do you think Josiah did good or evil? The Bible says he did good—do you agree? Then what do you say about his destroying the shrines, altars, and other elements of pagan worship?

What has the Taliban been doing in areas of the world they control? They have been destroying various ancient artifacts associated with culture and worship they deem to be pagan. When you hear of this in the news, do you rejoice?

How do you think the people in Israel responded to Josiah's actions? Were all happy about it? What is the difference between the actions of Josiah and that of the Taliban?

- Josiah was destroying active centers of worship, which were corrupting the minds and injuring the people.
 - The Taliban are destroying artifacts of history and evidence of past civilizations, but these are not active centers of worship or actively destroying the minds of people.



- Josiah was destroying state led and state sponsored systems of worship, in other words, the government had been instrumental in setting up those place of idol-worship and therefore had a role in destroying them
 - The Taliban did not lead the people into worshipping the gods associated with the artifacts they are destroying. If the Taliban wants to be like Josiah, they need to dismantle their own government, lay down their arms, repent before the world, and lead the people to worship the God who Jesus revealed

Read first paragraph, “Parents know...” I want you to consider the following:

Patience and Prudence are members of the same church. They grew up in the same community, attended the same church schools, and both married Christian men. They are members of the same congregation and both have sons of near the same age—Patience’s son is named Rob and Prudence’s son is named Jude.

Jude from an early age is a good boy, obedient, on time, always dressed nicely, speaks politely, gets good grades in school, helps the teachers and is noted for his sharp and quick mind. He was elected class president, served on the debate team, helped with mission trips, and worked closely with school and church leaders. He is often called upon to read Scripture in church as he is well spoken, bright, and well liked. Eventually, he graduates college and becomes a member of the general conference committee and is involved in forming church policy.

Rob, on the other hand, struggles from an early age. He is talkative in school, plays tricks on other students, skips classes, doesn’t do his homework, and his grades are very poor. He gets in arguments and fights occasionally. His mother prays and prays, talks with him, and disciplines him but it doesn’t seem to help. In adolescence he begins drinking, drops out of school, hangs out with the wrong crowd and is soon burglarizing homes and stealing as a profession. He is eventually caught and as a repeat offender is imprisoned for his crimes.

Back at church Patience frequently runs into Prudence, who never fails to mention how wonderful her son is, his latest accomplishments and then, with contrived concern, always asks about Rob’s latest troubles and expresses how sad she is that Rob has caused her so much grief.

Which mother would you rather be? Which of these two children would you rather is yours?

Now, as Paul Harvey would famously say, for the rest of the story: Jude is better known as Judas, and Rob is better known not as “The Robber” but as “The Thief on the cross” who accepted Jesus as his



Savior—now which child would you prefer is yours? Which child turned out to be the truly successful one? What is the point of this story?

- Man looks on the outward appearance the Lord looks on the heart
- Sometimes those in active rebellion are more open to truth than those indoctrinated into religious dogma and ritual
- We don't know the future, how things will turn out—so we must stay hopeful

The next sentence says, “Thus, much of Scripture is the story of God warning His people about not making wrong choices.”

This is well said, God is warning—not threatening! Is there a difference? Why does it often sound like threatening? Because those to whom God is speaking are unable to hear warnings in any other way.

Have you ever had a child you tried to warn, but they wouldn't listen, so the only way to warn them was to phrase it like a threat?

SUNDAY

Read top paragraph, “However much we like to talk...” What is the lesson trying to say? Each of us has our own unique way of seeing reality and our perspectives may or may not harmonize with reality.

For instance, we each have an English software package. Think about your primary language, how was it learned? It is not in the DNA, it is not programmed into the brain, it is uploaded after birth. And it is assimilated by exposure, it isn't possible for a child to avoid learning their primary language.

Yet, do you ever get up in the morning and think, “Today I am going to think in English (or whatever your primary language is)?”

If, like me, you speak only one language, everything gets filtered through it. When I look out and see a plant with trunk and leaves I see a “tree” not a *baum* which is the German word for tree. It is the same object, but filtered through a different lens, the lens of English.

Do you think English is the only software that got uploaded into your mind in this way? No, your beliefs about God, male/female roles, relations, your values, morals, and so much more—when you see a deer, do you see a cute animal that brings a smile, or do you see lunch? Depending on the internal belief systems, previous experiences, etc, data gets processed and understood differently.



What factors make our subjective view of the world more distorted and further from objective reality?

- Any major trauma in life—the younger the trauma the more impactful the warp, and the longer the trauma remains unresolved the more deeply the warp
- Resentment and grudge holding
- Violating God's law and refusing to repent
- Having limited facts or pieces of data, seeing only a small number of the pieces of the puzzle (The blind men and the elephant), when it comes to our world view this happens all the time:
 - Evolutionary theory is only maintained by denying and ignoring much of the evidence
 - As only one example: Geological radio-dating and astrometrics the earth and universe are billions of years old and some Christians suggest God created the earth 6000-10,000 years ago, therefore the Bible is wrong. The problem is the Bible doesn't teach the universe is 6000 years old. It says in Job that the sons of God sang for joy when the foundation of the earth was laid. The universe was created by God sometime in eternity past, we are told how long, and later God came and terraformed planet earth from ancient matter in the dark abyss in this corner of the Milky Way.
 - Bad theology happens when people do not incorporate the entirety of Scripture but take a little here and there
 - I have found in talking with people who disagree with the God of love we present, they always have multiples pieces of evidence they fail to incorporate into their view.
 - For instance—how many, before they go to Scripture and try and understand events, first understand God's design laws, like the law of love, the law of liberty, the law of worship? How many understand the nature and character of sin, that it is deviation from design law that results in damage and death to the deviant? Without these facts in one's mind, and many more like it, Scripture can very quickly become confusing.
- Filling the mind with false ideas and beliefs
 - From media
 - watch closely what the media is doing to Ben Carson and you will get lessons in deceit, distortion, and twisting of facts
 - From church
 - the number one infection is the imposed law construct that serves as a filter on how we see God
 - From family



- where children learn how men treat women and husbands treat wives, what substances are okay to put in the body, how we deal with people of different race and culture etc.
- From school
 - Why do all cultures that wish to change society start with the schoolbooks? Because children are forming their filters, their operating systems and if one can upload distorted beliefs into the children's minds they can change society
- From peers
 - Parents are most impactful on forming a child's worldview and belief system up until adolescence and then it is their peers. One of the benefits of encouraging young people to associate with those who are Christlike

Our challenge is to move ever more closely to seeing the world through God's eyes, through the reality of God's character, methods, principles, motives—how God designed reality to function. Sadly, most people have a human law construct as a filter on their minds and even when reading Scripture often misunderstand and misread because it is being warped through human law lenses.

Manasseh, we mentioned briefly before, but although he was perhaps the most wicked king in the history of Israel, not only leading the nation into paganism, fertility cult practices, occult practices and human sacrifices, it is also thought he had the prophet Isaiah put in a log and sawn in half.

But, afterward he was taken away in chains and with hooks in his nose, he repented and God forgave him and restored him to his throne—what is the lesson here?

What is God concerned with—our deeds, our record, our acts, or our hearts? God does not hold grudges, or resentment, or keep records of wrongs as 1Corinthians 13 states “love keeps no record of wrongs.” God is always for us, always seeking to save and redeem. No matter how bad you feel, how lost, how wicked, how sinful, Manasseh stands as evidence, that if you will let God, He will heal and restore you!

One of the horrible thing sin does to people is it causes them to experience fear, guilt and shame—internal, in their minds and hearts. This causes them to form beliefs based on those feelings—beliefs that if anyone ever knew of their sins they would be rejected. This deep-seated fear is another factor, besides the imposed law construct, that has led to so much bad theology.



When we were at the GC, there was one person walking around handing out his business card, with a web address, telling people “learn the truth about Tim Jennings.” He was telling people that I teach heresy. I had the opportunity to talk to him and the first thing he asked me was:

“Do you believe that our sins are being erased from the books of heaven in the investigative judgment?”

I told him that sin doesn’t happen in record books, it happens in people and God wants to erase sinfulness out of the hearts, minds, and characters of people and the books of heaven are records of our characters and as he heals us the records reflects that transformation. But, God is not erasing historical facts out of books of history.

He said in a derogatory tone, “That is what I thought you taught.”

So I mentioned the evidence of David. I asked him if we will know our own family members when we get to heaven. He unreservedly said yes. Then I asked if that is true, will David and Bathsheba know Solomon is their son? What happens when Uriah walks up? Will Uriah know Bathsheba was his wife? How can they erase that record? And if they erase it, what then happens to the line of David and ultimate to Jesus who was born of that line?

I also pointed out that the Bible says we sing a song of our experience in heaven—what experience do we have other than the experience of being healed and delivered from sin? If it is being erased from history of what will we sing? Further, when the woman anointed Jesus’ feet with the costly oil, Jesus said, “Those who are forgiven much love much.” If we don’t remember the great depth of what we have been forgiven, our love and appreciation for God is undermined.

After all this he said to me, “All I know is that there are sins I have committed in the past that are being erased from the books of heaven that no one will ever know about those sins.”

Which revealed his issue—he lives in fear, guilt and shame and he fears that if people knew of his sin he could not be loved or accepted.

This is one of the reasons the Bible says we are to confess our sins one to another—for the very purpose of demonstrating that love overrules!

Parents, think about when your children confessed some secret sin—did you love them less, did you reject them? Or did you have great compassion for them and want only to heal them and restore them



to righteousness? This is God—see Him in Eden, how He approached Adam and Eve; see Him in Jesus how He dealt with the lepers, the woman caught in adultery and others!

God is always seeking to demonstrate our sin does not cause Him to reject us! Our sin causes us to reject Him! We can't believe God is really that good, that gracious and thus we create false theologies designed to DIMINISH God's graciousness by teaching Jesus had to do something to merit it from the Father—Oh How terribly sad!

First question in the pink section at the bottom asks, “Who doesn't know personally the terrible consequences that can come even from sin that has been forgiven?”

Does this sound strange? Why is this question asked? Do we sometimes think that if we get forgiveness that we avoid the problems? Where does this idea originate?

This is what happens when we live at levels 1-4 of moral development:

1. Reward and punishment—if I am forgiven then no punishment so no problem
2. Market place exchange—if I am forgiven my debt for failing my part of the deal, then no consequence because I don't have to make good on the deal
3. Social conformity—if I am forgiven I am accepted back into the group and thus no consequence
4. Law and order—if I am forgiven, I am legally pardoned, and thus no legal punishment or no consequence

This leads to young people asking—if God will forgive me for having premarital sex then what's wrong with it?

It is only when we come to realize God's law is not like man's law, not imposed rules, that God's laws are protocols upon which reality works, and even though we may be forgiven, receive new heart and right spirit, the objective results of our actions are not erased from history or reality:

- David was forgiven and repented, but Uriah was still dead, and his actions caused a split in his family and Absalom tried to overthrow him
- Samson was forgiven and repented, but was still blind and a prisoner
- Peter was forgiven and repented, but he always had the history of his denial of Christ to remember
- A person who commits adultery and contracts HIV, is forgiven and may repent and therefore be reconciled to God, receive a new heart and right spirit, and be eternally saved, yet for the rest of their life on this earth, still has the HIV infection to deal with



What sin is not forgiven? What do we mean by forgiven? Are there sins that God, in His heart refuses to forgive? No—look at those who crucified Christ, he forgave them. Yet, are there sins that people don't repent of, don't seek forgiveness for, or said another way, don't accept the forgiveness God extends? So, then even though God forgives, those who refuse to accept that forgiveness remain in an unforgiven state!

MONDAY

Read last paragraph, “Unfortunately, the answer...” What do you think about the last phrase, “they faced the punishment that their sins brought upon them”?

This is well said! Do we often think of it in this light? That sin brings its own punishment, or do we get stuck into thinking God must punish sin?

Read first paragraph, “A preacher once said...” Israel wanted kings, God warned them against it, but they persisted and God chose their first two kings... Any other examples of God using His power to do something for the people He didn't want them to do?

- The quail in the desert
- The wars in conquering other nations
- The instructions on eating meat

What do we learn from this?

- Why did God give them what He warned them not to do?
- What were the people going to do?
- What were God's options?
- So God warned them of the dangers, then helped them do it anyway, and then was there to help pick up the pieces when they got what they insisted they wanted

Do we need to be careful for what we pray? Or is it more the attitude in which we pray?

Is it okay to pray for something evil or selfish, if your heart really wants it? Or, if your heart really wants it, but you know it is evil or selfish, is it better not to pray to God for it?

- “Happy are those who pay you back for what you have done to us- who take your babies and smash them against a rock.” Ps 137:8,9
- Balaam asked to curse Israel
- Moses asked not to go back to Egypt and then asked for someone else to speak for him



- Jonah asked not to go to Nineveh, and then actively tried to disobey
- Other examples?

If we have some evil desire in our heart, can we root it out on our own? Who is the only one who can? So, is it better to connect with God, even asking for something evil, or to disconnect from God? And if we connect with God, are we increasing the possibility of truth and love breaking through our misunderstanding and selfishness?

So, what is a healthy way to pray when we really want something?

“Father, I really, really, really want this—if it is possible, if it is in harmony with your will, if it won’t hurt me or others or your cause, then I ask you to do this. But Father, if this is not good, if even though from my perspective it seems the best, I trust you. I know you see millions of facts and possibilities I cannot even imagine, so God if it is not good, then don’t let me have it, and please give me some insight so I can understand.”

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read 2Kings 22:3-7:

In the eighteenth year of his reign, King Josiah sent the court secretary Shaphan, the son of Azaliah and grandson of Meshullam, to the Temple with the order: ⁴“Go to the High Priest Hilkiah and get a report on the amount of money that the priests on duty at the entrance to the Temple have collected from the people. ⁵Tell him to give the money to the men who are in charge of the repairs in the Temple. They are to pay ⁶the carpenters, the builders, and the masons, and buy the timber and the stones used in the repairs. The men in charge of the work are thoroughly honest, so there is no need to require them to account for the funds.” GNB

Read last paragraph, “Today we would say...” What do you think about the idea that if one is faithful they don’t have to account for the money they are spending? When is this true and when is this not true?

When is it true that a faithful person doesn’t have to account for the money? When they are the subordinate and have the trust of the superior.

But, what if they don’t have the trust of their superior, even if they are trustworthy?



Then, what about a superior who is trustworthy, but doesn't have the trust of the subordinates—does the superior get a pass, or does the superior have to give an account?

What about God in the Great Controversy—is He trustworthy? Is He giving an account to us and the onlooking universe? Why? Because He has an enemy that has lied about Him and many beings have believed those lies!

Do you find it interesting that in a time when the knowledge of God had been lost, the books of the law had been lost, where Manasseh and Amon had just led the people into decades of basest heathenism, that there were tradesman who were so honest and trustworthy that they didn't have to keep track of the money?

What does this mean? That the Holy Spirit is working through nature and experience to lead men to a knowledge of God and God's methods of truth, love and freedom!

Remember in Elijah's day there were 7000 who had not bowed the knee, and likely didn't have access to Scripture.

WEDNESDAY

The book of the law is found, Josiah is convicted and concerned that disaster is awaiting Israel. He calls for the prophetess who confirms this.

Read last paragraph, "Through Huldah..." What do you think of the idea of judgment and punishment used in this context? What is God's judgment? That they are beyond healing, that a therapeutic intervention is needed to save the nation and keep open the avenue for Christ. And what is the punishment? Is it an infliction by God or a natural consequence of what happens in a selfish world when we separate ourselves from God?

David had neglected the duty of punishing the crime of Amnon, and because of the unfaithfulness of the king and father and the impenitence of the son, **the Lord permitted events to take their natural course, and did not restrain Absalom.** When parents or rulers neglect the duty of punishing iniquity, **God Himself will take the case in hand. His restraining power will be in a measure removed from the agencies of evil, so that a train of circumstances will arise which will punish sin with sin.** {PP 728.1} [Wow—did you hear that? How does God punish sin? By setting people who choose to sin, which is separation from Him, to have what they have chosen and thus they are punished by sin. This is exactly what Scripture teaches, "the wages of sin is



death,” “sin when full grown brings forth death” “the one who sows to the carnal nature, from that nature reaps destructions”]

As Paul thus approaches Corinth, **how striking the contrast to the close of a former journey**, when Saul, "**breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord**," drew near to Damascus! How widely different the appearance, purposes, and spirit of Saul and Paul! Then he was **intrusted with the sword of secular power**, he was the agent of the Sanhedrim, the Jewish inquisitor, the exterminator of heretics, seeking victims to imprison, to scourge, or to stone. Filled with pride, he rode toward Damascus, with servants at his command to convey his prisoners to Jerusalem. Now he journeys on foot, with no outward tokens of rank or power, and no officers of justice to do his bidding. **The utmost that he can do to punish those who disregard his authority, is to separate them from a society whose members are everywhere regarded as ignorant and degraded.** His enemies declare that his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible. Yet the apostle is not so powerless as he is represented. He bears a commission from the King of kings. All Heaven is enlisted to sustain him. His weapons are not carnal, but mighty through God to overthrow the strongholds of sin and Satan. {Sketches from the Life of Paul 185.1}

THURSDAY

The lesson focuses on cleaning up the Temple, read third paragraph, “The king did not execute...”
What is the lesson we take from this? What is the OT temple symbolic of?

Through Christ was to be fulfilled the purpose of which the tabernacle was a symbol--that glorious building, its walls of glistening gold reflecting in rainbow hues the curtains inwrought with cherubim, the fragrance of ever-burning incense pervading all, the priests robed in spotless white, and in the deep mystery of the inner place, above the mercy seat, between the figures of the bowed, worshiping angels, the glory of the Holiest. In all, God desired His people to read His purpose for the human soul. It was the same purpose long afterward set forth by the apostle Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit: {Ed 36.2}

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17. {Ed 36.3}

So if the Temple was symbolic of the human soul, what is the lesson described here? What had accumulated in the temple? What does that symbolize within the human soul? And what removes it?



- The pagan images symbolize the pagan god constructs and methods of action that infect the human soul—power over, coercion, self-first, appeasement
- The reading of the law, symbolizes the comprehension of God’s design law, His methods, the truth about how reality works—that love cannot be achieved by force, coercion, threat, only in freedom
- The removal and rebuilding of the temple is symbolic of the removal of lies from our minds and rebuilding of our characters in harmony with God’s

In our character building we must build on Christ. He is the sure foundation--a foundation which can never be moved. The tempest of temptation and trial cannot move the building which is riveted to the Eternal Rock. {CG 166.1}

He who would grow into a beautiful building for the Lord must cultivate every power of the being. It is only by the right use of the talents that the character can develop harmoniously. Thus we bring to the foundation that which is represented in the Word as gold, silver, precious stones--material that will stand the test of God's purifying fires. In our character building Christ is our example. {CG 166.2}

Bottom pink asks, “What should the symbolism of the Passover mean to us now, as Seventh-day Adventists?” I would say as Christians?

While the institution of the Passover was pointing backward to the miraculous deliverance of the Hebrews, it likewise pointed forward, showing the death of the Son of God before it transpired. In the last Passover our Lord observed with His disciples, He instituted the Lord's Supper in place of the Passover, to be observed in memory of His death. No longer had they need of the Passover, for He, the great antitypical Lamb, was ready to be sacrificed for the sins of the world. Type met antitype in the death of Christ (Youth's Instructor, May 1873). {LHU 31.7}

What would be a potential problem of celebrating the Passover today?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the lesson

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Let us welcome Gary Jones, our new team manager for Come And Reason Ministries! Gary is a retired, non-commissioned officer in the Canadian Army who has moved to Chattanooga in order to volunteer to facilitate media shipments and day-to-day administrative needs. He just arrived the first week of Nov. and has much settling in to do. He's currently looking for a vehicle and commercial space that our Ministry can lease to serve as a storage and distribution hub for our materials. Once those two objectives are accomplished, he will then be active in outreach and promotions for Come and Reason. Gary will also be the voice behind our new ministry phone number... (423) 661-4734!

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website: http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

***The Remedy – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase*– ALL GLITCHES NOW FIXED** in the IOS Version! So please UPDATE to latest version.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes.

January 9, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, California.

January 29-30, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven Church in St. Helena, CA.

February 20, 2016: Class will meet at Hamilton Community Church due to the Courthouse being unavailable.

March 11-12, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Village Church, College Place, WA.

April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.



2015 Q4 Jeremiah Lesson 10

The Destruction of Jerusalem

FRIDAY

“We are in continual danger of getting above the simplicity of the gospel. There is an intense desire on the part of many to startle the world with something original, that shall lift the people into a state of spiritual ecstasy, and change the present order of experience. There is certainly great need of a change in the present order of experience; for the sacredness of present truth is not realized as it should be, but the change we need is a change of heart, and can only be obtained by seeking God individually for His blessing, by pleading with Him for His power, by fervently praying that His grace may come upon us, and that our characters may be transformed. This is the change we need today, and for the attainment of this experience we should exercise persevering energy and manifest heartfelt earnestness. We should ask with true sincerity, ‘What shall I do to be saved?’ We should know just what steps we are taking heavenward.” —Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 187, 188.

This is a fantastic quote, & one I was previously unfamiliar with. Thanks to the lesson’s author for including it.

SABBATH

Within a few short years the king of Babylon was to be used as the instrument of God’s wrath upon impenitent Judah. Again and again Jerusalem was to be invested [surrounded] and entered by the besieging armies of Nebuchadnezzar. Company after company—at first a few only, but later on thousands and tens of thousands—were to be taken captive to the land of Shinar, there to dwell in enforced exile. Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah—all these Jewish kings were in turn to become vassals of the Babylonian ruler, and all in turn were to rebel. Severer and yet more severe chastisements were to be inflicted upon the rebellious nation, until at last the entire land was to become a desolation, Jerusalem was to be laid waste and burned with fire, the temple that Solomon had built was to be destroyed, and the kingdom of Judah was to fall, never again to occupy its former position among the nations of earth.”—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 422, 423.

According to Wikipedia: Jerusalem has been completely destroyed twice, besieged 23 times, attacked 52 times, and captured / recaptured 44 times. Sounds like a vibrant history.



SUNDAY

Weeping for Tammuz

Tammuz: Babylonian major God. Believed to die every Summer solstice, therefore women would spend 6 days mourning [weeping] his “death” which brought on shorter days, searing summer heat & drought. He was resurrected 6 months later [Winter solstice], making December 25 a time of celebration [sound familiar]. Most of the pagan deities are related to the early practice of Sun worship, which is, of course, worship of Lucifer [“The bright Morning Star”].

Tammuz became Osiris became Baal became Zeus became Jupiter became St. Peter. What do these have in common?? Appeasement, and most of them had a sexual / fertility ritual associated with their worship.

“The foulest Babylonian custom is that which compels every woman of the land to sit in the temple of [Aphrodite](#) and have intercourse with some stranger at least once in her life. Many women who are rich and proud and disdain to mingle with the rest, drive to the temple in covered carriages drawn by teams, and stand there with a great retinue of attendants. But most sit down in the sacred plot of Aphrodite, with crowns of cord on their heads; there is a great multitude of women coming and going; passages marked by line run every way through the crowd, by which the men pass and make their choice. Once a woman has taken her place there, she does not go away to her home before some stranger has cast money into her lap, and had intercourse with her outside the temple; but while he casts the money, he must say, “I invite you in the name of [Mylitta](#)” (that is the Assyrian name for Aphrodite). It does not matter what sum the money is; the woman will never refuse, for that would be a sin, the money being by this act made sacred. So she follows the first man who casts it and rejects no one. After their intercourse, having discharged her sacred duty to the goddess, she goes away to her home; and thereafter there is no bribe however great that will get her. So then the women that are fair and tall are soon free to depart, but the uncomely have long to wait because they cannot fulfil the law; for some of them remain for three years, or four. There is a custom like this in some parts of Cyprus.” [Herodotus](#), *The Histories* 1.199, tr A.D. Godley (1920)

Weeping for Tammuz is demonstrating “sympathy for the devil.” This theme is still prevalent in modern comic book “mythology”.

MONDAY

The Unhappy Reign of King Zedekiah

Jeremiah was one of Zedekiah’s advisors, and yet his epitaph is “... he did evil in the sight of the Lord.” 2 Kings 24: 19, 20.

Consider the last thing Zedekiah saw with his own eyes: His children being killed, then his eyes plucked out. One wonders how deeply he lamented not following Jeremiah’s advice.



Jeremiah was imprisoned and dumped in to a muddy well for speaking the truth. How would we have been able to distinguish truth from error at that time? or now??

TUESDAY

The Fall of Jerusalem

The continual message of Jeremiah was more or less

“Through Jeremiah the word of the Lord to His people was: “Return, thou backsliding Israel, ... and I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.... Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you.” “Thou shalt call Me, my Father; and shalt not turn away from Me.” “Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.” PK 410.

The king was even too weak to be willing that his courtiers and people should know that he had held a conference with Jeremiah, so fully had the fear of man taken possession of his soul. If Zedekiah had stood up bravely and declared that he believed the words of the prophet, already half fulfilled, what desolation might have been averted! He should have said, I will obey the Lord, and save the city from utter ruin. I dare not disregard the commands of God because of the fear or favor of man. I love the truth, I hate sin, and I will follow the counsel of the Mighty One of Israel. PK 458.

Consider how difficult the destruction of Jerusalem must have been on, not only Jeremiah, but God Himself.

Note how the Babylonian general, Nebuzaradan employs the Law of Liberty when setting Jeremiah free.

But today I am freeing you from the chains on your wrists. Come with me to Babylon, if you like, and I will look after you; but if you do not want to, then don't come. Look, the whole country lies before you; go wherever you please.” Jer. 40: 4.

WEDNESDAY

All Your Heart

What comes first?? The change of heart or the seeking with all of the heart?? Does it matter which comes first??



The lesson makes it personal:

“What has been your experience with this promise [*“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart”* Jer 29:13]?”

The following text is often referenced as a meaningful promise:

For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jer 29:11.

Do events always work out the way the Lord has planned??

From the lesson:

“We have been given the prophetic gift in the wonderful minis- try of Ellen G. White. How can we be sure that we don’t show the same attitude toward her today that many (but not all) had toward Jeremiah?”

Were the Judeans supposed to blindly follow Jeremiah’s advice or were they expected to test it?? Are we intended to treat prophetic messages any differently?? What should be given more critical attention – the message or the messenger??

THURSDAY

The Seventy Years

Seventy years is no short time period. It’s slightly less than the average life span of a US male [76.3 years]. Think about how difficult this must have been to come to grips with for the children of Judah, especially the ones who believed the false prophets. Even with God’s advice to settle, build, plant, marry, and assimilate in to Babylonian society, they must have quickly realized that many of them would die there and never see their homeland again.

The lesson also brings out the valuable point that praying for the betterment & success of Babylon, and living in peace there must have been very foreign to the Judeans. They had been steeped in the “eye for an eye”, and “destroy every living thing [Cannanite]” mentality. Perhaps God was trying to bring them to a higher level of moral development [ultimately to “Love your Enemies”].

Now that they were in captivity, how were Jeremiah’s prophecies considered?? See Dan. 8

“The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesman, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly



element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place – that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis. The Bible, and the Bible only, gives a correct view of these things. Here are revealed the great final scenes in the history of our world, events that already are casting their shadows before, the sound of their approach causing the earth to tremble and men's hearts to fail them for fear.” PK 537.



Jeremiah 4Q 2015 Lesson 11

The Covenant

SABBATH

Read memory text: “ ‘The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.’” Jeremiah 31:31

What is this talking about? What is a covenant? What was the covenant made with Abraham?

A few months ago I was in California recording a TV interview with Mike Tucker for the Lifestyle Magazine TV show, and one of our friends and online class members, Luann Serafine, was also there. While we were talking at lunch, the covenant between God and Abraham came up and Mike mentioned that it was a Suzerain covenant, and when Luann got home she emailed me her notes on this, which I have included in the lesson notes:

Mike Tucker briefly introduced the topic of ‘covenant’ versus ‘contractual agreement’ in reference to the passage found in Gen 15: 17-21, a passage that has given me a greater insight, and appreciation for the depth of intimacy that God desires to enter into with us.

It’s been awhile since I have read my notes on this passage but I pulled them out this morning to look at them again...and thought perhaps you might enjoy them as well.

Passing Between The Halves (Gen 15:17-21)

There are no adequate modern parallels to the broad-ranging meanings of the term “covenant” as used in the Bible. The closest parallel probably resides in marriage, where a public gathering solemnizes an agreement between two people.

The type of covenant presented in the Bible is most often between two parties. The superior party was known as the *suzerain*; the inferior party as the *vassal*. Both the suzerain and vassal had specific responsibilities. Primarily in ancient societies the suzerain provided protection for the vassal, while the vassal supported the suzerain with taxes and was loyal in time of war.

The Lord and Abram joined themselves in a suzerain and vassal covenant (Gen 15:18). Like similar ancient Near Eastern covenants they held a public ceremony to ratify their relationship. The sacrifice of animals and a meal (15: 9, 10) were typical components of covenant ceremonies, as were the promises of both parties. Abram’s part of this agreement was to



“believe” in the Lord (15:6), which meant to worship no other gods. The Lord promised Abram to make his descendants as numerous as the stars (15:5) and provide a homeland for them (15:18).

Two differences between ancient Near Eastern covenants and the Gen 15 covenant are striking. Usually the list of the vassal’s duties and responsibilities was much larger than that of the suzerain’s. In fact, a covenant, including the duties of the vassal, was ***imposed on the vassal by the suzerain***. In the Gen 15 covenant almost nothing is said about Abram’s responsibilities. The focus is on what the Lord promised to Abram, not what Abram promised the Lord, as long as Abram kept the Lord ***cherished in his heart***.

In the second difference it was usually the vassal who cut the animals in two parts and walked between them (15:10, 17). The ritual symbolically demonstrated what would happen to the vassal if the covenant was broken. The “burning torch” passing between the pieces of flesh in the Gen 15 covenant (15:17) was obviously a representation of the Lord. The symbolism of Him passing between the cut sacrifices implies that He would die before He would allow His covenant with Abram to fail. [This is beautiful].

Interestingly, Mike did not contrast the ancient Near Eastern covenant construction with the covenant design described by God in Genesis 15. As I was thinking about it, these two constructs appear as possibly one more example of the *relational experience* between imposed-law-contract of relationship versus God’s love-design for intimacy with us.

What is a covenant? An agreement, a contract—in the case of God’s covenant with humanity—what is it?

Read first two paragraphs in Sabbath’s lesson, “Although the Bible...” All covenants are expressions of the covenant of grace—what does this mean? It is John 3:16—God so loved the world that he gave...

God committed Himself to reverse what Adam did to the species human and restore this creation back to its original condition, and He has invited every human being to be part of that restoration!

What is conveyed in the idea of faithfulness and obedience?

What is Biblical faithfulness? Heart loyalty, devotion! Thus Rahab chose loyalty to God, but still lied...



What is obedience in the Biblical sense?

In the New Testament the Greek word for obedience, obey, to obey is: **πακοή** [*hupakoe* /hoop·ak·o·ay/]

And it has two halves—the first half is where we get hypo, as in hypoglycemia, or hypotension, or hypodermic and means low, or under, and the last half is where we get acoustics and acoustical, and means to listen or hear. And thus the Biblical meaning of obedience is a humble willingness to listen, learn, comprehend and hear was God is teaching.

This is why Jesus said repeatedly, things like, hearing though they do not hear, or let him who has ears, hear. So people say things today like, “Do you hear me?” “Are you listening?”

So what does it mean to be obedient in God’s kingdom? It is about performance, or about heart motivation?

Why is this our responsibility in the covenant?

- What is the war between God and Satan over? God’s character and trustworthiness
- Where is the battlefield? Our minds and hearts (2Cor 10:3-5)
- What are the weapons of Satan? Lies, coercion, selfish desires
- What are the weapons of God? Truth, freedom, and love
- What is it that determines righteousness—behavior or heart?
- As the heart is healed do the behaviors change?
- But what is the key to changing the heart? Trust in God, and what is the key to trusting God? The truth, and what is the key to understanding and assimilating truth? A humble willingness to listen and learn!

Thus our responsibility in the covenant with God is to listen, think, really hear what God is saying to us!

If we really hear God, we are won to trust and in trust we open the heart to Him and the Spirit comes and heals and renews us to be like Jesus!

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “We look at how bad the world...” What else would God do but bear with us?



The lesson seems to be suggesting that God might do something else but bear with us, what?

They cite the example of the flood, but what is significant different about the time of the Flood and today?

At the time of the Flood Jesus had not yet come, the Remedy for human salvation had not been achieved, Satan was working to actually prevent God from fulfilling His plan to save this creation. Thus the Flood was not punishment for sin, but an act of mercy to keep open the avenue for the Messiah to come. Remember, at the time of the Flood there was only one righteous man on the entire planet—the avenue through which Jesus would come was almost closed!

This idea of using power to inflict punishment for sin is part of Satan's lies about God and it has deeply infected Christianity. God is waiting for a people to reject this lie and tell the truth about Him.

Listen to these two quotations by one of the founders of the SDA church on the struggle heavenly beings had, in Old Testament times, over recognizing God's character and methods, particularly on the use of force:

Before Christ's first advent, the sin of refusing to conform to God's law had become widespread. Apparently Satan's power was growing; his warfare against heaven was becoming more and more determined. **A crisis had been reached. With intense interest God's movements were watched by the heavenly angels. Would He come forth from His place to punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity? Would He send fire or flood to destroy them? All heaven waited the bidding of their Commander to pour out the vials of wrath upon a rebellious world.** One word from Him, one sign, and the world would have been destroyed. **The worlds unfallen would have said, "Amen.** Thou art righteous, O God, because Thou hast exterminated rebellion." {ST, August 27, 1902 par. 4}

For centuries God looked with patience and forbearance upon the cruel treatment given to his ambassadors, at his holy law prostrate, despised, trampled underfoot. He swept away the inhabitants of the Noachian world with a flood. But when the earth was again peopled, men drew away from God, and renewed their hostility to him, manifesting bold defiance. Those whom God rescued from Egyptian bondage followed in the footsteps of those who had preceded them. Cause was followed by effect; the earth was being corrupted.



A crisis had arrived in the government of God. The earth was filled with transgression... **All heaven was prepared at the word of God to move to the help of his elect. One word from him, and the bolts of heaven would have fallen upon the earth, filling it with fire and flame. God had but to speak, and there would have been thunderings and lightnings and earthquakes and destruction.**

The heavenly intelligences were prepared for a fearful manifestation of Almighty power. Every move was watched with intense anxiety. The exercise of justice was expected. **The angels looked for God to punish the inhabitants of the earth. But "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."** "I will send my beloved Son," he said. "It may be they will reverence him." **Amazing grace! Christ came not to condemn the world, but to save the world. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."**

The heavenly universe was amazed at God's patience and love. To save fallen humanity the Son of God took humanity upon himself... {RH, July 17, 1900 par. 6}

What does God want? Our love and trust—can love and trust be obtained by coercion and exercise of punishing power? Why Not?

Because of God's law—God's law is design law, one of those laws is the law of liberty. Whenever you violate liberty and coerce or threaten another, love is damaged and eventually destroyed and rebellion is instilled in the heart. Interestingly, those who teach God does act this way claim it is because the law requires justice and justice requires punishment, but in so doing they reveal they have accepted Satan's lies about God's law and they don't even comprehend God's law. Look at the evidence from history:

Look at what happened every time God did use power in history:

- Flood—tower of Babel—why, because they didn't believe God existed, or they didn't trust Him?
- Egypt and Sinai—and what were they doing 40 days later?
- Mt. Carmel—and what is the history after that?
- Did God ever get love and trust by use of force and punishing power?
- Zech 4:6 "Not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit says the Lord."



Levels 1-4 of moral development: see through the lens of imposed laws, the laws that sinful beings make and thus they falsely teach and believe that justice requires God to punish.

Levels 5-7: see through the lens of love and Design law and realize deviations from God's law are destructive to all who deviate, because such deviations are violations of the very basis upon which life is constructed to operate.

If you see a sick person, psychotic, deranged, out of control, violent, cutting themselves, threatening others—what do you want for that person, especially if you love them? This is level 5 and above, all of us are sin-sick of heart and mind, with various stages of infection and derangement of our faculties. Those who are being healed and come to see reality through the lens of God's design law, develop compassion and love for those still struggling in sinfulness. But those, who have not grown past level four, see deviations from God's design as crimes that require infliction of punishment, and thus they perpetuate the lies of Satan and obstruct God from completing His plan of salvation on earth!

The second paragraph is about God's covenant with Noah, let's read that in Genesis 9:9-17:

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: ⁹ **"I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you** ¹⁰ **and with every living creature** that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—**every living creature on earth.** ¹¹ I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth."

¹² And God said, "This is the sign of the **covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you**, a covenant for all generations to come: ¹³ **I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.** ¹⁴ Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, ¹⁵ **I will remember** my covenant between **me and you and all living creatures of every kind**. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. ¹⁶ Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."

¹⁷ So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth."

What kind of covenant is this? Is this covenant different than the covenant God made with Adam? No! This is the covenant of grace—notice that God is not requiring or asking for something in return from Noah's descendants, nor from the birds, or animals, or the earth itself. God is saying, "The earth is mine. It is now infected with Satan's principles, but I will fix it, heal it, cleanse it and restore the earth



back to my original design. This is my promise. This is what I will do! Now, Noah, this promise is made to you and your descendants.”

Why? Because they were the only humans on earth and it is by reality, fact, necessity, that only Noah’s descendants from that point forward will be participants in God’s promises and work of healing and restoration.

Any thoughts about the Rainbow? What does it mean that God says He will see it and remember? Would God forget without the rainbow? Or is it spoken this way for people at level 4 and below, to comfort them? Like a parent speaking to a child?

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “Through Abraham’s seed...” What does it mean that Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness?

The bottom pink section says, “Dwell upon the great truth that your hope of salvation comes only from the righteousness of Jesus credited to you by faith.”

It is true that our hope of salvation is only because of Jesus’ righteousness—so let’s make that absolutely clear. We are not suggesting salvation can be achieved in any other way than through Jesus and His righteousness.

However, what I am suggesting is that Satan has perverted the true meaning of what Jesus accomplished. Satan has twisted the truth about Jesus and His righteousness, how? By warping it through human imposed law constructs—this is what Daniel 7 warned about, what Paul in Thessalonians warned about, the man of sin who would twist everything and seek to change God’s law.

When we see God and His government working like human governments with imposed laws, then we falsely believe the righteousness of Christ is a legal payment, applied in a legal fashion, in a heavenly courtroom to legal records and that justification is getting ourselves legally accounted or credited as righteous “even though we are not.” This distorted view cheats people out of the actual healing and transformation of mind/heart/character that God wants for them.

In other words, having accepted the false legal idea of justification people fail to experience genuine justification—the justification Abraham did—which is genuine transformation of heart toward God!



This has been true throughout all human history. David, in Ps 51 wrote:

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. (vs 10,11)

Jesus said the same thing to Nicodemus. Jesus didn't say, "Unless a man be legally pardoned" or "Unless a man have my righteousness credited to his account in heaven." Jesus said, "Unless a man is born again" i.e. receives a new heart and right spirit, receives my righteousness into his mind to actually be righteous.

Thus Strong's New Testament lexicon, when describing the very word in Romans 4:5 and Galatians 3:6 that is translated "credited" or "accounted" as righteousness says:

This word deals with reality. If I "logizomai" or reckon that my bank book has \$25 in it, it has \$25 in it. Otherwise I am deceiving myself. This word refers to facts not suppositions.¹

Thus, Abraham, whose natural heart was enmity to God, experienced a change of heart where his heart was "set right" or "put right" or justified with God back into a state of genuine trust, and only AFTER this was he recognized, accounted or declared righteous, because he was actually right in heart with God again.

This is what we are to be teaching people and penal substitution theology, which dominates Christianity, is an infection of thought that has paralyzed the church and prevents the church from preparing the world for Christ's return. It is time we throw it out and come back to the truth about God!

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Moses and some..." What is being depicted here?

Moses goes into God's very presence; the others do not, why?

What is the role Israel is to play in the Great Controversy and plan of salvation?

- Through this family Jesus will come

¹ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



- Be teachers to teach the truth about God and His plan to save
- Be the storehouse of truth, Scripture etc.

What method was God using with Israel to have them teach? Object lesson, acting out a mini-drama, the various people of the nation were all assigned roles, and all played a part. They were actors in a drama—theater. Understanding this makes everything much more easy to understand:

- Moses represents Christ in His pre-incarnate state—thus Moses goes into God’s presence on the Mount, which symbolizes Jesus going into God’s presence to plan the plan of salvation before his incarnation
- The lamb represents Jesus during His incarnation
- Aaron represents Jesus after His ascension
- Nadab and Abihu represent the priesthood of believers who follow the directions of Jesus their heavenly High Priest
- The 70 elders represent the inhabitants of the world who are in need of salvation
- The all saw God from a distance, symbolizing how God has continued to reveal himself throughout human history to all people, whether in the church or not in the church
 - At Sinai the people were frightened but Moses was not—whenever God reveals himself in unveiled glory human beings still in sin, whether believers or not, respond with fear. But Jesus is there (symbolized by Moses) to reassure us there is no need to be afraid
 - God spoke to ancient Israel in various ways and speaks to us today in various ways (written word, nature, providence, people, dreams)

Understanding ancient Israel were actors in a drama helps explains so much—like Uzzah—have you ever wondered why Uzzah died when touching the ark, but the Philistines didn’t? It is straightforward, Uzzah was in the play, the Philistines were not.

The ark is symbolic of the universe perfectly restored to unity and oneness with God, sinlessness. Uzzah’s role is that of a sinner in need of healing; what happens when unhealed sinners come into God’s unveiled glory? Thus, what happened to Uzzah was demonstrative, educational. It did not determine Uzzah’s ultimate eternal destiny, it simply accurately acted out the role in which Uzzah was acting.

The lesson asks us to read Hebrews 4:2: “For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.”



Then read last paragraph, “Only by faith...” What is faith? It is trust—trusting God with your life and future outcomes.

What does faithful obedience look like?

Who was obedient to Christ, the Roman centurion who said Christ didn’t need to come to his house to heal his servant, but just say the word, yet who never observed a Sabbath (the law), or the Pharisees who crucified Christ and kept the Sabbath (the law) rigorously?

What law is a faithful person loyal to?

Did those who crucified Christ think they were being faithful law keepers? What was their error? They accepted Satan’s view of law, imposed rules that require punishment for breaking!

The lesson suggests the common misperception about the law and covenant is failure to take into account the context in which Paul is writing—I think the bigger failure is in misunderstanding the nature of God’s law itself.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson discusses the new covenant, thoughts? Notice all the covenants are communications from God of what He would do. Whenever there was some responsibility for human beings, it is always the responsibility that design law, reality requires!

- Covenant with Adam was what God would do, He would send a Savior—Adam responsibility—to believe or trust that God would do it
- Covenant with Noah is what God would do, He would not destroy the world with a flood again—humanity’s responsibility—believe it to be true
- Covenant with Abraham is what God would do, He would make a great nation from Abraham’s descendants and the Messiah would come through his children—Abraham’s responsibility—to trust God would do it
- New Covenant is also what God will do, He will reveal truth, destroy sin and Satan and restore His perfect design law in those who trust Him, ultimately healing His universe—our responsibility—to trust Him, and thus follow His prescription!

Read third paragraph, “The same law...” What is being written on our hearts? Is it a list of rules? No it is not a code of conduct, but the law of love, the very protocols upon which life works, God’s character!



Thus the 10 Commandments are not a list of rules to be obeyed, but a description of how we function when God has His Spirit living in our hearts.

Notice how God describes this through Ezekiel:

“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that **I am going to do these things**, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. ²³ **I will show the holiness of my great name**, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.

²⁴ “ ‘For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶ **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws...**Ezek 36:22-36

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “The broken body of Christ...” What link do you see in the communion service that links Old and New Testament together?

When one takes communion, one partakes of juice/wine and bread, which is symbolic of what? Bread—body and wine—blood, but what is this symbolic of? When Jesus said in John 6 unless a person eats his flesh and drinks his blood they have no part with him, to what was he referring? We know Jesus wasn’t talking cannibalism, but was Jesus suggesting the communion service? What is the reality to which the symbols point that we must partake?

Jesus is also known as the Word, John 1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Have you ever heard the expression “devouring a book?” What does it mean to devour a book? So what does it mean to eat the body of Jesus? To devour the truth He embodies! He is truth, we must ingest the truth as Jesus revealed it into our minds and hearts. When we ingest the truth then we are



won to trust and open the heart to receive the blood transfusion. The blood is symbolic of the life of Jesus. We become partakers of the divine nature! In other words, we receive the character of Jesus; this is how we partake the body and blood.

This idea that the shed blood of Jesus pays some legal penalty is false! It is a lie! It leads people to accept a false legal solution that leaves them dead in sin.

The truth is that the blood of Jesus, i.e. his life, his perfect character, sets us right in our hearts and minds with God, it at-ones us, or restores us to unity with God as we become partakers of the divine nature!

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 3



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Welcome Gary Jones! Gary is a retired non-commissioned officer in the Canadian Army who has moved to Chattanooga in order to be a volunteer team manager for Come and Reason Ministries. He is currently looking for a space that our Ministry can lease to serve as a storage and distribution hub for our materials. Once this is established he will be reaching out and working to promote this message here and abroad. Our Ministry now has a phone number: **(423) 661-4734**, and Gary will be manning that number.

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website: http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase– ALL GLITCHES NOW FIXED in the IOS Version! So please UPDATE to latest version.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes.

January 8-9, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, California.

January 29-30, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven Church in St. Helena, CA.

February 20, 2016: Class will meet at Hamilton Community Church due to the Courthouse being unavailable.

March 11-12, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Village Church, College Place, WA.

April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.



Jeremiah 4Q 2015 Lesson 12

Back to Egypt

I received this email this week:

Dear come and reason Team,

I have been blessed beyond measure by the messages you have sharing. I live in the United Kingdom and am the PM Leader of my church.

Through the grace of the Holy Spirit I am planning a revival program for my church in January. I believe God led me to you via a friend who went to the General Conference Session earlier this year. I have been fasting and praying and asking God to direct me as to what He wants me to do for the revival.

As a people we have been lost in church for so long that we cannot see how lost we are and God has made it clear to me personally, for a while now, it is because I had a distorted view of who He is. When I came upon your messages a few weeks ago everything God has been showing me came together in my mind.

I so want to share these truths with my church family, to see others wake up to the love of our God.

Would it be ok to use the material and the concepts from your program in the revival program?

I thank you for allowing God to use you in this magnificent way.

SABBATH

To what is the title referring? When the threats of Babylonian aggression came, some of the people thought they could seek protection from Egypt.

If we consider the history of Israel as not only historical fact, but an object lesson—actors on a cosmic stage—what is the lesson?

- The Hebrew people were in bondage in Egypt—human beings are in bondage of sin
- Pharaoh represents Satan—who governs the world of false gods, coercion, oppression, and the powers that enslave.
- Moses represented Jesus—the deliver who delivers humanity from the power of Satan and sin



- Now, years later, the people have rebelled against God, and they are under threat, to where do they turn? Back to their previous slave master. What would this represent to us today?
 - People who have had sin problems in their lives seek God and get deliverance, but often walk away from God and disconnect from Him and then problems begin piling up in their lives and what do many do? Turn back to their previous habits that enslaved them—alcohol, drugs, tobacco, overeating, porn, shopping, overwork, romances, novels, movies, etc. etc.
- What did Israel get from Egypt? What do we get when we go back to our previous destructive habits?

Read first paragraph, “This week’s lesson...” I think we all agree that God cannot force people to be saved, but what do you think of this idea described as “the limits of grace?”

What is the typical definition of grace? Unmerited favor? How about this as a definition of grace—unearned remedy or free remedy or remedy one did not develop? But the definition I like best for grace is God’s work to heal, restore and sustain His universe!

Does God become less gracious when we refuse Him? Does the Remedy to sin become less effective if we refuse it?

So, as the lesson suggests, what limits grace? Our refusal! We must be clear to NEVER suggest God stops being gracious. Many do, many teach that God one day stops being gracious and starts being something else, something, which as they describe is not worthy of our love and trust.

The next paragraph states, “Even after everything he warned about came to pass, the people still clung to their sins and paganism and rebellion, openly defying the prophet to his face and scorning the Word of the Lord to them.”

Is this happening today in Christianity? How?

What is the essence of paganism? Broadly speaking worshipping any god but the true god—but what is the bottom line that all false gods have in common?

The Bible repeatedly draws the contrast that false gods are not the Creator—why? I believe it is because God is trying to help people realize the difference between the laws of false gods and Himself.



False gods—gods who cannot create—cannot build the fabric of space, time, matter, intelligence, relationships and thus their laws are not the protocols upon which all reality stands and operates. False gods therefore ALWAYS use imposed law which requires the god to punish disobedience, thus the false god requires some action be done to the god in order for the god not to act out violently. This is the essence of what almost all Christianity teaches—and what often happens when we try to share the true Good News that God is not like that? What happens? We are ridiculed, rejected, and people cling to their pagan god concept.

SUNDAY

Read last paragraph, “As the chapter...” Was Babylon the primary threat facing Israel? What was? The primary threat was not Babylon, but the religious and political leaders in Israel that were teaching falsehood about God.

What is the primary threat facing Christianity today—is it, as we are often told—atheism, Islam, pluralism, the liberal media?

What is the reason so many people have turned away from Christianity and oppose it? Is it because Christianity clearly and consistently reveals a God like Jesus and its members consistently love others more than self?

Do the great opposers of Christianity oppose genuine love, kindness, altruism, gentleness, willingness to help others, respect for freedom of others, truthfulness and honesty?

No! They oppose the false Christianity that has dominated the church for over 1000 years—the view that God is dictator like, his law is imposed rules that God governs like human agents; that He has tribunals, keeps records of wrongs, will punish horribly for all eternity, that God is so biased He will kill the innocent in place of the guilty. They oppose the coercive Christianity that in times past held inquisitions, burned people at the stake and demanded kings bow to it; and they oppose the Christianity of today which wants to legislate its beliefs in order to coerce everyone to obey its tenants, to have all children indoctrinated into its way of thinking.

Religion has actually convinced people that there's an invisible man living in the sky who watches everything you do, every minute of every day. And the invisible man has a special list of ten things he does not want you to do. And if you do any of these ten things, he has a special place, full of fire and smoke and burning and torture and anguish, where he will send you to



live and suffer and burn and choke and scream and cry forever and ever til the end of time! But he loves you.—George Carlin

“The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.”—Richard Dawkins

“I am against religion because it teaches us to be satisfied with not understanding the world.”—Richard Dawkins

The greatest threat to Christianity is the false version of Christianity based on the idea that God’s law functions no different than our own, which today presents itself most clearly in the entire penal substitution theory of salvation. This is the greatest threat and this is what has led to so much rebellion. Why? Because it is a violation of God’s law, the law of liberty, and when one violates liberty, not only is love destroyed but rebellion ensues.

A theologian with his master’s in theology, almost has his PhD and who has worked as a pastor in the church for decades, emailed me this week asking if I believe God punishes. I presented our position with Bible and EGW quotes, and he absolutely could not comprehend what we teach.

He insisted over and over again that God is angry and wrathful and does inflict punishment and will torture and kill the wicked in the end. In his last email to me he said the following, which is diagnostic:

Again, I see both active and passive punishment here. I am comfortable with that. He is God. He can do anything He wants to do. I cannot question His actions. Satan wants me to, but I won't go there.

Do you see the problem here?

- His god is the source of inflicted punishments
- His is arbitrary and can do anything he wants
- We are not allowed to question and think
- And to question and think is framed as a satanic idea

This neatly sums up the trap much of Christian leadership finds itself in.



MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “The also vowed...” I am stunned at the lesson’s interpretation of this—was this a confession of faith? This is no different than what the devils said to Christ—we know who you are Son of the Most High God—was that a confession of faith? The devils believe and tremble, is their belief a confession of faith?

What is being revealed by the suggestion that this was a confession of faith? That the lesson is operating on imposed law construct, behavior, it is not about change of character and heart; it is about performance. They were sinners, but they did their legal requirement—they confessed and made claim.

This is the fraud of penal substitutionary theology—the idea that we need to confess and lay claim to the legal payment, do the right rituals and then boom, you are a person of faith and are saved. No, faith is trust in Jesus, which requires one actually know Him, and this trust leads to an opening of the heart, a relationship ensues and the entire inner person is transformed by the indwelling Spirit!

Read fourth and fifth paragraphs, “God has to warn...” Does this sound like people who are trusting God? Was their previous proclamation of loyalty real if they are now seeking to go to Egypt?

Is it the confessions and proclamations that matter, or is it the motive that generates the proclamation?

It is the motive—one can confess, convert, proclaim loyalty, but have a heart that is not truly changed so they are not healed; they remain infected with fear and selfishness and in rebellion against God, albeit now within the guise of religion.

Consider this story from EGW:

A few weeks after this, on our way to Boston we took the steamer at Portland. A violent storm came up, and we were in great peril. The boat rolled fearfully, and the waves dashed into the cabin windows. There was great fear in the ladies' cabin. Many were confessing their sins, and crying to God for mercy. Some were calling upon the Virgin Mary to keep them, while others were making solemn vows to God that if they reached land they would devote their lives to His service. It was a scene of terror and confusion. As the boat rocked, a lady turned to me and said: "Are you not terrified? I suppose it is a fact that we may never reach land." I told her that I had made Christ my refuge, and if my work was done, I might as well lie in the bottom of the



ocean as in any other place; but if my work was not done, all the waters of the ocean could not drown me. My trust was in God; He would bring us safe to land if it was for His glory... {1T 80.3}

Through the mercy of God we were all landed safe. But some of the passengers who manifested much fear in the storm made no reference to it, only to make light of their fears. One who had solemnly promised that if she were preserved to see land she would be a Christian, mockingly cried out as she left the boat: "Glory to God, I am glad to step on land again!" I asked her to go back a few hours, and remember her vows to God. She turned from me with a sneer. {1T 81.2}

I was forcibly reminded of deathbed repentance. Some serve themselves and Satan all their lives, and then as sickness subdues them, and a fearful uncertainty is before them, they manifest some sorrow for sin, and perhaps say they are willing to die, and their friends make themselves believe that they have been truly converted and fitted for heaven. But if these should recover, they would be as rebellious as ever. 1T 81

Is it about confession and claiming legal blood payments before the heavenly court or about a change in heart? Think of Proverbs 1:27-30:

When calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you.²⁸ "Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me."²⁹ Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord,³⁰ since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, Prov 1:27-30

Why does God not answer? Because they are not seeking healing, transformation of heart, a relationship with God, they are seeking to escape consequence, but with no part of them intent on a new heart and right spirit.

The last paragraph states they had a stark choice—what of today do we have a stark choice? How would you describe our choice?

Who will those who are following after the beast of Revelation think they are following? What could you say that makes the choice more distinct?



TUESDAY

Let's read Jeremiah 42 and 43, thoughts?

42 Then all the army officers, including Johanan son of Kareah and Jezaniah son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least to the greatest approached ² Jeremiah the prophet and said to him, "Please hear our petition and pray to the Lord your God for this entire remnant. For as you now see, though we were once many, now only a few are left. ³ Pray that the Lord your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do."

⁴ "I have heard you," replied Jeremiah the prophet. "I will certainly pray to the Lord your God as you have requested; I will tell you everything the Lord says and will keep nothing back from you."

⁵ Then they said to Jeremiah, "May the Lord be a true and faithful witness against us if we do not act in accordance with everything the Lord your God sends you to tell us. ⁶ Whether it is favorable or unfavorable, we will obey the Lord our God, to whom we are sending you, so that it will go well with us, for we will obey the Lord our God."

⁷ Ten days later the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah. ⁸ So he called together Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him and all the people from the least to the greatest. ⁹ He said to them, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your petition, says: ¹⁰ 'If you stay in this land, I will build you up and not tear you down; I will plant you and not uproot you, for I am grieved over the disaster I have inflicted on you. ¹¹ Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, whom you now fear. Do not be afraid of him, declares the Lord, for I am with you and will save you and deliver you from his hands. ¹² I will show you compassion so that he will have compassion on you and restore you to your land.'

¹³ "However, if you say, 'We will not stay in this land,' and so disobey the Lord your God, ¹⁴ and if you say, 'No, we will go and live in Egypt, where we will not see war or hear the trumpet or be hungry for bread,' ¹⁵ then hear the word of the Lord, O remnant of Judah. This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'If you are determined to go to Egypt and you do go to settle there, ¹⁶ then the sword you fear will overtake you there, and the famine you dread will follow you into Egypt, and there you will die. ¹⁷ Indeed, all who are determined to go to Egypt to settle there will die by the sword, famine and plague; not one of them will survive or escape the disaster I will bring on them.' ¹⁸ This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'As my anger and wrath have been poured out on those who lived in Jerusalem, so will my



wrath be poured out on you when you go to Egypt. You will be an object of cursing and horror, of condemnation and reproach; you will never see this place again.'

¹⁹ *"O remnant of Judah, the Lord has told you, 'Do not go to Egypt.' Be sure of this: I warn you today ²⁰ that you made a fatal mistake when you sent me to the Lord your God and said, 'Pray to the Lord our God for us; tell us everything he says and we will do it.' ²¹ I have told you today, but you still have not obeyed the Lord your God in all he sent me to tell you. ²² So now, be sure of this: You will die by the sword, famine and plague in the place where you want to go to settle."*

43 *When Jeremiah finished telling the people all the words of the Lord their God—everything the Lord had sent him to tell them—² Azariah son of Hoshai and Johanan son of Kareah and all the arrogant men said to Jeremiah, "You are lying! The Lord our God has not sent you to say, 'You must not go to Egypt to settle there.' ³ But Baruch son of Neriah is inciting you against us to hand us over to the Babylonians, so they may kill us or carry us into exile to Babylon."*

⁴ *So Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers and all the people disobeyed the Lord's command to stay in the land of Judah. ⁵ Instead, Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers led away all the remnant of Judah who had come back to live in the land of Judah from all the nations where they had been scattered. ⁶ They also led away all the men, women and children and the king's daughters whom Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard had left with Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch son of Neriah. ⁷ So they entered Egypt in disobedience to the Lord and went as far as Tahpanhes.*

⁸ *In Tahpanhes the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ⁹ "While the Jews are watching, take some large stones with you and bury them in clay in the brick pavement at the entrance to Pharaoh's palace in Tahpanhes. ¹⁰ Then say to them, 'This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I will send for my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and I will set his throne over these stones I have buried here; he will spread his royal canopy above them. ¹¹ He will come and attack Egypt, bringing death to those destined for death, captivity to those destined for captivity, and the sword to those destined for the sword. ¹² He will set fire to the temples of the gods of Egypt; he will burn their temples and take their gods captive. As a shepherd wraps his garment around him, so will he wrap Egypt around himself and depart from there unscathed. ¹³ There in the temple of the sun in Egypt he will demolish the sacred pillars and will burn down the temples of the gods of Egypt.' "*



Many major lessons let's focus on a few.

Do we get confirmation their so-called confession of faith was not a confession of faith? If we look through the theater lens what is the object lesson that applies to us?

Remember Egypt represents the world of sin, so:

- What does it mean that God told the remnant to stay in Israel?
 - That we are to stay in relationship with God, loyal to His law of love and faithful to His principles, trusting Him with the outcomes
 - thus they remain free!
- What does it mean that God promised blessings?
 - That when we trust Him, in the end we have all things restored, and here and now our decisions work to bring healing and blessings, even while enemies might be oppressing us
- What does it mean that they wanted to go to Egypt?
 - They want to return to the protection of the systems and methods of the world, i.e. selfishness, coercion, warfare, bribery, deceit, treaties, legal proclamations, human laws and enforcement, and
 - today this is a religious system with human laws, legal payments, coercive enforcement etc. i.e. penal substitution theology.
- What does it mean that they will die by sword, famine, or plague?
 - Those who reject God's methods today and instead claim security in legal payments live under the fear of coercive punishment, and will die either by:
 - violence of others,
 - spiritual starvation as they no longer ingest truth,
 - the infection of selfishness the plague of sinfulness in their own characters.
- What does it mean God's anger and wrath will be poured out?
 - That God surrenders people to reap that which they have sown
- Why does God speak in such ways?
 - Because the audience to whom He is speaking is currently operating at level one maturity and at this level the God who is powerful is the one who they listen to.
- What does it mean that God sent this message to them through Jeremiah?
 - That God never stops being the source of truth and light, and that today God has people all over the world sharing the true picture of Him and educating people on the devastating results that will happen if people persistently refuse to reconcile to God, if people stay living out of harmony with His design



- What do we learn from the response of the people?
 - That those who have solidified their characters in selfishness will refuse and deny truth and blame the messengers of love and truth
- What does it mean God will send for His servant Nebuchadnezzar to destroy?
 - Listen to this quote from EGW about the future last plagues:
 - "I was shown that the **judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them**, but in this way;
"They place themselves beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reproves, and points out the only path of safety; then if those who have been the objects of His special care will follow their own course, independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, then **He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them.**
"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of."
 - Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

Doesn't that sound just like what God did in Jeremiah's day, He removed His restraining hand, because the people chose to separate themselves from Him, and the destroyer came. Just what Revelation 7 describes.

Read last paragraph and bottom pink section, "Human nature is human nature..." This is one of the greatest tools of Satan, to play on emotions and get people to make decisions that go against their own reason, their own judgment, their own understanding of what is healthy and best. And once the unhealthy decision is carried out, the person then begins forming all kinds of lies and self-deception to avoid the guilt and shame associated with their choice, the blame game being one of those actions.

However, how can following a "clear thus saith the Lord" be another form of self-deceit and avoidance of truth?

By refusing to think, by refusing to evaluate the meaning, by taking passages at face value when they support the belief that one needs to hold to in order to avoid the truth and hide in their own self-deception. Thus, "my Bible says God throws people in the lake of fire and I take the Bible over your reasoning."

WEDNESDAY

The lesson points out that the refugees who thought they would find protection and safety in Egypt were wrong. How does this apply to us today?

What about those who are searching for eternal security, i.e. protection, in:

- penance
- rituals
- pilgrimages
- church attendance
- dietary conformity
- Sabbath observance
- legal substitutionary atonement
- blood payments to an offended god
- the gods of the world

What are the gods of the world today?

Read last paragraph, “When self-denial...” What is being described here?

- self-denial
- enlightenment of our minds
- freedom to follow the truth

Where is the change, the impact of God’s actions occurring in this description? In the sinner, not in a heavenly court room!

What are the wonderful things of God’s law? Realizing the amazing beauty of God’s design law and breaking free of the oppressive darkness that imposed law brings.

What does it mean “responsible in proportion to the light” one has? That it is not about performance, deeds done, actions taken, but about the motive of the heart, i.e. the character transformation! The healed/saved are those who have hearts that love truth and are willing to follow and apply it wherever it leads!

What does this mean, “The claims of his law are just and reasonable, and through the grace of Christ he expects us to fulfill his requirements.”



What does God's law claim? That God is love and life is constructed to work in harmony with His character of love and is actually an expression of that love.

What does just mean? Right, so God's design for life, which is the principle of giving in a free environment is the only right way for things and it is reasonable because this is how life is actually built to operate.

And it is through Christ's power/grace that we are enabled to not only understand God's design/law but to live in harmony with that law. Why does God expect us to do so? Because He expects us to be sensible and choose life and not death—it would be like offering a drowning man a lifeline of the water, we expect him to take it.

What would keep a drowning man from taking the lifeline? Believing some lie that lifeline is from of a terrible enemy about to torture and destroy him.

Thus, when we are enlightened to see the truth of our situation, our condition, God's character of love, it is reasonable that we take the hand of our Savior, and Christ expects we will do the reasonable thing, i.e. choose His Design, when we understand it.

So, are there other EGW quotes that supports this idea of what the law requires?

- **The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; {DA 762.2}**
- **But the law requires that the soul itself be pure and the mind holy, that the thoughts and feelings may be in accordance with the standard of love and righteousness.--RH, Apr 5, 1898. (2SM 211.) {2MCP 564.1}**
- **The divine law requires us to love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves. {A New Life NL 32.1}**
- **His law requires your heart's supreme affection for your Maker. It requires you to do unto others as you would have them do to you. {BEcho, February 15, 1889 par. 8}**
- This is the voice of God to you, my brethren and sisters who profess to keep the law of God. **That law requires that you love your neighbor as yourself. Are you doing it? {RH, March 11, 1884 par. 10}**
- **The law requires us to present to God a holy character. It demands of men today just what it demanded of Adam in Eden,--perfect obedience, perfect harmony with all its precepts in all relations of life, under all circumstances and conditions. {ST, May 30, 1895 par. 2}**



Why does God's law require this? For the same reason the law of respiration requires you to breathe, it is how life is constructed to operate—the ONLY way life can exist.

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, "The rationale..." What does it mean they offered incense to the queen of heaven? Who was the queen of heaven?

FRIDAY

Asks a profound question, "What if you don't believe in God, how can you know good from evil?"

Romans 1:20: "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."

Romans 2:12-15: "All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)"

Read and discuss the questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Welcome Gary Jones! Gary is a retired non-commissioned officer in the Canadian Army who has moved to Chattanooga in order to be a volunteer team manager for Come and Reason Ministries. He is currently looking for a space that our Ministry can lease to serve as a storage and distribution hub for our materials. Once this is established he will be reaching out and working to promote this message here and abroad. Our Ministry now has a phone number: **(423) 661-4734**, and Gary will be manning that number.

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website: http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase– FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes.

January 8-9, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, California.

January 29-30, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven Church in St. Helena, CA.

February 20, 2016: Class will meet at Hamilton Community Church due to the Courthouse being unavailable.

March 11-12, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Village Church, College Place, WA.

April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.



Jeremiah 4Q 2015 Lesson 13

Lessons From Jeremiah

SABBATH

CORRECTION: One of our online listeners, Elise Nesbitt, has graciously (pun intended) emailed a helpful correction to something I said last week.

Thank you Elise for catching my confusing of two Greek words. I said that the Greek word for grace is *khiros* from which we get chiropractor—and while *khiros* is the root to chiropractor, it is not the Greek for grace. That word is *charis*. I have included Elise's email in the notes for those who would like to read it.

I was listening to last Saturday's class and came across the first, (yes, FIRST), thing that didn't make sense in the last 18 months of listening to you online. You mentioned the root word in Greek for chiropractor was the same root as grace. To be gracious, (LOL) I did hear you add "I believe", so my guess is that you weren't totally positive.

Your slight hesitation was correct. The Greek for "hand" is χεῖρ, χεῖρός, "khire, khiros" from which we get chiropractor. It means the instrument a person uses to accomplish their purpose.

But the Greek word for "grace" is χάρις, "charis" from which we get charisma or eucharis.

I like Thayer's Greek Lexicon definition the best: 1) that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, or loveliness; 2) good-will, loving-kindness, favor.

John 1:14 says Jesus was full of grace. Religious people usually jump directly to the second definition of grace. I've never heard anyone say Jesus was full of joy. Or that he was a pleasure to be around. Or that he was a great delight to have in one's home. Or that he was full of charm and a very sweet gentleman. Come to think of it, Jesus was the ultimate Prince Charming!

But, to be fair, Jesus does bring justification with God as a chiropractor justifies the bones and ligaments.

Thank you for challenging us and giving us opportunities to think for ourselves. I absolutely LOVE all the (trick) questions that you ask. I used to answer immediately, but now I stop and think about the question first before I answer - and then think about why I answered the way I did.

I'm so glad you stream/record the classes!



Are there any lessons you gleaned from this quarter you would like to share?

Read Memory Text: —Behold, the days are coming,‘ says the Lord, _that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.’” Jeremiah 23:5 NKJV

I want us to spend a little time digging into this passage and comparing Scripture with Scripture this morning.

What does the word branch entail? Why might it be used?

- When people outline their family trees what do the hereditary pathways do? They branch—new branches grow out of older branches.
- The branch concept is designed to let us know this is going to be a person who is a descendant of David, a person who is really and actually human—but somehow able to do something no other human is able to do

Does this passage bring any other passages to mind? How about Isa 11:1-9:

*A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.
2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of power,
the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD—
3 and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;
4 but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.
5 Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

6 The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
and a little child will lead them.
7 The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,*



- and the lion will eat straw like the ox.*
- 8 *The infant will play near the hole of the cobra,
and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest.*
- 9 *They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.*

What is going on in this passage?

- *A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse*
 - again a biological descendant of David—a human, a part of this creation
- *from his roots a Branch will bear fruit*
 - what kind of fruit? righteousness, fruit of a perfect and godly character
- *The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD—and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.*
 - What does this mean? He will have the knowledge of God, understanding how reality works, our true condition, God's methods and design and how to fix what is wrong
 - What does fear of the Lord mean? Does it mean He will be terrified and afraid of God? Or that He will rejoice in the knowledge, wonder, admiration and experience with and of God?
- *He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy—*
 - what does this mean?
 - Does it mean ~~man~~ looks on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart?"
 - Does it mean He will not determine health or disease, good or bad, based on externals i.e. behaviors, but by the actual motives of the heart?
 - So might we say this—~~he~~ will not diagnose by superficial appearances; but he will diagnose accurately (rightly) those who are in *need* of healing.
- *with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth*
 - what does this mean?
 - Which law lens do you think through when you hear the word justice?
 - Do you think through the human idea of laws, rules imposed and justice is enforcement of those rules?
 - Or do you think through Design Law, where God's laws are those protocols upon which life is based and justice is seeking to restore people to harmony with God's design for life?
 - Thus, this passage means God is constantly seeking to do that which restores the sin-sick to wellness.
- *He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth*
 - what does this mean?
 - Any other texts come to mind on this one?



- How about in Revelation where it says the wicked are destroyed by the sword that comes from his mouth?
 - And what is that rod or sword?
 - It is the rod or sword of truth! Which does what? See next verse—
- *with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked—*
 - what slays the wicked?
 - what is breath a symbol of?
 - It is the symbol of life, the breath of life, and life in God's universe is love—thus the rod or sword is truth and the breath is love—so the wicked are slain when their unhealed selves come into the presence of the unveiled glory of God's—His true self. God's life-giving fire of love and truth (which heal the righteous) is a consuming fire to the unhealed and is symbolized here by the rod and breath.
- *Righteousness will be his belt*
 - what does this mean?
 - What is righteousness?
 - It is perfection, harmony with God, His character, methods, principles, the way God constructed all reality to operate. This will be the belt, the basis upon which all things are held together.
- *and faithfulness the sash around his waist*
 - which means what?
 - That He doesn't waiver, He is reliable, He is consistent, predictable, dependable, trustworthy

And then note, from what the Branch accomplishes what happens:

- ⁶ The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. ⁷ The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. ⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. Isa 11:1-9
 - What is being described?
 - How does this come about?
 - Why is this the result?

What is being described is that by the result of what the Branch accomplishes the infection of fear and selfishness, survival of the fittest drive, will be eradicated from nature and nature will be restored back to God's original ideal. Dualism will be eliminated from the universe! At-one-ment is achieved when all things are again united under one head, Jesus Christ!

What insights does Zech 6:12,13 give to this process?

- Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and



he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord. ¹³ It is he who will build the temple of the Lord, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.‘

- To what is this referring? If the temple in heaven has always been in existence, then what does it mean that the Branch will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord?

When Jesus said to the Jewish leaders that when they destroy ~~–this~~” temple He would rebuild it in three days, to what was He referring? Does His statement have anything to do with the passage in Zechariah six?

What is a temple?

- A place of entertainment?
- A place of legality?
- A place of worship?
- A place where God dwells?
- What about the Temple Jesus built?

Let’s reread or original memory text from the NKJV:

—Behold, the days are coming,‘ says the Lord, _that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.” Jeremiah 23:5 NKJV

Now let’s compare it to the GNB and NIV:

The Lord says, —The time is coming when I will choose as king a righteous descendant of David. That king will rule wisely and do what is right and just throughout the land. GNB

—The days are coming,” declares the Lord, —when I will raise up to David (footnote—or up from David’s line) a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. NIV

Any noted differences? Why do you think the authors chose a translation with the word judgment rather than rule wisely and do what is right and just?

Does the expression execute judgment connote a different message than rule wisely and do what is right and just?



Why might the authors want to connote the idea of executing judgment? Could it be they are trapped in a false law construct? Could it be they are struggling to break free of the imposed law views that infected the church through imperial Rome?

Read fourth paragraph, –Such as faithfulness to God...” What does faithfulness to God and obedience to His commandments look like? What is the difference between religion of the heart and one of empty and dead rituals?

Can Sabbath observance be an empty and dead ritual? Can a person have a heart transforming experience with Christ and not be a Sabbath observer?

What is the role of the Sabbath? What law lens do you see it through? It must be seen through the lens of the central issue in the conflict between good and evil—Read...

SUNDAY

first paragraph, –Seventh-day Adventists understand...” This is well said—so with this question in mind, how does one understand the Sabbath? Does one see the Sabbath as an –arbitrary test of obedience?” If so, what kind of God would such an idea be promoting? An arbitrary God who makes up arbitrary laws and such a teaching would promote Satan’s view of God—it would be on the wrong side of the central issue in the Great Controversy.

Jesus said the Sabbath was made for man not man for the Sabbath—what does this mean? Why was the Sabbath made for man? What does it provide that is crucial in this war over God’s character and trustworthiness?

- Evidence of God’s methods and principles—proof that God is love, and completely trustworthy—how?
- In what context was the Sabbath created? War, over what? God’s trustworthiness to rule.
- What does it mean, that God, rather than using power to coerce and force all the heavenly beings into line, instead, after created earth, said, –Now, after providing this evidence of My Creatorship, after creating a planet constructed to operate in all ways upon the law of love, the principle of giving, after creating new beings with the power to procreate beings in their image—after all this to reveal my true nature, universe, I rest my case, consider for yourselves, no pressure or coercion from me. I want you to be free!”
- The Sabbath only exists because God is NOT like Satan says. He is not arbitrary, coercive, abusive, but presents truth in love and leaves us free.



- This day was provided as a weekly sign-post of God's methods and those who internalize God's law into their hearts and characters, practices God's methods—they present the truth in love and leave others free. This is what true Sabbath observance means—a seven day a week practicing of God's methods, all symbolized in the day created to remind us of God's amazing character of love

Read third paragraph, –Never will it be..." Amazing love that Jesus left all to heal and save us! What does it mean he bore the guilt and shame?

Christ bore our guilt and shame—i.e. He was not guilty and He was not ashamed:

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, **scorning its shame**, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Heb 12:2

Christ scorned or despised the shame of the Cross because He knew who He was and that the shame of the experience was actually upon those who rejected and crucified Him, and not on Him. He said, –Father forgiven them they don't know what they are doing..." they think they are shaming me – but it is actually shame on them. Christ, when he was lifted up –drew all" unto Himself, thus He knew His act was an act of supreme glory and not an act of shame.

What was it that crushed out His life? It was the result of the Father hiding His presence from Jesus, NOT the process of God inflicting death or using power to kill Jesus.

Did His Father use power to kill Jesus? Those who hold the penal view teach that God executed Jesus on the cross—what is terribly wrong with this teaching?

- It makes God out to be the source of death
- It teaches that if God were not to inflict death then sinners would live eternally
- It incites fear of God and undermines trust
- It leads to false theologies designed to protect from God
- It keeps people trapped in cycles of sin, powerless to break free
- It distorts how reality actually works
- It shuts down thinking and prevents the development of the image of God in man
- It justifies the use of coercive and destructive power to get one's goals
- It creates a disparity in the Godhead
- It sustains Satan's allegations that God is arbitrary and breaking His law requires inflicted punishment



What does it say about God that Jesus went through this for us? Why was it necessary? It was the only way for Jesus to build the temple of God—which is what? The dwelling place of God—which is what?

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? 1Cor 3:16

In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. **That temple**, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an **object lesson** for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was God's purpose that **every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God.** Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. **But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple.** God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the **high destiny open to every soul.** But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, **Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,—from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul.** "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." Malachi 3:1-3. {DA 161.1}

What was Jesus purpose? It was to restore God's image in humanity, to cleanse this species to fix what Adam and Eve did so that we can again be a place where God can dwell by His Spirit!

Does this have any bearing on the cleansing of the sanctuary to take place before Christ returns?

Did you notice the Malachi 3 verse just read, that the Messiah comes to His temple to cleanse the Levis and make them pure—they are the building blocks of the temple, this is what it means to cleanse



God's temple to have our hearts, minds, characters cleansed from lies, selfishness and any deviation from God's design.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, –There is a document...”

Read the next paragraph, –Not quite true...” Do you agree with this?

What kind of religion did Adam and Eve have in Eden? What ceremonies? What rituals? What rites? What procedures? What creeds?

Were Adam and Eve religious in Eden? What was the essence of their religion?

Their religion was reality—God and His creation, which operated on the protocols of love and fulfilling their role within God's framework. How would you describe their role? What would the practice of such a religion look like?

What will our religion look like in the earth made new?

Today:

- Religions too often bind while Jesus sets free
- Religions separate while Jesus unites
- Religions blind with symbols, rituals, and works while Jesus restores understanding with reason, explanations and reality
- Religions focus on self while Jesus focuses on the Father

Why then did God give such instructions for organized religion after sin—particularly at Sinai?

Did humanity understand God and how God's universe i.e. reality actually worked? Did humanity understand the true situation and circumstances it was in? Did humanity have clear understanding of the Great Controversy over God's character and His plan to heal and save?

So what was the purpose of the systems put in place by God? To protect, teach, instruct and illustrate! It is exactly like what parents do for their children. Such systems provide a sense of security, reduce anxiety, give structure, teach and hopefully lead to internalization and maturation of Godly principles.



In other words, the organized system of religion given by God was a tool designed to help fallen human beings in a sinful world experience God's healing in their lives—to lead them out of ritual and to a living God—Jesus!

Do those systems ever get corrupted and end up obstructing people from knowing God and experiencing His healing?

What profession has opposed God's work with His people most consistently throughout history?

Is there any profession that through history has obstructed the work of God more than the clergy?

- Aaron builds the golden calf
- Nadab and Abihu mislead the people
- The sons of Samuel abuse the people
- The priests during the time of Elijah and beyond lead in idol worship
- The Sanhedrin at the time of Christ
- The Jewish leadership to the Apostles
- The clergy in the Dark Ages and throughout the Reformation
- What about today?

How many seminary trained clergy did Jesus select to be amongst His twelve Apostles?

Saul of Tarsus was seminary trained—and when he converted what did Jesus do? He sent him out to the wilderness for 3.5 years to reprocess his understanding of all that he had learned. Historical facts needed to be set in new understanding and then he was able to go forward with the gospel work.

Now, to be fair there have been many great men of God who were in the clergy:

- Samuel
- Paul
- Nicodemus
- Joseph of Arimathea
- Luther
- Tyndale
- Many others

I am not saying that clergy cannot be agents of God—only that the clergy is an occupation where Satan seems to work with special effort to place his agents and we would be foolish to not recognize



this and do as the Scripture says, each person think for themselves and be fully persuaded in their own minds! The fourth paragraph states,

—The people do all these sinful things and *then come back to the temple and ‘worship’ the true God and claim forgiveness for their sins.* God is not mocked. Unless these people change their ways, especially how they treat the weak among them, they are going to face harsh judgment.” (emphasis original)

Why do the people do wickedly and then come to the temple and claim forgiveness for their sins? Could it have to do with their understanding of the sin problem and what they believe the solution is?

Does this sound like any thing we see in religion today? Is this not the essence of penal substitution theology? Sin is doing bad things; salvation is getting legal pardon i.e. legal forgiveness for one’s sins, which we get by claiming the blood of Jesus as our legal payment. So, we go out and sin, then come in to church and claim forgiveness for our sins.

But the lesson is right, it says ~~—unless~~ these people change their ways” unless they are changed in the inner person—reborn, recreated, have new hearts and right spirits etc. they will face harsh judgment—what does this mean face harsh judgment?

What is another word for judgment? Diagnosis—their diagnosis will be ~~—let~~ him who is wicked be wicked still—they are beyond healing—they are terminal.”

THURSDAY

Read bottom pink section, ~~—In~~ what are you putting...” Do we put our hope in:

- The promises of God, or the God who promises?
- The shed blood of Jesus, or Jesus who shed his blood?
- The righteousness of Christ, or the Christ of righteousness?

Am I just playing word games, or is there a difference in these? What difference?

The promises, blood, righteousness can be treated like commodities, something we can claim or accept and utilize in our negotiations/relationship with God to get what we want. This type of thinking is classic religion—focusing on some action, negotiation, ritual, rite, regulation, etc. done to influence God, but which subtly separates us from God.



But, when we focus on the God of promises, we lose all such perspective and instead find ourselves in a relationship with Him, a relationship in which we bring nothing but our sin-sick selves in need of healing and restoration. It isn't the blood we claim, it is our eternal Friend that we find!

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, —What's interesting in..." To what is the appeal to validate God as the One worthy of our worship? It is power—He is most powerful therefore we should worship Him—thoughts?

Is being most powerful the criteria that merits our worship?

First was power, i.e. whether God is most powerful, ever a question that Satan raised? No, it was never a question of who is most powerful, Satan acknowledge this and is frightened by God's power.

19th Century Congregationalist Theologian George MacDonald wrote:

—What is the deepest in God? His power? No, for power could not make him what we mean when we say *God*. A being whose essence was only power would be such a negation of the divine that no righteous worship could be offered him; his service would be only fear.”
(George MacDonald, *Discovering the Character of God*, p. 29.)

Why then does the Bible emphasize so often God is powerful? To whom is God trying to communicate? People operating at level one development and at level one development the only thing that wins is power. So God presents His power so they will start listening.

People have also misunderstood much of the meaning of what the Bible is saying on this topic. Often the Bible appeals to God as Creator and false gods as unable to create. God as the source of life, the false gods as being dead. This has also been misconstrued to be about power—it is not, it is about reality, it is about how God governs. What laws is life built upon? The universe and all reality is built about design law, which is an expression of love, this is the basis of life. This is why the Bible teaches he who pursues righteousness and love finds life, or why God's law revives the soul—because it is the basis for life.

When we truly come back to worship Him who made the heavens and the earth we come back to understand reality as God designed it, we leave behind human constructs of law and leave behind the distortion of God's character that imposed law has brought to Christianity.



Read last paragraph, —Of course...” This week I was emailed by Bob Reiswig, an online classmember, a photograph of a page in the book *The Letter to the Romans* by William Barclay, which reads:

Let us go back to the prophets. The prophets spoke about the wrath of God, and, very often, their message was that unless men were obedient the wrath of God would come upon them. How would that wrath be seen and operate? It would be seen in captivity and defeat, and national disaster. In other words the prophetic message was, —If you are not obedient to God the wrath of God will involve you in ruin and disaster.” In point of act Ezekiel put this in another vivid way—“The soul that sinneth it shall die.” (Ezekiel 18:4). Now if we were to put this into modern language we would use a different kind of terminology. We would say, —There is a moral order in this world, and the man who transgresses the moral law, soon or late, is bound to suffer.” That is exactly what J.A. Froude the great historian said: —One lesson, and one lesson only, history may be said to repeat with distinctness, that the world is built somehow on moral foundations, that, in the long run, it is well with the good, and, in the long run, it will be ill with the wicked.” The whole message of the Hebrew prophets was that there is a moral order in this world. The conclusion is clear—*that moral order is the wrath of God at work.* (emphasis original) God made this world in such a way that we break His laws at our peril. Now if we were left solely at the mercy of that inexorable and implacable moral order, there could be nothing for us but death and destruction. True, the world is made in such a way that the soul that sins must die—if the moral order is to act alone. But into this dilemma of man there comes the love of God, and that love of God, by an act of unbelievable free grace, lifts man out of the consequences of sin and saves him from the wrath he should have incurred.

The wrath of God is the inevitable punishment of sin. **It is there in the structure of the universe. And it is precisely from the consequences of our rebellion against that moral order** that the love of God saves us, because of what Jesus had done for us.

Paul goes on to insist that men cannot plead ignorance of God. They could have seen what God is like from God’s world. It is always possible to tell something of a man from his handiwork. And it is possible to tell something about God from the world He made. The Old Testament writers knew that. Job, chapters 38 to 41, is based on that very idea. Paul knew that. It is from the world that he starts when he is speaking to the pagans at Lystra (acts 14:17). Tertullian, the great early Christian Father, had much about this conviction that God can be seen in His world. —It was not the pen of Moses that initiated the knowledge of the Creator.... The vast majority of mankind, though they had never heard the name Moses—to say nothing of his book—know the God of Moses none the less.” —Nature,” he said, —is the teacher; the soul is the



pupil.” —One flower of the hedgerow by itself I think[[I do not say a flower of the meadows; one shell of any sea you like—I do not say a pear from the Red Sea; one feather of a moor flow—to say nothing of the peacock—will they speak to you of a mean Creator?” In the world we can see God. It is Paul’s argument—and it is completely valid—**that if we look at the world suffering follows sin.** (emphasis original) **Break the laws of agriculture—the harvest fails. Break the laws of architecture—your building collapses. Break the laws of health—your body suffers.** Paul was saying —Look at the world! See how it is constructed! From a world like that you know what God is like." The sinner is left without excuse. (p. 18, 19

We must focus on Jesus because only focusing on Him is there healing and transformation!

TUESDAY

The lesson cites Romans 14:12 —So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God.” What comes to mind when you hear this?

What does it mean? What law lens are you hearing it through?

The lesson states that in the end each of us will have to give an account of ourselves to God. Does this excite you are frighten you? Why?

If understood through the imposed law and penal view, what comes to mind?

If understood through design law and healing view, what comes to mind?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Welcome Gary Jones! Gary is a retired non-commissioned officer in the Canadian Army who has moved to Chattanooga in order to be a volunteer doing outreach for Come and Reason Ministries. He is working to promote this message here and abroad. Our Ministry now has a phone number: **(423) 661-4734**, and Gary will be manning that number.

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website: http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase— FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes.

January 8-9, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, California.

January 29-30, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven Church in St. Helena, CA.

February 20, 2016: Class will meet at Hamilton Community Church due to the Courthouse being unavailable.

March 11-12, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Village Church, College Place, WA.

April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.



Rebellion and Redemption 1Q 2016 Lesson 1 Crisis in Heaven

The third paragraph in the introduction states:

Satan's efforts to misrepresent the character of God, to cause men to cherish a false conception of the Creator, and thus to regard Him with fear and hate rather than with love; his endeavors to set aside the divine law, leading the people to think themselves free from its requirements; and his persecution of those who dare to resist his deceptions, have been steadfastly pursued in all ages. They may be traced in the history of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, of martyrs and reformers. {GC 12,13}

This is the central issue in the war—our conception of God, do we view him with love and trust or with fear and hatred?

The quote mentions that Satan has endeavored to set aside the divine law, to lead people to think themselves free from its requirements?

How? How has Satan actually done this?

SABBATH

Read first paragraph:

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. [why? what law lens are you thinking through? Are you thinking like a child, level 1-4 moral development that if you disobey you are unhappy because the ruling authority has to punish you? Or are you thinking like a mature friend of God who understands God's law is design law, and deviations from it injure and destroy the deviant and this is what destroys our happiness?] God desires from all His creatures the service of love—service that springs from an appreciation of His character. **He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience;** and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {PP 34.3} [What kind of law compels, forces, coerces? Imposed law, so if you understand how these various laws function then you can recognize in this statement alone the difference between God's law and man's law]



If God takes no pleasure in forced obedience, if all are granted free will, what action is therefore excluded in regard to the function of God's law? – Coercive enforcement—inflicting punishment upon lawbreakers.

So, with this in mind, what does it mean that Satan has tried to get people to set aside the divine law and think themselves free of its requirements?

What does God's law require? Why does it require this? Which law lens do you answer the question through?

The divine law requires us to love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves. {A New Life NL 32.1}

This is the voice of God to you, my brethren and sisters who profess to keep the law of God. **That law requires that you love your neighbor as yourself.** Are you doing it? {RH, March 11, 1884 par. 10}

But the law requires that the soul itself be pure and the mind holy, that the thoughts and feelings may be in accordance with the standard of love and righteousness.--RH, Apr 5, 1898. (2SM 211.) {2MCP 564.1}

Christ came to this world to live the law and represent the character of God, that the delusions which Satan had brought upon the world might be dispelled. In the sermon on the mount, He who gave the law became an expositor of the law. That sermon, so full of what it means to love and obey God, is the unfolding of His character. **The law is shown to be a representation of God's character**, that man may see that he must render obedience to the law if he would become a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King. **This law requires nothing short of perfect spiritual obedience.** {ST, February 24, 1898 par. 5}

What does the law requires? Love—why? Because this is the basis of life—this is like saying the law of respiration requires you to breathe—and what happens if one refuses to breathe?

So, how has Satan gotten men to think they don't have to live in harmony with the law of God? By getting them to believe they have to obey the law—did I just confuse you?

Yes, Satan wants people to think they have to live in harmony with God's law—*only Satan replaces God's true law with his own perverted version of that law.* Daniel 7:25 prophesied that a little horn



power would seek to change God's law. Satan has seduced the world, including the Christian world, into believing God's law functions like human law, rules imposed requiring imposed punishment, thus Satan gets people to set aside God's law and instead adhere to a false law construct which distorts God's character and obstructs His plan to heal and restore His creation.

Steve Morris brought an article from our Chattanooga Times Free Press last week, let me share it with you. And you tell me, has God's law been set aside?

Chattanooga Times Free Press, December 5, 2015 page E-1.

God isn't looking at us with an angry face

I once hurt a person. Badly. The pain I caused elicited an unforgettable response—eyes flashing fire, nose compressed like a spring under pressure, jaw locked, teeth grinding. It was an angry face.

We have all seen the angry face at one time or another. It's nearly impossible to avoid, considering that we are bound to make somebody mad eventually. In my situation, the person I had offended was no mere acquaintance, which made matters worse. Grief is compounded when we hurt someone close to us, like a spouse or a parent or a friend. We don't want those we love to be angry with us. We especially don't want God to be angry with us.

Have you ever been burdened with the feeling that God is looking at you with an angry face? If you're like many people, you do. "God must be angry with me" or "I think God is punishing me" are statements I hear frequently as a pastor. Though we have been taught that God is love, many of us go on quietly believing that God is also mad.

Certainly we deserve God's anger. Our thoughts and affections and behaviors often reveal that we prefer our own way over God's. And we know, if God cares about justice at all, that he must punish our sin. Therefore, it isn't unreasonable of us to imagine a dark shadow of wrath on God's face. Our sins are many, God's judgment is certain; hell is real; and we are by nature children of wrath (Isaiah 59:12; Revelation 20:11-15; Ephesians 2:1).

And yet (what hopeful words). And yet the Bible says that there is a way to know with absolute certainty that God is not looking at you with an angry face. How can you know? Look at the cross of Jesus. The cross wasn't merely an example of love—it was a substitutionary act of love. Jesus was ~~p~~ierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities" (Isaiah



53:5). Instead of turning his angry face upon us, God turned his angry face upon his Son. God's eyes flashed fire, his nose compressed like a spring under pressure and, with locked jaw and clenched teeth, he poured out upon Jesus the wrath we deserve. "For God so loved the world" (John 3:16)

Jesus, the sinless substitute, absorbed in himself every ounce of God's anger over our sin, fully and finally. Therefore, there is now ~~no~~ condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). Can you believe it? No condemnation. No angry face. If you are in Christ Jesus—that is, if you are trusting in Jesus for salvation—you can be absolutely certain that God is not angry with you. You will still grieve God with your sin and experience his fatherly discipline, but God will never look upon you in anger. All his anger has been spent in Jesus.

No wonder the birth of Jesus was accompanied by such a happy angelic announcement: "Behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11). Good news of great joy, indeed. Through faith in Jesus, you can look into the face of God and see nothing but love.

David King is senior pastor at Concord Baptist Church, where he has served the last 14 years. He is married to Natalie and has three children.

What law is being described? What system is God being relegated to? Whose law is God being described as operating under?

This is evidence of the infection—the lie, the idea that God is an arbitrary being who imposes rules and then inflicts punishments. Do you see how deeply Satan's lies have infected the Christian world?

Jump back to the introduction the fifth paragraph states:

Yes, God has pledged to bear in Himself the full responsibility for all human rebellion and to suffer the consequences for every evil we have committed. Only in this way could God restore His relationship with the human race, relationships between humans, and humanity's relationship with the rest of creation.

What are they trying to say?



- Are they trying to say that God suffers in the way a parent suffers when they see their children engaged in behaviors that injure themselves? So all the human sin and evil causes God to suffer in His heart because He loves us and all sin damages and destroys that which He loves?
 - This is a healthy understanding of how God suffers over every individual sin
- Or, are they trying to say that all the sins ever committed by every person throughout all history are legal breeches in God's law and require legal accountability in the divine government, which means they must be punished. And thus all the individual acts of sin ever committed were placed upon Christ and God inflicted torment and torture upon Christ to cause Christ to artificially experience the legally proper amount of suffering for human sins?
 - In other words, would they agree with the article from the paper, that God vented His anger and wrath on His Son causing Jesus' suffering?
 - This is a destructive way to think because it is false, it is based on the lies of Satan, it reinforces lies about God's law and God's character and undermines our love and trust in God

The last paragraph in the introduction states, "Jesus has won a decisive victory at the cross."

What was that victory? What did He win and how did He win it?

SUNDAY

With our understanding of God's true law in mind, we turn to the question of the fall in heaven—how did Satan get 1/3 of the angels to rebel?

The lesson refers us to Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, both of which describe the rebellion in heaven when Lucifer the light bearer became infatuated with himself and sought to get for himself rather than to give of himself.

What issue did Lucifer raise in heaven?

He called God's character and justice (what is justice?) into question? He suggested God was unfair, played favorites, was arbitrary, made up rules—how? What issue did Lucifer use to suggest some unfairness on the part of God?

He suggested there was no difference between Lucifer and the pre-incarnate Christ, yet Christ was given privileges that Lucifer was not, and this was suggested as being unfair. How could Lucifer do this so successfully? In other words how could the angels not see through this easily?



1Tim 6:16 says God lives in unapproachable light—what does this mean? Unapproachable by whom?

God is infinite—can a finite mind enter, i.e. approach, infinity? Why not?

So if an infinite God wants the closest interaction with finite beings, what must happen if finite beings cannot enter infinity? An infinite being must enter linear time—leave infinity and interact on the level of the created being. This person, this infinite divine being was Jesus. Jesus has always been the member of the Godhead who has been the go-between between infinity and finite creation, the bridge-builder, the connecting-link, also known as.... the mediator!

What form did Jesus take when, before the earth was created, He left infinity to interact with His angelic host?

What would make sense? Would Jesus want them to feel comfortable, to feel a kinship with Himself? Then what form would He take? The form of an angel—is there any Biblical evidence to support this?

- Exodus 3 where God speaks to Moses from the burning bush, but it says the angel of the Lord spoke to Moses
- When Samson's parents saw the angel of the Lord, but they saw God
- Whose voice did Jesus say the dead would hear and come forth from the grave? His voice! And whose voice does Paul say in Thessalonians will raise the dead? The voice of the archangel
- And who was it that did raise Moses? The archangel Michael
- And what name did Jesus share with Lucifer? Greek Phosphorus, which means light bearer, or bright and morning star, and translated from Greek to Latin—Lucifer! (2Pet 1:19)

So what did Lucifer allege? That he was no different than Jesus, but Jesus received special privileges that Lucifer did not get, thus Satan alleged God was arbitrary and unfair. Here is what one of the founders wrote about how sin began in heaven. It is in the book Patriarchs and Prophets:

Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. The Scripture says, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." Ezekiel 28:17. "Thou hast said in thine heart, . . . I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will be like the Most High." Isaiah 14:13, 14. Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all



created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone. {PP 35.2}

To dispute the supremacy of the Son of God, thus impeaching the wisdom and love of the Creator, had become the purpose of this prince of angels. {PP 36.1}

Leaving his place in the **immediate presence** of the Father, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. He worked with **mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealed his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God. He began to insinuate doubts concerning the laws** that governed heavenly beings, intimating that though laws might be necessary for the inhabitants of the worlds, *angels, being more exalted, needed no such restraint, for their own wisdom was a sufficient guide. They were not beings that could bring dishonor to God; all their thoughts were holy; it was no more possible for them than for God Himself to err.* [what is Satan's tactic here? He is planting seeds of pride, selfishness, trying to get them to think about themselves and their rights, turning their minds away from God and His goodness] **The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father was represented as an injustice to Lucifer**, who, it was claimed, was also entitled to reverence and honor. If this prince of angels could but attain to his true, exalted position, great good would accrue to the entire host of heaven; for it was his object to secure freedom for all. **But now even the liberty which they had hitherto enjoyed was at an end**; for an absolute Ruler had been appointed them, and to His authority all must pay homage. Such were the subtle deceptions that through the wiles of Lucifer were fast obtaining in the heavenly courts. {PP 37.1} [what type of law is Lucifer alleging God uses in this specific situation—liberty is ended, an absolute Rule appointed?—imposed law—always part of Satan's lies.]

There had been no change in the position or authority of Christ. Lucifer's envy and misrepresentation and his claims to equality with Christ had made necessary a statement of the true position of the Son of God; but this had been the same from the beginning. Many of the angels were, however, blinded by Lucifer's deceptions. {PP 38.1} [how many humans remain blinded by these lies? How many church leaders are not only blinded, but leading others into the darkness of these lies?]

MONDAY

Read last paragraph, —Walking _to and fro...‘ The question at the top of the lesson states, —Why does Jesus call Satan the prince of this world?’



Does title *prince of this world* refer to territories—physical locations, or the world of selfishness, sin, disease, decay and death—the prince of *this sick* world?

Does Satan have some “legal” right to this world? What legal right? Based upon what? This is commonly taught in Christianity, but such an idea is borne out of Satan’s lies about God’s law. Can Satan create? Can Satan sustain the operations of nature and the laws of nature—which are God’s laws? No! Satan has no legal right to this planet, all such ideas are a result of thinking through the false law lens.

But even if one were to operate in that legal law view—in order to speak to the children—does Satan have a legal claim? So let’s use an example of imposed law and see: Say the Mayor of Chattanooga decides to sign the city over to a foreign power—would that be “legal”? Would that stand? Why not? Because the city charter is subject to a higher governmental authority—what about Adam?

When Satan declared to Christ, The kingdom and glory of the world are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it, he stated what was true only in part, and he declared it to serve his own purpose of deception. **Satan's dominion was that wrested from Adam, but Adam was the vicegerent of the Creator. His was not an independent rule. The earth is God's, and He has committed all things to His Son. Adam was to reign subject to Christ. When Adam betrayed his sovereignty into Satan's hands, Christ still remained the rightful King.** Thus the Lord had said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." Daniel 4:17. Satan can exercise his usurped authority only as God permits. {DA 129.4}

So, when Jesus was referring to Satan as the prince of this world was He speaking about territory, property, physical boundaries, or about the world of selfishness and sin?

What is Satan truly the prince of? Satan is the originator of evil; Satan is the father of lies, the murderer from the beginning, the instigator or rebel and thus the progenitor of pain, suffering and death—not God. Thus Satan is the prince of this sin-sick and dying world.

This is why it is so offensive, outrageous, wrong and destructive to teach God to be the source of inflicted suffering and death upon the wicked—it takes Satan’s attributes and puts them on God. We also give Satan power and authority he does NOT possess when we teach that he has some legal claim to earth that Christ needed to reclaim.



TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, —We have no idea...” I am at a loss as to how they could write something like this—there were no physical battles in heaven—ever, how do we know?

First in Revelation 12:7 that says, —there was war in heaven...” the Greek for war is πόλεμος [*polemos* /*pol·em·os*/], from which we get *polemic* which means: —a controversial argument, as one against some opinion, doctrine, etc.”

The war in heaven was not physical, but was mental, it was over ideas, concepts, beliefs, focusing on God’s character. This is supported by 2Cor 10:3-5: —We do not wage war as the world does...”

I found a journal article, in the *Review and Herald* September 7, 1897 which is profound with insight into this, see what you think:

Satan's representations against the government of God, and his defense of those who sided with him, were a constant accusation against God. His murmurings and complaints were groundless; and yet God allowed him to work out his theory. **God could have destroyed Satan and all his sympathizers as easily as one can pick up a pebble and cast it to the earth. But by so doing he would have given a precedent for the exercise of force. All the compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order.** He would not work on this line. He would not give the slightest encouragement for any human being to set himself up as God over another human being, feeling at liberty to cause him physical or mental suffering. This principle is wholly of Satan's creation. [Is the Christian world clear on this? Or has Christianity been teaching just the opposite, that justice requires God to use force? Can you see how the Christian world, with it's false idea that justice requires God to use force to kill is preparing the way for Satan to impersonate Christ?] {RH, September 7, 1897 par. 7}

The principles of the character of God were the foundation of the education constantly kept before the heavenly angels. **These principles were goodness, mercy, and love.** Self-evidencing light was to be recognized and freely accepted by all who occupied positions of trust and power. They must accept God's principles, and, **through the presentation of truth and righteousness, convince all who were in his service. This was the only power to be used. Force must never come in.** All who thought that their position gave them power to command their fellow beings, and control conscience, must be deprived of their position; for this is not God's plan. [When we choose church leaders do we choose people who refuse to use



coercive tactics? Do we choose people who refuse to teach God uses force and coercion?]
{RH, September 7, 1897 par. 8}

These principles are to be the foundation of education in God's church today. The rules given by him are to be observed and respected. God has enjoined this. His government is moral. **Nothing is to be done by compulsion. Truth is to be the prevailing power.** . All service is to be done willingly, and for the love of God. All who are honored with positions of influence are to represent God; for when officiating, they are in the place of God. In everything their actions must correspond to the importance of their position. **The higher the position the more distinctly will self-sacrifice be revealed if they are fit for the office.** Every heart that is controlled by these principles will be loyal. But when those who profess to be in God's service resort to accusation, they are adopting Satan's principles to cast out Satan; and this never will work. {RH, September 7, 1897 par. 9}

In the councils of heaven it was decided that principles must be acted upon that would not at once destroy Satan's power; for it was God's purpose to place things upon an eternal basis of security. [What is necessary for eternal security? The agreement and solidification into the character of God's methods—which requires sentient beings to understand and choose the right for themselves.] Time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his government. **The heavenly universe must see worked out the principles which Satan declared were superior to God's principles. God's order must be contrasted with Satan's order.** The corrupting principles of Satan's rule must be revealed. The principles of righteousness expressed in God's law must be demonstrated as unchangeable, perfect, eternal. {RH, September 7, 1897 par. 10} What were the principles of Satan that needed to be exposed? Imposed law with coercive enforcement, versus God's law of design law the law of love!

The Lord saw the use Satan was making of **his powers**, [what powers?] and he set before him **truth in contrast with falsehood.** Time and time again during the controversy, Satan was ready to be convinced, ready to admit that he was wrong. But those he had deceived were also ready to accuse him of leaving them. What should he do?--submit to God, or continue in a course of deception? He chose to deny truth, to take refuge in misstatements and fraud. {RH, September 7, 1897 par. 11}

The Lord allowed Satan to go on, and **demonstrate his principles.** [what are they?] God did reveal that his principles were right, and he carried the worlds unfallen and the heavenly universe with him; but it was at a terrible cost. **His only begotten Son was given up as**



Satan's victim. [what does this mean? How? Why?] The **Lord Jesus Christ revealed a character entirely opposite to that of Satan.** As the high priest laid aside his gorgeous, pontifical robes, and officiated in the white linen dress of a common priest, so Christ emptied himself, and took the form of a servant, and offered the sacrifice, himself the priest himself the victim. {RH, September 7, 1897 par. 12}

By causing the death of the Sovereign of heaven, Satan defeated his own purpose. [According to this author who caused the death of Jesus? Who do you believe killed Jesus? God did not kill Jesus at the Cross. Those who teach such an idea misrepresent God and support Satan's lies about God.] **The death of the Son of God made the death of Satan unavoidable.** [Why? If one operates under an imposed law construct this is hard to understand—unavoidable, as if the Sovereign of the universe could not avoid it? Why could it not be avoided? Design law makes this clear—because God would no longer NEED to hold back the results of Satan's choice—separation from God, which results in death. Before Christ's death Satan's death was avoided—why? Because it would have caused confusion over God's character, law, methods, and the reason Satan died. But now, God's actions and methods are clear, and God no longer needs to hold at bay what *Satan has chosen*—except for the humans on earth who are still confused and in the dark] **He was allowed to go on until his administration was laid open before the worlds unfallen and before the heavenly universe. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he uprooted himself from the affections of the unfallen beings. He was seen by all to be a liar, a thief, and a murderer...** {RH, September 7, 1897 par. 13}

Today Satan is working upon human minds by his crooked principles. [What are his crooked principles? Imposed law, coercive pressure, deception—and human minds in church leadership teach imposed law and coercive pressure are godly and just—how horrible!] **These will be adopted and acted upon by some who claim to be loyal and true to God's government.** How shall we know that they are disloyal and untrue?—"By their fruits ye shall know them." **God does not force any one. He leaves all free to choose.** But he says, "By their fruits ye shall know them." The Lord will not write as wise those who cannot distinguish between a tree that bears thorn-berries and a tree that bears olives. [What does this mean? The fruit of the method one uses when dealing with others—do you use God's methods of truth love and freedom, or Satan's method of coercive force?] {RH, September 7, 1897 par. 15}

Individually, we are deciding our eternal destiny, deciding whether we shall enjoy the highest honor that can be given to man, even an eternal weight of glory, or be ranked with Satan by possessing his character, by dishonoring God because we profess to be



Christians while misrepresenting Christ. [How? By promoting and practicing the methods of coercion, force, arbitrary rule and deception] Those who choose to reveal the character of the arch-deceiver identify themselves with him beyond the possibility of a change, because they choose not to see themselves as wrong. This was the course that Satan pursued. {RH, September 7, 1897 par. 16}

WEDNESDAY

Satan Evicted—when, how, what does it mean? What was Jesus talking about when He said: —Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” Jn 12:31,32

Here are these verses from *The Remedy*:

“Now is the time for the infection of selfishness and sin in this world to be fully diagnosed and revealed as destructive; now, Satan, the prince of this selfish world, will be driven out into the open, out of the shadows, out from behind his lies and distortions about God and God's methods, out where all can see him as the murderer he truly is, and thus out of the hearts of all who love me.³² When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all intelligences throughout the universe to me.”

To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, "It is finished," had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ's victory. {DA 758.2}

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion... {DA 758.3}

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. **Henceforth his work was restricted.** Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. **The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken.** {DA 761.2}



Yet Satan was not then destroyed. The angels did not even then understand all that was involved in the great controversy. The principles at stake were to be more fully revealed. **And for the sake of man, Satan's existence must be continued. Man as well as angels must see the contrast between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness.** He must choose whom he will serve. {DA 761.3}

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. {DA 761.4}

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

Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. **For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.** {DA 761.5}

Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; **but mercy does not set aside justice.** [what does this mean? What law lens do you understand it through? Does mercy set aside the right way the universe is designed to run? The right way is the just way, or justice] **The law reveals the attributes of God's character,** and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. [why? For the same reason the law of respiration cannot be changed to meet someone under water] God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Corinthians 5:19. {DA 762.1}

The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man,



lived a holy life, and **developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have **remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.** More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. **[notice what is happening—healing, recreation, renewal!]** Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan's purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God's law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Psalm 85:10. {DA 762.3}

By His life and His death, Christ proved that God's justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed. Satan's charges were refuted. God had given man unmistakable evidence of His love. {DA 762.4}

THURSDAY

What is the continuing battle with Satan and evil over on planet earth today? Where is the battlefield? What are the weapons?

What is our role? What is God waiting for?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

We are very thankful to Gary Jones, who has spent the last 6 weeks here in Chattanooga researching properties for Come and Reason Ministries. This was an arduous task that none of the board members had time to do. Thanks to Gary's research we were provided with the information we needed to prayerfully review and make a decision. After reviewing all the variables involved (particularly cost factors), it was decided by the board that now is not the time for Come and Reason Ministries to purchase property. Instead, the board determined it was the time to continue to direct our resources toward producing free materials and expanding our distribution. To this end, Gary will be returning to Canada to establish a distribution hub for our materials in Canada, as Simon Harrison has done in Australia and Samuel Jacobs has done in South Africa. We are so thankful to all our Distribution Hub Directors. Please keep our ministry and team in your prayers.

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website: http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase**—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

January 8-9, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, California.

January 29-30, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven Church in St. Helena, CA.

February 20, 2016: Class will meet at Hamilton Community Church due to the Courthouse being unavailable.

March 11-12, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Village Church, College Place, WA.

April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.



Rebellion and Redemption 1Q 2016 Lesson 2

Crisis In Eden

SABBATH

Read memory text: —_And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” (Genesis 3:15 NKJV).

What does the text mean? What is God actually doing? Is God acting to cause division, discord, disunity?

The key is to ask—between what? What are Satan’s principles? In what do Satan’s principles result? Then what action would God take to cause enmity?

It means God is instilling love, kindness, patience, peace, grace, forgiveness, mercy, gentleness, goodness, honesty, truthfulness, selflessness—God is working in the hearts of men to instill these virtues and such virtues are at war with Satan and his kingdom. Therefore, these principles cause one to be separated from Satan and his kingdom of sin, selfishness and death.

Any New Testament thoughts come to mind?

—Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to turn —_a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law— ³⁶ a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.‘ MT 20:34-36

What does this mean? Have you ever read this and wondered how could Jesus try to divide families?

It all depends on what law lens you look through and what you understand is actually happening. Here it is from *The Remedy*:

"Don't think I have come to make peace with a selfish world. I have not come to bring peace with selfishness, but a sword to cut selfishness out of the hearts of men.³⁵ I have come to cut dysfunctional family ties: to free a son from selfish loyalty to his father's ambitions and feuds, to sever a daughter from the control of an oppressive and manipulative mother, to cut through the fear and hostility a daughter-in-law has toward her mother-in-law.³⁶ A person's worst enemies are often members of their own family.



Read second paragraph, “How did we...” What does the phrase “fairly early in earth’s history” mean? Does it mean early in regards to when the non-living matter on earth was made or when earth life was created on earth? Is there a difference?

Job 38:4-6 tells us that the angels were singing for joy when the foundations of the earth were created, but humankind was not around. What does this mean?

That the non-living matter found on earth was created some time before life was created on earth.

Note the description of earth in Genesis 1:2:

- “Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” NIV
- the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. NRSV

What does this sound like? That something was here already, before the Genesis 1 account. We are not told for how many billions of years this ancient matter was in the dark in some corner of the Milky Way before the events of Genesis 1.

So, what does it help us to comprehend to realize that non-living matter was created sometime before life on earth?

That when scientists find evidence that the rocks, the geological foundations of earth are billions of years old, this does not undermine the Biblical account because the Bible doesn’t say Genesis is the description of creation of the universe, but that Genesis is the description of terraforming one solar system in a universe already billions of years old.

But if what I am describing is correct, what do we do with Genesis 1:14-19?

And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, **15** and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. **16** God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. **17** God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, **18** to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. **19** And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.



The understanding that fits most consistently with all the pieces of evidence is that this is referring to our solar system, the stars would be Venus and Mars the brightest stars in the night sky, not all the stars in the entire universe.

SUNDAY

Read fourth paragraph, ~~Humans~~ share with fish and birds the divine encouragement to be fruitful...” Any thoughts on why the authors chose the word ~~encouragement~~?”

I find this interesting—is the instructive language to be fruitful and multiple significantly different than ~~Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy?~~”

Was the instruction to be fruitful and multiple an:

- Encouragement?
- Instruction?
- Permission?
- Directive?
- Command?
- Description?
- Mission statement?
- Gift?
- Intention?

What is the lesson that earth was created to reveal? How do all living creatures on earth reproduce? What is the one common principle to all reproduction—whether sexual or asexual?

All living creatures reproduce by *giving of themselves* to produce their offspring—mammals, reptiles, birds, helminthes, plants, fungi, bacteria, amoeba—all living creatures give of themselves to produce their offspring. What is the lesson? Life is built on the principle of giving—this is God’s law, God’s design and deviating from it brings death.

Can you think of anything in nature that violates this principle of giving of itself to reproduce and instead reproduces by taking?

Viruses—viruses invade a host cell, take over the machinery of the host cell, redirect the resources of the host cell to make more virus until the host cell is so depleted of life sustaining energy and resources it dies and spills the virus out to infect cells around it which are also taken over by the virus



which co-opts the hosts resources to produce more virus, killing the host cells, and ultimately, if something doesn't stop it, killing the host and thereby killing the virus.

What does this represent? This represents sin—the law of sin and death—taking for self rather than giving of self destroys and leads to death! This is all based on design law—either living in harmony with it or violating it.

Satan has infected the minds of humans with his virus of fear and selfishness and the entire penal substitutionary lie of salvation which further infects the hearts of humans and instead of bringing life and restoration brings suffering and death.

The lesson says, —~~Here~~ we see a glimpse of the significance of being created in God's image.”

What does it mean to be created in God's image? How are we in God's image?

What do you think of this quote from the book *Education*:

When Adam came from the Creator's hand, **he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker.** "God created man in His own image" (Genesis 1:27), and it was His purpose that **the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal this image--the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator.** All his faculties were capable of development; **their capacity and vigor were continually to increase.** [What is capacity and vigor? Do our capacity and vigor continually increase? Why not? When we think of heaven, do we think of a place where our capacity and vigor increase eternally?] Vast was the scope offered for their exercise, glorious the field opened to their research. The mysteries of the visible universe--the "wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge" (Job 37:16)--invited man's study. Face-to-face, heart-to-heart communion with his Maker was his high privilege. Had he remained loyal to God, all this would have been his forever. **Throughout eternal ages he would have continued to gain new treasures of knowledge, to discover fresh springs of happiness, and to obtain clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the wisdom, the power, and the love of God. More and more fully would he have fulfilled the object of his creation, more and more fully have reflected the Creator's glory.** {Ed 15.1}

But by disobedience this was forfeited. **Through sin the divine likeness was marred, and well-nigh obliterated.** [How? How has God's image been nearly obliterated? In what ways?] Man's physical powers were weakened, his mental capacity was lessened, his spiritual vision dimmed. He had become subject to death. Yet the race was not left without hope. [What hope?



What do you think? What would be necessary to save a species deviant from the design and decaying into death? Does such a state sound like it needs a legal solution?] By infinite love and mercy the plan of salvation had been devised, and **a life of probation was granted.** [Probation—what does this mean? Probation like legal probation, or something else? What was the purpose of the probationary existence?] **To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized--this was to be the work of redemption.** [Does this sound legal? In fact, does the legal theories of salvation bring the vision of restoration, recreation, regeneration more clearly to light, or does it obscure it? It is Satan's goal to obscure and obstruct God's true plan behind his lies and distortions—often presented in the guise of religious piety.] This is the object of education, the great object of life. {Ed 15.2}

Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. [What does it mean—love the basis of creation?] This is made plain in the **law that God** has given as the guide of life. The first and great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." Luke 10:27. **To love Him, the infinite, the omniscient One, with the whole strength, and mind, and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being--the body, the mind, as well as the soul--the image of God is to be restored.** {Ed 16.1}

What do you hear? What does it mean to be in God's image? What is the basis of life? What is the basis of death? What is necessary to restore God's image? What type of law is being described?

Can we have God's image restored within us without having God's law of love restored within us?

Can we have God's law of love restored if we cling to and practice human imposed law constructs? Thus penal substitution, which is based upon human imposed law constructs, is an obstacle to restoring God's image within us! We must reject it and have this deep infection, this deep distortion purged from our theology, teachings, churches and schools if we ever want to fulfill our end-time mission to take the true picture of God to the world!

What about this quote:

Adam and Eve were formed in the image of God. **But Satan worked constantly to destroy the divine similitude. The holy pair yielded to temptation, and God's image was obliterated.** Christ put His hand a second time to the work. **He would recreate human**



beings. [How? What method? What was necessary?] When the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son. [Why did Christ come to earth? Why did He partake of humanity? To fix what Adam's sin did, to restore the species human back to God's original design. This is not penal legal, this is design!] Hear, O heaven, and be astonished, O earth! The appointed Instructor appears, and He is no other than the Son of God; His divinity was clothed with humanity. {Christ Triumphant 221.3}

Christ came to reveal perfection amid the imperfection of a world corrupted by disobedience and sin. **The eternal Word appeared in human form, bringing with Him all grace, all healing, all efficiency.** [What did He bring? What was necessary to heal and restore this creation back into God's original design!] He brought with Him the bread of life, which, if received, will be to us as the tree of life. The Inspired Word declares of this Teacher, —For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.” {CTr 221.4}

The question of how to obtain a knowledge of God is to all a life-and-death question.[How? What method?] Read Christ's prayer to His Father, intended not merely as an important lesson in education for the disciples, but to come down through all time for the benefit of those who would read the Inspired Writings. —Father,” He prayed, —the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. **And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.**”Manuscript 15, 1898. {CTr 221.5}

Read last paragraph, —The third blessing given...” If the Sabbath was given at the end of creation week of planet earth, did it exist before that time? If it didn't exist before that time why do some people say the Sabbath is eternal? Why do some say the 10 Commandments are eternal?

What is eternal? God is eternal, and God's law of love, the protocols upon which all creation is built is eternal.

Why was there no Sabbath before earth was created? Because it wasn't needed, why wasn't it needed? Because the allegations about God, the war over God's trustworthiness had not started and therefore the Sabbath as evidence of God's methods was not necessary.



What does the Sabbath reveal? That God presents truth in love and leaves us free. The Sabbath is proof that God does not coerce, but leaves all beings free. The Sabbath is evidence of God's character, methods and our genuine freedom in His government. And, because of the war, the Sabbath will stand through all eternity future as evidence of God's character and His creation here on earth.

The lesson suggests the Sabbath is evidence that people are more than animals?

Were instructions given that animals were to also rest on the Sabbath?

Which is a bigger gap, the relationship gap between you and your dog, or you and God?

Were animals made, designed by God, for us to have relationships with?

Would the Sabbath be a day in which it is appropriate to relate to our animals as well as to God?

Did our relationship with God get broken? When?

Did our relationships with the animal kingdom get broken? When?

Is the Sabbath of any benefit in helping us move back toward God and experiencing life as God designed? How?

Adam and Eve were given responsibility to care for the earth and all the creatures in it—what does this reveal?

If we are in God's image and are to govern the earth as God governs the universe how will we treat the animals?

Consider this next quotation for two purposes, one for what it says about how we treat animals, and second for the description of the future of those who are cruel to animals—what do we understand the description to mean and why is it described like this?

Suffering and death were thus entailed, not only upon the human race, but upon the animals. Surely, then, **it becomes man to seek to lighten, instead of increasing, the weight of suffering which his transgression has brought upon God's creatures. He who will abuse animals because he has them in his power is both a coward and a tyrant.** {2MCP 514.2}



A disposition to cause pain, whether to our fellowmen or to the brute creation, is satanic. Many do not realize that their cruelty will ever be known, because the poor dumb animals cannot reveal it. But could the eyes of these men be opened, as were those of Balaam, they would see an angel of God standing as a witness to **testify against them in the courts above.** **A record goes up to heaven, and a day is coming when judgment will be pronounced against those who abuse God's creatures.**--PP 443 (1890). {2MCP 514.3}

Do we have a disposition to be cruel to animals? Why are we not to be cruel to animals?

What do you think about the language of a courtroom used here? Does that mean there is a legal courtroom in heaven and God's law functions like our laws?

No—to whom is such a description written? For those who are cruel to animals—and what level of moral development would such a person be? Level 1, and what is the only thing such persons respond to? Power and threats of punishment. This is not a description of the exact method and means of how heaven works, but a description penned for the reader who is cruel to animals to connote the idea that they cannot get away with such cruelty, that they will suffer for what they have done—but written in a way that will most likely bring a conviction and lead to repentance.

But it is true, there is a record, an exact record of each person's character recorded in the heavenly servers. Angels do stand witness in the royal courts of heaven to all that has transpired here upon earth. And there will be a day when all will be accurately judged—also known as diagnosed—let him who is wicked be wicked still and him who is righteous be righteous still.

MONDAY

The lesson title is *Test at the Tree*—what do you think when you hear this title? What ideas come to mind?

What kind of God is conveyed?

Which law lens do you hear this title through?

What was the purpose of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil?

What are the possibilities?



- Because God didn't know what they would do and thus God needed a means whereby God could discover whether they were loyal to Him or not? Is this the purpose of the Tree? Clearly NOT!
- Because God wanted to provide them a means to develop their capacities and solidify their characters.
 - God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; **but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automaton.** Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. **There could have been no development of character...** It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule. E.G. White, Conflict and Courage 33

What law is involved in the issue of the Tree? Is it imposed law or design law?

- Those who look through imposed law lenses see an arbitrary test of obedience to rules, which requires infliction of punishment if one breaks the rules. Such a conclusion is false and is evidence that the one who holds it goes to the story with the false belief that God's law functions like human laws, rules imposed that require enforcement.
 - Thus they teach that God threw them out of the Garden as an imposed punishment for their disobedience—why is this horribly wrong?
 - Because it misrepresents God's actions of love, grace, mercy and redemption to be those of a brutal dictator and stern judge
 - God did not throw them out of the Garden to punish, but to redeem—how and why? What would have happened if sinners would have access to the Tree of Life? Would sin and suffering have been reduced? Would selfishness be cured? Or would the world be more horribly corrupted? Would suffering be extended? So, the expulsion from the Garden, was not punishment, it was therapeutic and merciful to REDUCE pain and suffering!
- The law involved at the Tree of Knowledge was not imposed law, it was Design law—it was the law of exertion:
 - **Strength comes by exercise.** All who put to use the ability that God has given them, will have increased ability to devote to his service. Those who do nothing in the cause of God will fail to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. **If a man should lie down and refuse to exercise his limbs, he would soon lose all power to use them. Thus the Christian who will not use his God-given powers, not only fails to grow up into Christ, but loses the strength which he already had; he becomes a spiritual**



paralytic. It is those who, with love for God and for their fellow men, are striving to help others, that become established, strengthened, settled in the truth. The true Christian works for God, not from impulse, but from principle; not for a day or a month, but during the entire life. {RH, May 23, 1912 par. 13}

Thus our Creator God, provided the simplest of means for them to think through the issues, exercise their abilities and mature and grow in godliness. But instead they believed a lie!

Thus the Tree was another manifestation of God's character of love!

Read last paragraph, —The division..." Do you hear the slant put on the quote? That God needed to see—as if God didn't already know. No, this was not for God to see, it was for them to exercise and grow, for them to test their abilities and choose the right thus strengthening their characters.

TUESDAY

What did Satan do to get them to fall? Was it a temptation of appetite? Adam and Eve were starving, hunger pangs were overwhelming and they just couldn't resist them?

Was it a temptation of intoxication—like psychedelic mushrooms? What was the temptation?

It was one of distrusting God's character—believing the lie that God was not good and could not be trusted and therefore they had to act to protect and promote themselves!

Eve believed the words of Satan, and the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors, and it was only by repentance toward God and faith in the promised Messiah that they could hope ever to regain the lost image of God. {RH, January 5, 1886 par. 8}

Through belief in Satan's misrepresentation of God, man's character and destiny were changed, but if men will believe in the Word of God, they will be transformed in mind and character, and fitted for eternal life. To believe that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16), will change the heart, and reproduce in man the image of God. {1SM 346.1}



The taking of the fruit was merely the behavioral outcome of believing the lie about God.

- Lies believed break the circle of love and trust
- Broken love and trust results in fear and selfishness
- Fear and selfishness results in destructive behavior (sins)
- Destructive acts damage mind, character, body—terminal condition

- Truth about God believed destroys lies and wins to trust
- Restored trust open heart and love poured in driving out fear and selfishness
- Restored love and trust results in acts of righteousness, sharing, giving, love and service
- Acts of righteousness results in growing in Godliness and witnessing God's kingdom

But it all starts with coming back to the truth about God—which requires we reject the false imposed human law construct with its false legal salvation theology known as penal substitution.

WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph, —Eve became overwhelmed...” Genesis 3:7 states, —Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.”

What are the possible meanings to —they realized they were naked?”

- Their robes of light were gone and their bodies were not covered
- Their pure hearts were gone and they were conscious of guilt and shame and became self-focused thus noticing they were naked
- Under conviction of their own consciences they experienced fear and became self-focused and afraid and their souls/characters were naked and open without excuse, but this was displaced into their bodies and they tried to cover their naked bodies?

The lesson asks what they saw when their eyes were opened? What do you think they saw? They saw imperfection—why? Because all around them was filled with defects or because they now viewed reality through a different mental lens, one of fear and threat assessment, insecurity?

Why did they try and sew fig leaves together to cover themselves?

Why were they ashamed—was it because of physical deformity? Did they look in the mirror and see scars, lesions, deformity? What was deformed? Their characters! If they were still perfect in their minds, hearts, characters, would they have been ashamed?



How did God respond?

Did God condemn them? No—He called out to them and asked who told them they were naked—in other words God is saying, —Adam, you didn’t hear me mention you were naked. I am not the one pointing it out. It is your own conscience Adam!”

Then God went about initiating His plan to fix what Adam broke! How?

Read fourth paragraph in **THURSDAY’s** lesson, —There had to be...” Did anything strike you as questionable?

The lesson stated, —So, God provided an animal sacrifice to point to the Savior.” This sounds almost reasonable—in fact this is so close to being right that most Christians accept it without question. They even cite a Bible text to support this claim. But let’s check the Scripture for ourselves to see what it actually says:

The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. Genesis 3:21

Does the text say God sacrificed an animal? Which is harder for God to do, create a living animal, or create a non-living skin of an animal?

If one wants to believe God sacrificed an animal here, one has to project that belief into the text because the Bible doesn’t actual say this.

Further, does the Bible even say it was an animal skin? If we want to project things into the text that are not there, we could just as easily project in that God provided a human skin, or an angel skin—I am NOT saying that is what happened, only that if we go down the trail of introducing ideas not in the text we can introduce all kinds of ideas.

Why would the authors, and so many Christians, assume that God killed an animal to provide them skins? What kind of God would kill to do this? Why would they think it would be done?

Because they have the view that God is the source of inflicted death as the just punishment for sin, and the animal would represent Christ and God would have to execute Christ in our place in order to provide us with salvation.



But this is all based on Satan's version of God's law. When one comes back to design law one realizes that God doesn't have to inflict death, God has to introduce life into a system that is already dying and it is not accidental that God provides a covering of skin WITHOUT God acting to kill. Jesus did not act to kill in order to provide us with a perfect robe of righteousness, Jesus surrendered Himself in love—Satan acted to kill! I do not think it is an oversight or accidental that the Bible describes God providing them a covering WITHOUT God acting to kill!

We must think critically, and question the so many deeply imbedding assumptions that sound so close to being true, but are yet based on the lie that God's law operates like human laws.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase**—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

January 8-9, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, California.

January 29-30, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven Church in St. Helena, CA.

February 20, 2016: Class will meet at Hamilton Community Church due to the Courthouse being unavailable.

March 11-12, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Village Church, College Place, WA.

April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.



Rebellion and Redemption 1Q 2016 Lesson 3

In last week's lesson we ended right before we got to a point that I think is worthy of our spending a moment to discuss.

In the fourth paragraph of Lesson Two **THURSDAY's** lesson it states: —There had to be another way to ensure the future of the human race. So, God provided an animal sacrifice to point to the Savior. (Gen 3:21)”

Did anything strike you as questionable about this?

This sounds almost reasonable—in fact this is so close to being right that most Christians accept it without question. The authors even cite a Bible text to support this idea that God provided an animal sacrifice. But let's check the Scripture for ourselves to see what it actually says:

The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. Genesis 3:21

Does this text say anything about God sacrificing an animal? Which is harder to do, create a living animal or create a non-living skin of an animal?

If one wants to believe God sacrificed an animal here, one has to project that idea into the text because the Bible doesn't actual say this.

Further, does the Bible even say it was an animal skin? If we want to project things into the text that are not there, we could just as easily project in that God provided a human skin, or an angel skin—I am NOT saying that is what happened, only that if we go down the trail of introducing ideas not in the text we can introduce all kinds of ideas.

Why would the authors, and so many Christians, assume that God killed an animal to provide Adam and Eve skins? What kind of God would kill to do this? Why would they think it would be done in this way?



Because they have the view that God is the source of inflicted death as the just punishment for sin, and the animal would represent Christ and God would have to execute Christ in our place in order to provide us with salvation.

But this is all based on Satan's version of God's law. When one comes back to design law one realizes that God does NOT have to inflict death, God has to introduce life into a system that is already dying! Remember the Scripture says we are dead in trespass and sin.

I do not think the Biblical description of God providing a covering of skin *WITHOUT* God acting to kill is accidental. Jesus did not act to kill in order to provide us with a perfect robe of righteousness, Jesus surrendered Himself in love—Satan acted to kill! I do not think it is an oversight or an accident that the Bible describes God providing them a covering *WITHOUT* God acting to kill!

We must think critically and question the many deeply imbedded assumptions that sound so close to being true, but are yet based on the lie that God's law operates like human laws.

Here is how one of the founders of the SDA church describes the first animal sacrifice:

The sacrificial offerings were ordained by God to be to man a perpetual reminder and a penitential acknowledgment of his sin and a confession of his faith in the promised Redeemer. They were intended to impress upon the fallen race the **solemn truth that it was sin that caused death**. To Adam, the offering of the first sacrifice was a most painful ceremony. **His hand must be raised to take life**, which only God could give. **It was the first time he had ever witnessed death**, and he knew that had he been obedient to God, there would have been no death of man or beast. **As he slew the innocent victim**, he trembled at the thought **that his sin must shed the blood of the spotless Lamb of God**. This scene gave him a deeper and more vivid sense of the greatness of his transgression, which nothing but the death of God's dear Son could expiate. And he marveled at the infinite goodness that would give such a ransom to save the guilty. A star of hope illumined the dark and terrible future and relieved it of its utter desolation. {PP 68.1}

In encourage you, when you hear this idea, that God killed the first animal to provide skins for Adam and Eve, to challenge it. Confront, gently, those who teach this idea. It might seem like something minor, but it isn't because the idea is based on an entire false understanding of God's character, law, government, the problem with sin and its solution.



On to this week's lesson...

Global Rebellion and the Patriarchs

I received this email this week:

Re: The Remedy

I would like to tell you how much I have been enjoying this version! I have been so frustrated with versions that do not talk in our language. I frustratedly say to my husband - how am I supposed to understand this stuff? Then along comes this and I love it.

Have been an Adventist for my life - am 53. Grown kids who we dragged to church all their little lives. "Doing" what we thought was best to appease an angry God (at the time).

Had a life crash - and thought I would never stop crying. Had left God cause he just seemed like another complication I could not deal with.

While crying one night on my living room floor in the wee hours of the morning, either Jesus or an Angel - someone came to me in a sweet, calm voice that was not outward but inward?? Don't know quite how to explain it really? But, I most definitely heard it say, "What about Jesus?" - I stopped my crying and lifted my head off the floor - I said, Lord? Is that You? I don't honestly know how to explain this - but, my whole heart turned away from my troubles and went all out to Him - and I said/prayed - Lord please, show me who You are.

And in short - He did.

I was surprised at the things He was showing me in my armchair at home alone??! I would often say to Him - how could this be? Lord if I am wrong - please show me.

He just kept sweetly, gently - leading me along. He opened up to me His Character - just me and Him. I would keep asking Him - how could this be? How could the Church not know this?? I kept on following - although sometimes weak kneed I must admit.



Then finally - I met someone - a couple of people actually - a family who was teaching what God alone was showing me! I heard them with my ears open - then along comes another and another. I praised God.

Now - I have The Remedy - it is perfectly what God was showing me alone in my armchair at home!

All this to say - Thank you brother - super thank you bunches ~

Your Sister in the Living God,

Then I received another email:

I have listened to the first lesson of the new quarter and find your explanation compelling. Your teaching of the lesson is the first one I listen to every week. I study and make notes of the daily lesson for myself and usually also listen to one or two other teachers who teach the same lesson. At the same time I find your bashing of those who disagree with you within the denomination disturbing. The comments you made about the nearby educational institution in this first lesson I thought were those of airing dirty laundry. It makes me reluctant to share your teaching with non Adventist friends. Thank you for reading my comments and concerns.

I want to thank the person who wrote this because it made me step back and examine myself, prayerfully, and I realized the reason I sometimes have occasional critical comments leak out is because I am no better or different than what I am criticizing. All of us who have accepted Jesus and are cooperating with Him are a mixture of His strength and our weakness, His Remedy and our sickness—the University I was criticizing is the same a mixture of God’s grace, purposed to help promote His message, and filled with human weakness. I hate my own weakness and any remnants of sin left unhealed by God’s grace. I hope you will be patient with me and pray for me as I continue to grow in God’s grace.

SABBATH

The lesson makes a very bold and accurate statement in paragraph three, –Sin not only distorts creation, it destroys it.”



This is a statement based on design law—and it is absolutely right—it is right by our observation and experience, it is right by science, and it is right by Scripture. All three threads of evidence confirm this.

And it stands in contrast to the idea from last week's lesson that God killed the first sacrifice—no God did NOT!

If sin is the source of death, then why do so many Christians teach God is the source of destruction and death?

Because God has been lied about and the lies have been extremely effective and are accepted without thought to be true.

What are the arguments people use to continue to teach that God is the source of inflicted death?

The primary arguments stem around the themes of justice, fairness and sovereignty. Those who hold to the view that God is the enforcer and inflictor of death as punishment for sin, do so because they misunderstand God's law, justice and sovereignty.

They still think through the lens of human laws and falsely believe God operates like we do. Thus, they want to believe God is strong, in control, and fair, so they adamantly teach that God must hold tribunals, keep track of deeds, and inflict pain, suffering and death.

But the lesson is right, just as the Bible teaches, the wages of sin is death, sin when full grown brings forth death—it is sin, which is deviation from how life is built to operate, that damages and destroys. Not God!

SUNDAY

Cain and Abel—what questions or concerns come to your mind when you think of this story?

Why do you think Cain acted like he did? Why was he hardened against God? Is it possible Cain came to the sacrifice with an assumption about God that was wrong?

What did Cain do for a living? Farmer, what had God said about the ground after sin?



–Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.” Gen 3:17-19

Did Cain understand this, as many do today, as God inflicting a curse upon the ground and thus Cain blamed God and found God to be untrustworthy? Did Cain have a view of God as a being who had a law that required him to punish those who disobey and thus while Cain believed in God he didn’t trust God and it was manifest in how he worshipped? Does this happen today?

Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam, were very unlike in character. Abel feared God. **Cain cherished rebellious feelings, and murmured against God because of the curse pronounced upon Adam, and because the ground was cursed for his sin.** 1SP 54

Who did Cain blame for the curse? And what did choosing to view God as a curser, an inflictor of curses, do to Cain’s attitude?

Those who oppose what we teach hold the same view of God. At the GC I spoke to two individuals who are active in their specific work of targeting me and our ministry. They go around claiming I teach heresy. They specifically site examples like this that God did use His power to curse the ground to punish Adam and Eve for sin. This is what Cain thought, and what kind of worship did it result in? Rebellion. This is how rebellion began in heaven, by Satan getting intelligences to believe God’s law is a system of arbitrary rules that require God to punish.

But from where did the curse upon earth’s harvest and productivity arise – from God inflicting it or from earth deviating from God’s design and being infected with Satan’s principle of selfishness?

Christ never planted the seeds of death in the system. Satan planted these seeds when he tempted Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge which meant disobedience to God. Not one noxious plant was placed in the Lord's great garden, but after Adam and Eve sinned, poisonous herbs sprang up. In the parable of the sower the question was asked the master, "Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?" The master answered, "An enemy hath done this" (Matthew 13:27, 28). **All tares are sown by the evil one. Every noxious herb is of his sowing, and by his ingenious methods of amalgamation he has corrupted the earth with tares.** {2SM 288.2}

If Cain would have understood the truth about God’s law, that it is design law, and that the curse was not inflicted by God, it was announced or diagnosed by God as the natural result of nature deviating from His design, then Cain might have trusted God and not murdered his brother!

How many religious people through history and even today are caught in the same trap?



Here is another quote from one of the founders of our church:

These two brothers, Cain and Abel, represent the whole human family. They were both tested on the point of obedience, and all will be tested as they were. Abel bore the proving of God. **He revealed the gold of a righteous character, the principles of true godliness.** But Cain's religion had not a good foundation; **it rested on human merit. He brought to God something in which he had a personal interest,**--the fruits of the ground, which had been cultivated by his toil; and **he presented his offering as a favor done to God,** through which he expected to secure the divine approval. {ST, December 23, 1886 par. 1}

Do you notice that Cain had a works oriented religion—why? Because he didn't trust God—why? Because he believed the lie that God is the inflictor of punishment against sin! Continuing the quote...

In the case of Cain and Abel we have a type of two classes that will exist in the world till the close of time; and this type is worthy of close study. There is a marked difference in the characters of these two brothers, and **the same difference is seen in the human family today. Cain represents those who carry out the principles and works of Satan, by worshipping God in a way of their own choosing.** [Notice the author doesn't say by not worshipping God. These followers of Satan are religious and do worship, but they worship a God who operates in the manner Satan has ascribed. In other words they worship a false god!] Like the leader whom they follow, they are willing to render partial obedience, but not entire submission to God. Man, in the pride of his heart, would like to believe that **he can confer some favor upon God; that our heavenly Father may be the receiver, and not always the giver. But God will not be bribed.** [This is exactly what Penal Substitution Theology teaches, that God must be bribed, only the payment is something too expensive for us to procure through our own efforts. The payment required is the blood of His Son—which humans must get to take to God by killing God's Son when He comes to save us. In this false theory God must be paid by the Son's blood or else He will kill us. This is Satan's infection, the lie of imposed law! Oh, they will say God is the giver in that God gave His Son, but they deny the split in the Godhead their theology causes.] He says: "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof." Man has nothing to give that he has not first received from God. {ST, December 23, 1886 par. 7}

The Cain class of worshipers includes by far the largest number; for every false religion that has been invented has been based on the Cain principle, that man can depend upon his own merits and righteousness for salvation. {ST, December 23, 1886 par. 8}

thoughts?



The classic way this is presented is that Cain represents those who do some work themselves and offer this work to God in order to pay for their sin. What type of system would such a worshipper be operating under?

A system similar to our own, in which the government takes from the people, in which the laws are imposed and in which coercion takes place. Such a government requires lawbreakers to pay their debt to society. Thus, when one holds this type of governmental operation in mind one can fall into the trap of trying to work one's way to heaven.

But, what is another trap of this type of bias? The Penal Substitutionary Theory—that the government does require a debt payment, only it is beyond us to pay and so Jesus, who owes no debt, pays our debt to His Father and we can come to the Father by offering the Father the legal blood payment of His Son.

MONDAY

The Flood—any questions about the Flood? Many questions come to my mind about this event.

Here is a description of the world leading up to the flood, the reason for the flood and the event itself by one Christian author in the book *The Spirit of Prophecy* Volume 1, consider some of these possibilities:

The curse did not change at once the appearance of the earth. It was still rich in the bounty God had provided for it. **There were gold and silver in abundance.** The race of men then living was of very great stature, and possessed wonderful strength. The trees were vastly larger, and far surpassing in beauty and perfect proportions anything mortals can now look upon. **The wood of these trees was of fine grain and hard substance --in this respect more like stone.** It required much more time and labor, even of that powerful race, to prepare the timber for building, than it requires in this degenerate age to prepare trees that are now growing upon the earth, even with the present weaker strength men now possess. These trees were of great durability, and would know nothing of decay for very many years... {1SP 66.3}

The people used the gold, silver, precious stones, and choice wood, in building houses for themselves, each striving to excel the other. They beautified and adorned their houses and lands with the most ingenious works, and provoked God by their wicked deeds. They formed images to worship, and taught their children to regard these pieces of workmanship made with



their own hands, as gods, and to worship them. **They did not choose to think of God**, the creator of the heavens and the earth, and rendered no grateful thanks to him who had provided them all the things which they possessed. **They even denied the existence of the God of Heaven**, and gloried in, and worshiped, the works of their own hands. **They corrupted themselves with those things which God had placed upon the earth for man's benefit.** They prepared for themselves beautiful walks, overhung with fruit trees of every description. Under these majestic and lovely trees, with their wide-spread branches, which were green from the commencement of the year to its close, they placed their idols of worship. Whole groves, because of the shelter of their branches, were dedicated to their idol gods, and made attractive for the people to resort to for their idolatrous worship. {1SP 67.2}

Instead of doing justice to their neighbors, they carried out their own unlawful wishes. They had a plurality of wives, which was contrary to God's wise arrangement. In the beginning, God gave to Adam one wife--showing to all who should live upon the earth, his order and law in that respect. The transgression and fall of Adam and Eve brought sin and wretchedness upon the human race, and man followed his own carnal desires, **and changed God's order. The more men multiplied wives to themselves, the more they increased in wickedness and unhappiness.** If any one chose to take the wives, or cattle, or anything belonging to his neighbor, he did not regard justice or right, but **if he could prevail over his neighbor by reason of strength, or by putting him to death, he did so**, and exulted in his deeds of violence. **They loved to destroy the lives of animals. They used them for food, and this increased their ferocity and violence**, and caused them to look upon the blood of human beings with astonishing indifference. {1SP 68.1}

But if there was one sin above another which called for the destruction of the race by the flood, [what might it be?] it was the base crime [note what comes next in the context of this use of a legal word –crime” but note what kind of law is being violated in this crime and what the problem was in doing so] of amalgamation of man and beast which defaced the image of God, and caused confusion everywhere. God purposed to destroy by a flood that powerful, long-lived race that had corrupted their ways before him. He would not suffer them to live out the days of their natural life, which would be hundreds of years. [Some argue the flood was an infliction of angry wrath to punish sin. I think it was a therapeutic intervention to reduce pain, suffering, sin, and keep open the channel for Messiah] It was only a few generations back when Adam had access to that tree which was to prolong life. After his disobedience **he was not suffered to eat of the tree of life and perpetuate a life of sin.** [Why was man barred from the tree of life? As punishment for sin? No! It was as a mercy, a therapeutic intervention to reduce sin. And this is the same reason for the flood! In addition to



keeping open the channel for Messiah!] In order for man to possess an endless life he must continue to eat of the fruit of the tree of life. Deprived of that tree, his life would gradually wear out... [Why would humans die? Decay! What did the tree of life prevent? Entropy, decay, wearing out. The tree of life would not have prevented beheading, incineration, nuclear vaporization—i.e. all death, only natural death] {1SP 69.1}

Noah and his family were not alone in fearing and obeying God. But Noah was the most pious and holy of any upon the earth, and was the one whose life God preserved to carry out his will in building the ark and warning the world of its coming doom. Methuselah, the grandfather of Noah, lived until the very year of the flood; and there were others who believed the preaching of Noah, and aided him in building the ark, who died before the flood of waters came upon the earth. Noah, by his preaching and example in building the ark, condemned the world. **God gave all who chose an opportunity to repent and turn to him.** [Did God really? Then why didn't He have Noah build more arks? Because God foreknew their choices] But they believed not the preaching of Noah. They mocked at his warnings, and ridiculed the building of that immense vessel on dry land. Noah's efforts to reform his fellow-men did not succeed. But for more than one hundred years he persevered in his efforts to turn men to repentance and to God. Every blow struck upon the ark was preaching to the people. Noah directed, he preached, he worked, while the people looked on in amazement, and regarded him as a fanatic... {1SP 70.1}

The period of their probation was drawing near its close. **The unbelieving, scoffing inhabitants of the world were to have a special sign of God's divine power...** [What sign?] Angels were sent to collect from the forest and field the beasts which God had created. Angels went before these animals and they followed, two and two, male and female, and clean beasts by sevens. These beasts, from the most ferocious, down to the most gentle and harmless, peacefully and solemnly marched into the ark. The sky seemed clouded with birds of every description. They came flying to the ark, two and two, male and female, and the clean birds by sevens. **The world looked on with wonder—some with fear, but they had become so hardened by rebellion that this most signal manifestation of God's power had but a momentary influence upon them.** [Is it credible to believe that people could be so hardened such a manifestation would have no impact on them? What about those who came to arrest Christ and saw divinity flash through humanity and then saw him put the ear back on the High Priest's servant after Peter cut it off?] For seven days these animals were coming into the ark, and Noah was arranging them in the places prepared for them. {1SP 71.3}



And as the doomed race beheld the sun shining in its glory, and the earth clad in almost its Eden beauty, they drove away their rising fears by **boisterous merriment**; [How many people when truth brings conviction drown out the conviction by amusement, partying, intoxication, TV, video games or other distractions?] and by their deeds of violence seemed to be encouraging upon themselves the visitation of the already awakened wrath of God. [What do we understand God's wrath to be? No longer holding back the reaping of the destruction one's actions have chosen] {1SP 72.1}

Everything was now ready for the closing of the ark, which could not have been done by Noah from within. **An angel is seen by the scoffing multitude descending from Heaven, clothed with brightness like the lightning. He closes that massive outer door, and then takes his course upward to Heaven again.** [Thoughts? What would you think if you saw an angel descend from heaven and re-ascend?] Seven days were the family of Noah in the ark before the rain began to descend upon the earth. In this time they were arranging for their long stay while the waters should be upon the earth. **And these were days of blasphemous merriment by the unbelieving multitude.** [why? Were they trying to drown out their fears and misgivings?] They thought because the prophecy of Noah was not fulfilled immediately after he entered the ark, that he was deceived, and that it was impossible that the world could be destroyed by a flood. Previous to this there had been no rain upon the earth. A mist had risen from the waters, which God caused to descend at night like dew, reviving vegetation and causing it to flourish. {1SP 72.2}

Notwithstanding the solemn exhibition they had witnessed of God's power—[which was what?] of the unnatural occurrence of the beasts' leaving the forests and fields, and going into the ark, and the angel of God clothed with brightness, and terrible in majesty, descending from Heaven and closing the door; yet they hardened their hearts, and continued to revel and sport over the signal manifestations of divine power. But upon the eighth day the heavens gathered blackness. The muttering thunders, and vivid lightning flashes, began to terrify man and beast. The rain descended from the clouds above them. This was something they had never witnessed, and their hearts began to faint with fear. The beasts were roving about in the wildest terror, and their discordant voices seemed to moan out their own destiny and the fate of man. **The storm increased in violence until water seemed to come from heaven like mighty cataracts. The boundaries of rivers broke away, and the waters rushed to the valleys. The foundations of the great deep also were broken up. Jets of water would burst up from the earth with indescribable force, throwing massive rocks hundreds of feet into the air, and then they would bury themselves deep in the earth.** {1SP 73.1}



The people first beheld the destruction, of the works of their hands. Their splendid buildings, their beautifully-arranged gardens and groves, where they had placed their idols, were destroyed by lightning from heaven. Their ruins were scattered everywhere. They had erected altars in groves, and consecrated them to their idols, **whereon they offered human sacrifices.** These which God detested were torn down in his wrath before them, and they were made to tremble before the power of the living God, the Maker of the heavens and the earth, and they were made to know that it was their abominations and horrible, idolatrous sacrifices, which had called for their destruction. {1SP 74.1}

The violence of the storm increased, and there were mingled with the warring of the elements, the wailings of the people who had despised the authority of God. Trees, buildings, rocks, and earth, were hurled in every direction. **The terror of man and beast was beyond description. And even Satan himself, who was compelled to be amid the warring elements, feared for his own existence.** [Why? What was happening? Did Satan fear for his existence because God was acting to destroy? Or, was God releasing His restraining hand over the laws of nature and Satan, who was the god these idolaters worshipped, was incapable of stabilizing nature and sustaining the earth. It would be like a person trying to hold a exploding grenade in their hands. He [Satan] had delighted to control so powerful a race, and wished them to live to practice their abominations, and increase their rebellion against the God of Heaven. **He uttered imprecations against God, charging him with injustice and cruelty.** [who did Satan blame? What was Satan's view of why this was happening? Because God was acting to inflict it as punishment and cruelty] **Many of the people, like Satan, blasphemed God, and if they could have carried out their rebellion, would have torn him from the throne of justice...Angels that excel in strength guided the ark and preserved it from harm. Every moment during that frightful storm of forty days and forty nights the preservation of the ark was a miracle of almighty power.** {1SP 74.2}

The bottom of the lesson states, –Either our life is blotted out, or our sins are. How does this stark reality show just how black-and-white the issues really are?”

Any questions come to mind? Is it black and white? Are there questions?

- What is sin? How do you define it?
 - breaking rules or deviating from God's design?
- Why is the life of the unrepentant sinner blotted out? How is it blotted out?
- How is sin blotted out, and from where is sin blotted out?
- Who does the blotting out?



- What is used to blot out the sin?
 - Sin at its root has two elements—lies and selfishness
 - Sin is blotted out of our characters/minds/hearts by the truth and by the love of God, which are both found in the character of Christ
 - Thus we are to be partakers of the Divine Nature,
 - This is the meaning of partaking the bread and wine or the flesh and blood of the sacrifice, the flesh represents the truth and the blood represents the life (character of love)

TUESDAY

Read fourth paragraph, “It was to impress Abraham’s...” What does this mean? Was the test of Abraham to provide evidence to God that God needed, that God didn’t somehow already know—“I wonder what Abraham will do?” Or to provide Abraham the test Abraham needed to achieve the victory and experience beneficial to Abraham while simultaneously revealing this transforming process to heavenly beings who cannot read hearts and minds and who don’t know the future?

Consider this quotation from *My Life Today*:

A refining, purifying process is going on among the people of God, and **the Lord of hosts has set His hand to this work.** This process is most trying to the soul, but it is necessary in order that defilement may be removed. Trials are essential in order that we may be brought close to our heavenly Father, in submission to His will, that we may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. . . . **The Lord brings His children over the same ground again and again, increasing the pressure until perfect humility fills the mind, and the character is transformed; then they are victorious over self,** and in harmony with Christ and the Spirit of heaven. **The purification of God's people cannot be accomplished without suffering. . . . He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth.** True grace is willing to be tried. If we are loath to be searched by the Lord, our condition is one of peril. . . . {ML 92.2}

Why can purification not be accomplished without suffering? Because it is a design law that once there is brokenness of any kind, there are no pain-free options!

We are broken and deformed by sin and the healing process is painful, but it is not harmful! Only those who trust God and will follow Him and His directions in their lives will experience the victory over their own broken selves.



This is because the healing we need *requires our active participation*, because it is healing of our inner selves. If we were not active participants, freely choosing the painful healing road, if God were to use divine power to simply create new characters in us—we, as unique beings, would cease to exist—we would be destroyed and new beings with new identities would be created to take our place.

Therefore, God brings us to places where we can face our own weakness and make choices in harmony with Him to achieve victory over our own weakness and establish firm and healthy character in union with Him. Understand, we CANNOT do this in our own strength—we must yoke up with Christ and only in that love/trust relationship can we then experience the victory over our own weaknesses of character.

Read last paragraph, –The sacrifice required...” Notice—Satan is the legalist, Satan is the one who focuses on behavior, deeds, actions, rules—also notice God didn’t do this so He could discover what Abraham would do, but because He *knew* what Abraham would do and this was for Abraham’s good as well as a witness to the unfallen beings!

WEDNESDAY

Jacob and Esau—any questions about their story?

Many people point to Cain and say things like God is very particular, if you don’t do what God says God will punish or God will condemn—well what about Jacob? Did Jacob do what God instructed?

Look at how the lesson describes it in the third paragraph, –Even though Jacob’s actions seemed to ignore God’s plan. God was still there for him.”

Why the –seemed” Why not say –even though Jacob ignored God’s plan?”

Is it because their model has a hard time describing God as being so particular in one place and not another?

What is the issue? What was the difference between Cain and Jacob? Very little if one focuses on behavior, which is what the legal religions always do. But there is a big difference if one looks past behavior to reality: Cain refused to trust God, Jacob trusted God but still struggled with his own selfishness. In other words, both were infected with selfishness—Jacob had symptoms of the condition but continued to partake the Remedy, Cain had symptoms and refused the Remedy!



THURSDAY

Joseph and his brothers—questions about their story?

Third paragraph states, “Then, when Joseph told his brothers about his dream (Gen 37:5-11), he incited even more hatred and envy against himself.”

Would it have been more helpful to add “inadvertently” before incited? The way this sentence is worded lends itself to be understood as putting blame on Joseph—but the blame is with the selfishness in the hearts of the brothers. What response would have the brothers’ have had for Joseph if they had loved him like Jesus loves us?

As we review all these stories what is the critical point the lesson has completely ignored?:

- Cain/Abel
- Flood
- Abraham’s life
- Jacob/Esau
- Joseph and his brothers

The context of the Great Controversy, with humanity being in a terminal condition and in absolute need of the promised Messiah! God is working to send Jesus to heal and save and Satan is working to oppose God. In every one of these stories you see this issue being played out:

- Cain kills Abel—the righteous brother—to destroy the potential avenue for Messiah
- Flood—the entire world hardened against God except one man
- Abraham—called to be the avenue for Messiah, so targeted to be diverted how?
 - Hagar and distrusting God
 - Lying about his wife
 - Going to war—don’t you think Satan hoped to lure Abraham to war so he could kill Abraham?
 - Yet, despite Abraham’s fallen humanity and shortcomings, he overcomes them in his relationship with God!
- Jacob/Esau—Satan tempts Jacob to cheat Esau in order to incite anger in Esau to kill Jacob and close the avenue for Messiah
- Joseph and his brothers—again to destroy the family of Jacob with a famine and close the avenue for Messiah



FRIDAY

In the middle of the lesson it states, —“Of course, Jesus came to earth to die; that was the whole point.”

Was it? Was the whole point for Jesus to die? Or was the point for Jesus to save and heal (Jn 3:17), and His death was the MEANS to achieve His goal?

Read and discuss the questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

As we begin 2016 I want to share a little on how the Lord has blessed Come and Reason Ministries in 2015. During 2015 we:

- conducted over 30 seminars, in various denominational and community churches, universities, and health-care organizations in the US, Australia, and New Zealand
- were featured on three television programs and one radio show
- distributed over 40,000 books and 40,000 DVD sets (this doesn't count our Australia and South Africa distribution)
- launched the E-version of *The Remedy*
- launched the print version of *The Journal of the Watcher*
- had exhibits at two conventions (GC and AACC) to distribute our materials
- had over 350 new likes on our facebook page
- produced and broadcast 51 weekly Bible Study classes and had over 180,000 views of our videos watched on YouTube, with weekly averages increasing over the year to now be over 2000 viewers each week
- And despite the massive expense in giving away so much material this year, our finances are stronger than when the year began

We are overwhelmed by God's blessings, give Him all the credit and pray that in 2016 this ministry will fulfill God's purpose for us and we commit ourselves to be available to His direction!

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:

http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase**—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a HARD COVER book at Amazon as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

January 8-9, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, California.

January 29-30, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven Church in St. Helena, CA.

February 20, 2016: Class will meet at Hamilton Community Church due to the Courthouse being unavailable.

March 11-12, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Village Church, College Place, WA.

April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.



Lesson 4 Q1 2016

Conflict and Crisis: The Judges

SABBATH

What was the origin of the “great controversy”? This question **must** be answered correctly in order to understand all of Scripture, Nature, & our experiences. Continue to ask yourself this question as we study this lesson and the remainder of the quarterly.

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. I Cor 10: 3-5.

From the teacher’s quarterly:

“The story of Israel during the time of the judges is remarkable for its clear cycle of (1) apostasy, (2) oppression, (3) cry for help, and (4) divine intervention. Judges were individuals chosen by God as instruments to deliver Israel from its predicament at the hands of foreign powers. Deliverance took the form of actual military conflict. The great controversy was manifested in literal military terms. It is this theme of the great controversy that provides a lens through which to view the brutal, violent encounters that make modern sensibilities uneasy in the act of imagining how a loving God could sanction the killing of individuals or of populations.”

How does the “lens” of the great controversy help us understand the “brutal, violent encounters” of the children of Israel in the decades after Joshua’s death?

What “lens” does the lesson seem to be looking through?

What was God’s criteria for choosing one of His Judges?

***Why were the “military conflicts” necessary at the time of the Judges? ***

What was God’s original intent? See Ex 23:28, Deut. 7:20, Joshua 24:12 for context.

From the teacher’s quarterly:

“Unlike most manifestations of the great controversy, which are spiritual in nature, we see actual military battles in the book of Judges. In this context, such hymns as “Onward Christian Soldiers” (The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, no. 612) take on a new meaning. Help your



students to understand what it means to be a soldier for Christ, enlisted in His army to advance His kingdom and combat the forces of oppression and darkness.”

How are the “military battles in the book of Judges” manifestations of the great controversy? How are they misunderstood?

SUNDAY

Deborah

[pronounced neb-ee-yaw] feminine. a prophetess or inspired woman: by implication – a poetess; by association – a prophet’s wife. From Strong’s Concordance.

Why would God choose a female for the task of leading the deliverance of Naphtali, and Zebulun?

How spineless was Barak? “Barak said to her, “If you go with me, I will go; but if you don’t go with me, I won’t go.”

Anyone else see a theme here?

“The heroine of the story is Heber’s wife, Jael, who is not afraid to identify with God’s people and who played a crucial role in the defeat of God’s enemies. Judging her actions from our perspective today isn’t easy. The last thing we should do, though, is use her deeds to justify deception and violence in order to achieve our ends, no matter how right those ends might be.”

How is it considered heroic to drive a nail through someone’s temple? Hadn’t God, Himself, just aided in the destruction of the entire “army”? Do we think God was proud of Jael for nailing Sisera’s head to the ground? Did Jael live with the psycho-emotional scars of taking a human life or was she unaffected? Which law lens are we viewing through?

MONDAY

Gideon

When the Israelites cried out to the Lord because of Midian, he sent them a prophet, who said, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians. And I delivered you from the hand of all your oppressors; I drove them out before you and gave you their land. I said to you, ‘I am the Lord your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.’ But you have not listened to me.” Judges 6: 7-10.



This is a loaded passage. God reviews some history [see Ex 20: 2], reminds them of what would happen to them if they forgot Him [2 Cor 10: 5], and explains why they're in subjugation to the Midianites.

From the lesson: "Despite Gideon's complaint, which was unwarranted (they were disobedient; that's why they were oppressed)..."

Was Gideon's complaint unwarranted? Note that the Angel of the Lord says to Gideon "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior." Gideon replies, "... but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us?"

Were they oppressed because they were disobedient, or something else? Which law lens?

Gideon requested three miracles, the first of which was outlined by Michael. Imagine preparing scarce food only to have it consumed by fire.

Was his faith strong or weak? Were the miracles evidence of God's guidance in Gideon's endeavors? What about Gideon's efforts after the defeat of the Midianites?

But Gideon was betrayed into another error, which brought disaster upon his house and upon all Israel. The season of inactivity that succeeds a great struggle is often fraught with greater danger than is the period of conflict. To this danger Gideon was now exposed. A spirit of unrest was upon him. Instead of waiting for divine guidance, he began to plan for himself. – {From Eternity Past (EP) 400.2}

Because he had been commanded to offer sacrifice upon the rock where the Angel appeared to him, Gideon concluded that he had been appointed as a priest. Without waiting for divine sanction he determined to institute a system of worship similar to that carried on at the tabernacle. – {EP 400.3}

With the strong popular feeling in his favor, he found no difficulty in carrying out his plan. At his request all the earrings of gold taken from the Midianites were given him as his share of the spoil. The people also collected other costly materials, together with the richly adorned garments of the princes of Midian. From the material thus furnished, Gideon constructed an ephod and a breastplate, in imitation of those worn by the high priest. His course proved a snare to himself and his family, as well as to Israel. The unauthorized worship led many of the people finally to forsake the Lord to serve idols. After Gideon's death, great numbers, among whom were his own family, joined in apostasy. The people were led away from God by the very man who once overthrew their idolatry. – {EP 400.4}



TUESDAY

Samson

The study of Samson should be required for ALL males ages 10-95. There are lot's of consistent, testable life lessons to be learned here.

From the 1st paragraph: "God, indeed, had special plans for Samson; unfortunately, things didn't work out as well as they could have." This statement could be said of EVERYONE from Adam on down to present day.

Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, "I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife." Then his father and mother said to him, "Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" And Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she pleases me well." But his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord—that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel. Judges 14: 1-4.

How do we understand the idea that "... it was of the Lord – that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines."?

Did God lead Samson to the Philistine woman? Did God *know* that Samson's weaknesses would lead him in this direction & over rule circumstances without interfering with freewill? What's going on here?

Note the complaining/whining/flattery/coercive language in the wife-to-be when trying to get the answer to Samson's riddle. Moreover, note Samson's inability to say NO to the complaining/whining/flattery/coercive language – all males ages 10-95 need to study, etc.

Do we think that God was pleased with Samson's taking the lives of so many Philistines, not to mention 300 foxes? How do we understand this within the context of Him "seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines"?

Physically, Samson was the strongest man upon the earth, but in self-control, integrity, and firmness, he was one of the weakest. He who is mastered by his passions is a weak man. Real greatness is measured by the power of the feelings that a man controls, not by those that control him. – {EP 410.3 emphasis added}.

Those who in the way of duty are brought into trial may be sure that God will preserve them; but if men willfully place themselves under the power of temptation, they will fall, sooner or later. Satan attacks us at our weak points, working through defects in the character to gain



control of the whole man. He knows that if these defects are cherished, he will succeed. – {EP 410.4}

We've discussed this before. God gave Samson his strength, but didn't dictate how Samson used it. He gave Solomon his wisdom & wealth, but didn't coerce Solomon to use it for good. We often misinterpret God's servants behavior as being sanctioned or worse controlled by God, however, reality operates differently.

WEDNESDAY

Ruth

We see a consistent theme of humanity blaming God for the actions of Satan throughout Scriptural history [Ruth 1: 20, 21]. Here is insight in to the real controversy.

Evidently marriage had some similar pitfalls then, as today, and was considered a "duty." [see Ruth 3: 10, 13.]

From the last paragraph: "Talk about a living-happily-ever-after story. Unfortunately, there aren't too many of those in the Bible. Of course, there are not too many outside of the Bible either. Here, too, though, we can see how, despite the ebb and flow of life, God's will shall prevail in the end; and that's good news for all who love and trust Him."

I'm not sure how the lesson knows this is a "happily-ever-after" story, but ...

THURSDAY

Samuel

The lesson asks us to discern the subtlety of the "attack of evil" in the following passage, where there were no armies massed on borders, etc. I don't think this attack is subtle in the least. This is the core of the controversy – **THE MISREPRESENTATION OF GOD'S CHARACTER.**

12 Now the sons of Eli were corrupt; they did not know the Lord. 13 And the priests' custom with the people was that when any man offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fleshhook in his hand while the meat was boiling. 14 Then he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; and the priest would take for himself all that the fleshhook brought up. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. 15 Also, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who sacrificed, "Give meat for roasting to the priest, for he will not take boiled meat from you, but raw." 16 And if the man said to him, "They should really burn the fat first; then you may take as much as your heart desires," he would then answer him, "No, but you must give it now; and if



not, I will take it by force.” 17 Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for men abhorred the offering of the Lord. 18 But Samuel ministered before the Lord, even as a child, wearing a linen ephod. 19 Moreover his mother used to make him a little robe, and bring it to him year by year when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. 20 And Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, “The Lord give you descendants from this woman for the loan that was given to the Lord.” Then they would go to their own home. 21 And the Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile the child Samuel grew before the Lord. 22 Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 23 So he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. 24 No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear. You make the Lord’s people transgress. 25 If one man sins against another, God will judge him. But if a man sins against the Lord, who will intercede for him?” Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father, because the Lord desired to kill them. I Sam 2: 12-25

Did the Lord really desire to kill Eli’s sons?

“But although he [Eli] had been appointed to govern the people, he did not rule his own household. Eli was an indulgent father. Loving peace and ease, he did not exercise his authority to correct the evil habits and passions of his children. Rather than contend with them or punish them, he would submit to their will and give them their own way.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 575.

Do we see any parallels, today, with parents unwilling to “correct the evil habits and passions” of their children. Admittedly, I’m speaking from a position of ignorance, not having any children myself. However, I am a keen observer of human nature, and see this everywhere.

Samuel dealt with the same problems that Eli did, and perhaps modeled some of the same indulgences.



Rebellion and Redemption 1Q 2016 Lesson 5

The Controversy Continues

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “When we compare... What does this mean?”

What does it mean to buckle?

- Does it mean to disobey an explicit instruction written in Scripture?
 - What about David and the showbread?
- Is it about saying ‘no’ to God?
 - What about the parable of the two sons, first son told his father no, but then went out into the field, the other son said yes, but didn’t
 - What about Moses telling God no when first called?
- Does it mean to lie?
 - What about Rahab? Was she buckling when she lied?
- Does it mean question God?
 - What about Abraham and questioning God about Sodom?
 - Or Moses when questioning God about destroying Israel?

What does it mean to buckle?

It means to betray one’s loyalty to God, to give into fear and selfishness and make selfish choices at the expense of love for God and others!

- Moses when he struck the rock
- Elijah when he ran away
- David with Bathsheba, and worse, murdering Uriah
- Abraham lying about his wife
- Peter denying Christ

What is the cause of the buckling? Our own fears, insecurities and failure to trust God.

What undermines our trust in God? Not knowing Him! Ideas we hold that undermine our confidence in Him.

What is the power of God that enables us to stand firm?



I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the *power* of God for the salvation of everyone who believes... Rom 1:16

What is the power of the gospel? How do you avail yourself of it? Is it physical power and might or something else?

What of this description of God's power:

Rebellion was not to be **overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government.** The Lord's **principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love;** and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and **truth and love are to be the prevailing power.** E.G. White
Desire of Ages 759

How are truth and love the prevailing power? What do truth and love prevail over?

Truth prevails over lies and love prevails over selfishness—if we want to prevail in this war we must come back to an accurate understanding of God's character and government, i.e. methods and designs for reality. The truth of who He is and how He works, this is power—knowledge is power, experiencing God's character is power—power to live in harmony with God!

Satan's power is lies—and thus by Christ's death He destroyed him who holds the power of death that is the devil. How? What does this mean?

How is love a power? Remember the example of crossing the street and a truck is about to hit you...

How does Satan get people to claim a belief in God, to have a form of godliness “but deny the power thereof”?

Satan does this by infecting Christianity with a false law construct, once Christianity accepted the lie that God's law functions like man's laws, rules imposed requiring imposing of punishment, he denied Christians of the power of God. Why is this so?

Because Christians had their trust in God undermined, thus the avenues for the Holy Spirit to infuse our hearts and minds with transforming love are closed:



- Lies believed break the circle of love and trust—TRUTH believed destroys lies and wins to trust
- Broken love and trust results in fear and selfishness—restored trust opens the heart and God pours His love into our hearts
- Fear and selfishness results in acts of sin—love and trust results in acts of righteousness, service, giving, love
- Acts of sin damage mind, character, body, a terminal condition—acts of righteous result in growth in godliness, witnessing God’s kingdom—a healing condition

Further, when we believe lies about God, not only is the avenue for healing love closed, we make theologies to protect ourselves from God, this is fear based religion, not loved based religion.

Examples:

- Refusing to baptize people into Jesus Christ who haven’t given up their Sabbath job, or quit smoking, or drinking wine etc. We do this because we are afraid the institutional church will get contaminated by “sinners” so we refuse baptism until people clean up their lives and attest to a certain creed.
- Teaching theologies that function to protect us from God:
 - Jesus pleads to the Father His merits to pay for our sins
 - We are covered by the robe of righteousness so the Father won’t see us
 - Our sins are removed from record books in heaven so when we get there no one will know our confessed and forgiven sins
 - Jesus died to take away the wrath of God

These ideas undermine trust and worsen people’s actual spiritual condition, because of the Design law of worship—by beholding we become changed—we actually become like the God we worship, so holding such beliefs will not only incite fear, but harden us inside legal belief-boxes that cut us off from the power of God.

Read last paragraph, “The focus, and the challenge...” It is talking about deliverance in the face of stress, pain, problems—let’s consider their view, that it is faith, rather than logical consequences.

If one understands reality, what is actually transpiring and why, then one has a logical comprehension of what is taking place, does that undermine faith?

When a pregnant woman goes into labor, what room do they put her in at the hospital? The delivery room! What does she want to happen? She wants to be delivered?



Is this process painful and distressing to the woman in labor? If she has understanding of her situation, and what is transpiring, does her knowledge of her situation lessen her faith in her doctor? And if she had been having monthly prenatal visits with her doctor, and has come to know her doctor from experience and evidence, would that *undermine or strengthen* her faith in the doctor?

What about the case of a woman who presents to the ER in pain and is in labor, but unaware she is pregnant, she doesn't know the ER doctor who is assessing and treating her, does this impact her faith?

Faith is the logical consequence of knowing God for who He really is—supremely trustworthy!

Satan knows that the truth about God's character is so overwhelmingly beautiful, consistent, reliable, trustworthy, altogether lovely, and compelling so much that anyone who really comes to know God will trust Him. Therefore, Satan uses strategies to prevent us from knowing Him. One of them is this idea that we should believe or have faith without evidence or logic. For instance:

- God is love, but if you don't love and trust Him, He will burn you in hell—this is illogical, it doesn't work in reality at all—so what do religious people say? Oh God's way's are not my ways; I just take that on faith! Thus they believe lies about God that undermine faith and incite fear, cut them off from the power of God!
- Or, God requires legal payment and our security is found in legal blood payment of Jesus. This also undermines trust, teaching that God is the one whom we must fear, and more people fear God who is trying to save them than sin which is destroying them.

SUNDAY

The lesson is about David, first his victory over Goliath, and then his defeat with Bathsheba and Uriah. What are your thoughts?

How could David have such a victory with Goliath and fail so bad with Bathsheba?

Did David have a different character with Bathsheba? In other words, was the defect in character that manifested with Bathsheba not in David when he faced Goliath?

What was different about the situation with Goliath than with Bathsheba?

Would objective reality with Goliath provide David with confidence in his own ability to defeat Goliath? The situation with Goliath was objectively beyond David's ability to deal with on his own,



thus that situation required David to look outside himself for help, to rely on another for power to overcome, to not trust in himself, and thus turn to God—thus David didn't trust in himself, he trusted that God could defeat Goliath.

But, when it came to Bathsheba, was David looking through God's perspective of reality? Was David trusting God with his life, his actions, his choices, or was David in a life situation where David felt in control, powerful, confident in himself?

David throughout much of his life found himself in circumstances where his own innate abilities were inadequate to meet the challenges of life—not only with Goliath, but with the lion and the bear while working as a shepherd, and during the many years of running from Saul, and fighting with enemies around him.

But, the sin with Bathsheba happened in a different place in David's life. David was now in a position of authority, power, apparent control, safety, security, wealth. He was a beloved and popular ruler, now David could handle it. He didn't need God any more, this was in David's ability to manage. (This is likely the reason God instructed him not to take a census—because David would be tempted to believe his strength was in his spearman, infantry, bowmen and cavalry)

Did the selfishness manifested in David when he took Bathsheba, suddenly appear in David at that time in his life, or was it always in David, but it wasn't until this situation, when trials, challenges, tribulations seemed passed that David was most vulnerable to have this infection of selfishness break out into the open?

What was necessary for David to be saved? To be reborn, to die to self, to have a new heart and right spirit recreated within! When do you think this ultimate conversion experience happened for David? Wasn't it after Nathan confronted him?

We so often look at behavior and when a person in our church has stumbled and fallen in some sin, we pick up the gossip stones and start throwing. But, isn't it often the case that like David, like Peter after denying Christ, like Moses after striking the rock, like Elijah after running away—that this is when the secret infection of fear and selfishness is exposed and the sinner finally surrenders all to God and is fully healed in heart, mind and character!

- It was AFTER Moses struck the rock that he was taken to heaven
- It was AFTER Elijah ran away that he was translated to heaven
- It was AFTER David's sin with Bathsheba and Uriah he wrote Psalms 51
- It was AFTER Peter's denial that he was converted and ready to feed Jesus' sheep



Do we allow for the falls in our own lives to be those painful moment that reveal to us the secret infection we thought we could manage on our own, and humbly fall on our knees before God and let Him have us completely to heal and restore us? Do we then get up in the newness of our recreated hearts and minds, in union with Jesus, to live for Him?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Hezekiah was king...” What do you hear happening in this paragraph? Who is seeking to accomplish his purpose? Who is God seeking to save? What is the reason Israel is overtaken by foreign forces? Was it God’s desire for it to be this way?

When God did permit it to happen was it for the purpose of punishing, i.e. inflicting retribution? What was the purpose in allowing Israel to be overrun?

Do you see there is a much bigger reality to understand? If we fail to recognize the Great Controversy we will misunderstand or MISS what we should understand about what is happening.

But what if we do understand there is a Great Controversy, what are the other errors in understanding that can blind us to comprehending the truth of what was transpiring?

The biggest—is misunderstanding God’s law as imposed, then when one reads stories like these one falsely believes God is punishing for disobedience.

But consider the total break down in all that is reasonable if this were the case: If it were a case of imposed law not being obeyed and God inflicting punishment for breaking his law—what types of complete contradictions in all that is reasonable and logical and just and good do you see in these stories?

- God uses the pagans who are every bit as wicked as Israel to punish Israel
- God uses His power to control what people do—He needs Israel punished so He inserts Himself into the mind of these pagan leaders and inspires them to go to kill, maim, mutilate, torture, enslave, rape and destroy—really? What kind of God would He be if God were inspiring such activity?
- God would be an abuser of power one who does use coercion and force and threat, and there is no real freedom in His universe and thus no real love in His universe
- It would present God as saying He wants you to love Him, but if you don’t He will kill you



The only logical way to understand this at all, and fortunately, that is also consistent with Scripture, is Design law.

- God is acting as our protector, our Intercessor against the forces of evil in this world—
 - God intercedes in our own hearts (I will put enmity between you and the woman) against our own fear and selfishness, instilling a desire for good;
 - God intercedes against the principalities and powers of darkness (Angels with Elisha, 4 angels at four corners, holding back the snakes and scorpions in the desert for Israel) and in this story, God was holding back the evil nations around Israel. But when they repeatedly rejected Him He finally gave them what they chose, freedom from His protection. And what happens in a world in which selfishness dominates, a world without the love of God governing the hearts of men? Those with power seek to dominate and control those weaker and the enemies came and overran Israel!
 - God interceded in the natural course that sin does to the human being, in Jesus, who became sin though he knew no sin so that we might become the righteousness of God.
- Thus the punishment Israel received is the same punishment we receive when we:
 - disobey mother and touch a hot stove
 - run the toothbrush under water to show mom we brushed our teeth but really didn't
 - cheat on our exams—what is the punishment?
 - cheat on our spouses—what is the punishment?
 - Is the punishment for cheating getting caught? NO! Getting caught and experiencing some external consequence, like an F, expelled from school, separation and divorce etc. are not the punishment—such actions would be like mother spanking for not brushing your teeth. No, the punishment for cheating is a seared conscience, warped character and hardened heart less capable of love, truth, compassion and sensitivity to God's kingdom!

This past weekend I presented five talks at Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA. I presented the truth about God as we know it. One of the questions that came in was, "In light of the character of God I presented, and the design law versus the imposed law constructs I outlined, what do we do when ISIS shows up in our communities bent on killing us?"

I answered by saying that it is Satan's government that works by force, coercion, and fear. That Satan wants us to get afraid and think we are in danger. It inflames our survival of the fittest drives and moves us away from love, moves us to justify killing others to protect self.



In Bible times we have the story of Jehoshaphat who faced a huge army coming to destroy his city, and what did Jehoshaphat do? He called the singers together and they sang praise to God—God confused the other army, they killed themselves and the people were delivered.

We are taught that in the future many of us may very well face situations in which our lives are threatened because of our faith? What are we to do?

Revelation 12:11 describes those ready for translations, “these are they that do not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”

Do we trust God with our lives, so much so that we can say to God, “God if I need to die at the hands of an ISIS soldier, in order to bring that soldier to conviction, where he repents and is eternally saved, I give you my life.”

Remember Saul of Tarsus—what event was used by God to bring Saul to conviction? The stoning of Stephen. Do you think Stephen will awaken in the resurrection upset with God for not protecting him, or will he be thankful his life was used in such an effective way to reach Paul, and thereby so many millions more?

I am not saying I am ready to do this yet, but I want to be, I want to love like this and ask God to recreate in me this heart of love and trust in Him. Which takes us to...

WEDNESDAY

Death Decree

What do you understand is happening in the book of Esther? Read the third paragraph, “Little did the king realize...”

What is it that gives us insight and understanding into the book of Esther? It is the Cosmic Conflict over God’s character! This is the issue—humankind was “dead in trespass and sin” in a terminal condition. God has a plan which will save the species human, but it requires Jesus to come as a human being, to be born of a sinful human woman, but a woman who trusts God.

Does Satan want this to happen? No, he is trying to obstruct it and all through OT history you see the battle—immediately Cain kills Abel, trying to destroy the righteous one, the Flood, only one righteous



man on earth, Abraham is selected to be the family through whom Jesus will come and Satan attacks on all fronts:

- Gets nations to kidnap Lot, seeking to draw Abraham into a war where he can be killed
- Gets Abraham to replace Sarah with Hagar seeking to create his own line of people and obstruct the plan
- Gets Jacob's children to fight against each other
- Brings a famine attempting to starve them
- Gets wicked nations to try and destroy them
- Gets wicked individuals to try and destroy them as in the book of Esther
- Infects their religion with false god constructs
- Leads the priests to misrepresent God
- And, in Thursday's lesson, after Nehemiah rebuilds the walls, Satan leads the people to legalism and bigotry and bias and prejudice—get rid of their heathen wives, put up walls and rigid legal rules to protect them from ever going into paganism again and so they built a legal religion based on rigid rule keeping

Read fourth paragraph, “How fascinating it is...” What did the Jews face that we will face? Was it merely the death decree? Or is it something much more profound?

In the time of Rome, when Jesus was on earth, what had the Jewish religion become? A merging of church and state—their Sanhedrin worked with the State to enforce religious rules coercively. They did not present the truth in love and leave free. No, the religious authorities constantly sought to coerce obedience. How many times did they try to stone Jesus? What did they want to do to the woman caught in adultery? What did they do to Stephen? Did the Jews get permission from the Romans to stone Stephen? No, the Jews themselves were infected with Satan's version of God's character and law, thus their system was corrupt and ultimately as Jesus Himself said, they were loyal to their father the devil!

Are we today vulnerable to being caught up just like the Jews 2000 years ago, serving Satan and Satan's plans, albeit on the “right” day of the week?

Isn't that exactly what the beast of Revelation describes a union of church and state powers that coercively enforce religious rule?

What is the one central belief that is at the root to such a system? The belief that God's law functions like human law and therefore it is just and right to use the power of the state to enforce obedience.



THURSDAY

What do you understand is the lesson for us today from the experiences of Nehemiah?

Israel was not only real people dealing with real issues in their day, they were also actors on a stage and much of their history is object lesson history for the entire plan of salvation:

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. ¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! ¹³ No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. 1Cor 10:11-13

So what lessons do we learn from ancient Israel that apply to us today?

- Israel slaves in Egypt—we are slaves to sin in this world
- Moses a deliver comes to free them—Jesus comes to free us
- They leave Egypt for the promised land, Christians in the first century left the ways of the world for God's methods and principles
- Israel accepts false views of God and rebels from God's plan and end up slaves again, the church accepted false views of God and rebelled from God's law and ended up in the Dark Ages, captives again of Satan's lies about God
- They had a spokesperson for God, Nehemiah, lead them to repair the walls to repair the breach and God has called for a people at the end of time to do the same, listen to this:

The **spiritual restoration** of which the work carried forward in Nehemiah's day **was a symbol**, is outlined in the words of Isaiah: "They shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities." "They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, **The repairer of the breach**, The restorer of paths to dwell in." Isaiah 61:4; 58:12. {PK 677.2}

The prophet here describes a people who, in a time of general departure from truth and righteousness, are seeking to restore the principles that are the foundation of the kingdom of God. [Before we even go on, what might this be? What principles of God's kingdom have been lost and at the end of time need to be restored?] They are repairers of a breach that has been made in God's law--the wall that He has placed around His chosen ones for their



protection, and obedience to whose precepts of justice, truth, and purity is to be their perpetual safeguard. [How has God's law been broken down? By replacing it with imposed law instead of design law!] {PK 677.3}

In words of unmistakable meaning the prophet points out the specific work of this remnant people who build the wall. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; **and call the Sabbath a delight**, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 58:13, 14. {PK 678.1} [Design law or imposed law? Can a mother force a child to eat their spinach? Can a mother make them enjoy it? Notice what is being described here, not behavior change, but a heart change! This is healing, design law! And note what comes next in the quote]

In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. **The breach made in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired.** [Notice how this is phrased, it doesn't say, the breach made in the law by changing the Sabbath, or the breach in the law was the change in the Sabbath—no. Many SDAs have mistakenly believed that the breach in the law was the change in the day. No, the breach happened **at the time** when the Sabbath was changed. And was is the breach, the breakdown, the fracture in God's law? The idea that God's law is imposed, that it functions like human law, rules imposed. We are to be the people, who like Nehemiah, are called at this time in earth's history to rebuild the wall. The wall of protection in the truth about God's law and character, that God's law is design law, the law of love upon which all reality is built and God is working to heal and restore His children.] God's remnant people, standing before the world **as reformers, are to show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform** and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as **a memorial of creation**, a constant reminder of the power of God. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. **Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to co-operate with Him in building up the waste places.** [What is a memorial? Something that helps us remember—what is the Sabbath designed to help us remember? God's power—and what is the foundational power of God? Truth and love—and how does the Sabbath help us remember this? The Sabbath was created in the context of a war over God's right to rule—and rather than use might to force all intelligences in the universe to bow down, God created this planet and then said, "Universe, I rest—my case—take 24 hours aside and consider the evidences for yourself, no coercion!" The Sabbath is a reminder that God is the God of truth, love and freedom! This is design law and



the existence of the Sabbath is evidence Satan lied. If God were the abuser of power Satan alleges, there would be no Sabbath. This is also the Elijah message we read earlier, turning hearts of the fathers to the sons, i.e. a message of God's love!] They are to be repairers of the breach, **restorers of paths to dwell in**. See verse 12. {PK 678.2}

MONDAY

The lesson is about Elijah and the lesson states, "To say that it would not rain was a direct challenge to Baal, who was thought to bring rain to ensure fertile crops and herds that made farmers wealthy. The prevailing religious rites focused on fertility and income."

Who was Baal, was the issue primarily about fertility and income? Or was fertility and income a measure used by the people to evaluate their standing before God? Was there some other issue which was more insidious than this?

What was the problem with worshipping Baal? Was it simply a matter of using the wrong word "Baal" when worshipping God? Was it because they were not saying "Yhwh" (Yahweh)? Or was it something else?

"The Hebrew noun *ba'al* means 'master', 'possessor' or 'husband'. Used with suffixes, e.g. Baal-peor or Baal-berith, the word may have retained something of its original sense; but in general Baal is a proper name in the OT, and refers to a specific deity, Hadad, the W Semitic storm-god, the most important deity in the Canaanite pantheon.

"Yahweh was 'master' and 'husband' to Israel, and therefore they called him 'Baal', in all innocence; but naturally this practice led to confusion of the worship of Yahweh with the Baal rituals, and it became essential to call him by some different title; Hosea (2:16) proposed 'iš, another word meaning 'husband.'" Wood, D. R. W., & Marshall, I. H. (1996). *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed.) (108).

The problem was not the syllables used as *ba'al* was one name used for the true God. Therefore, the problem must have been something else. There must have been some distortion presented in the character of Baal that is not in the character of God. So, what was Baal like?

Baal was the son of El (i.e. El-ohim or El-Shaddai). He was the god of weather. Often called, 'Almighty' and "Lord of the Earth." Baal was the god who brought rain, thunder, lightening, who fertilized the earth, controlled the sun and brought the harvest. Baal fought the great serpent leviathan



as well as battled against Mot, the god of death. And most amazing of all, it was taught that Baal died in his battle with Mot and was resurrected from the dead to bring life to earth.

So what was the problem with worshipping a god who was the “husband and protector of Israel,” the son of El, who controlled the weather, who brought rain, sunshine, and fertility, who blessed with full harvest, who warred against the great serpent and death, who died and was resurrected to bring life to the earth? What was wrong with this god? What was Elijah opposing? What made Baal worship false?

“Determined to keep the people in deception, the priests of Baal continue to offer sacrifices to their gods and to call upon them night and day to refresh the earth. **With costly offerings the priests attempt to appease the anger of their gods;**” White, E.G., *Prophets and Kings*, p. 124.2.

And the Bible confirms this:

"So the prophets prayed louder and cut themselves with knives and daggers, according to their custom, until blood flowed." 1 Kings 18:28 ¹

Could it be that Baal represented the characteristics of Satan’s version of God, the idea that he (as god) must have bloody sacrifices in order to be appeased, have his wrath assuaged, or have his anger propitiated? And is God waiting for His church on earth to complete the reformation by eliminating this pagan god concept and restoring the true picture of God as revealed in Jesus?

So again, notice the issue is about worship, who do you trust, how do you understand God?

Is there an application today to what Elijah was dealing with in his day?

“See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. ⁶ He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; Mal 4:5,6

What is the Elijah of today? Why is Elijah needed today? What is the message?

¹ Some may attempt to argue that what made Baal worship false was its gross and hedonistic practices. We assert that all such degradation is the outgrowth of worshipping a god who must be appeased, assuaged or propitiated. In the Dark Ages these ugly practices of worshipping such a god were evidenced in the inquisition and burning people at the stake. The gross forms of their worship were the fruit of the real problem, which was accepting a god who had to be paid by sacrifice to grant blessings, a god who would inflict punishment if sacrifices were not brought. And Revelation tells us that those who hold to this view of God will again torture and kill in the name of their god.



FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Dr. Jennings has been named a ***Champion of Health*** by True Health Broadcasting Network in association with Health Institute for Preventive Care, Access, Research and Education (HIPCARE) and True Health TV and will be presented with the ***“Legacy Champion of Health”*** award at a Gala on Saturday, April 9, 2016, at the Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC), Atlanta, Georgia.

This award is being presented to Dr. Jennings, as it states in the award letter, “because of your unselfish commitment to community health exemplified by your leadership in the community and as author of *“The God-shaped Brain”* and *“Could it be this Simple? A Biblical Model for Healing the Mind”*”.

There will be a ***Health Equity Town Hall Meeting***, on January 16, 2016 at 3pm at the GWCC which will be free to the public and will be televised on True Health Broadcasting Network (THBN) and its affiliates, reaching millions of households.

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website: http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase–FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

January 29-30, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven Church in St. Helena, CA.

February 20, 2016: Class will meet at Hamilton Community Church due to the Courthouse being unavailable.

March 11-12, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Village Church, College Place, WA.

April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.



Rebellion and Redemption 1Q 2016 Lesson 6 Victory in the Wilderness

I received this email this week:

Greetings from the Philippines. I thank the Lord, I found this site. I can't find enough words to express how happy am I, I found Dr. Jennings teaching about God's Love, His true character, And His Plan of Salvation for the lost humanity. Now all my questions pertaining to God's Love and His judgement in the Second coming of Jesus are now clearly answered. His teaching about the Character of God is really life-transforming. How I wish, I can have his free CD"S and DVD"S but I'm in the Philippines.

Good news for all outside the US all our DVDs and free materials are available online for streaming!

I also received this email this week:

I have recently found your ministry. We are studying Revelation. It's been really difficult to listen to teaching that is so different than your interpretation. God has put in my heart John 17:3. And ever since then I have just been praying it. My mind has been open to complete love and I have a difficult time listening to teachings that are not LOVE. Please pray for me. I understand that taking on the life of Christ includes persecution. I praying that I can find others in my community that are lovers of Truth. I suppose my request is mainly for prayer. Thank you

And an online friend sent me an article a week or two ago, and I found this in it from a Dr. Syme:

Some years later, I went to American University where I did my work in Church History and I met one of my Church History teachers and in conversation with him, he said, "You'd be very surprised to know what my present assignment is."

So I said, "Yes, I might be. Well, what is it?"

*"Well", he said, "I have been spending about two months in the White vaults."
And I said, "What conclusion did you come to?"*

"Well", he said, "The World Council of Churches has been picking up the tab. They wanted me to comment on the question of Ellen G. White because of Dr Handspicker's previous



statement.” And he said, “I’ve been investigating, and they have been very courteous and they gave me every facility. But,” he said, “The thing that amazes me about Seventh-day Adventists, and the thing that amazed me particularly about the White Estate, was how they ever got any work done.” He said, “That phone, it buzzed from first thing in the morning to last thing at night. The questions, the kind of questions which any person with common sense ought to be able to answer, they would have to inquire what Ellen White said about it.”

So, evidently, some non-SDAs have picked up on the struggle some SDAs have with believing obvious truths without a confirming quote from EGW.

Sadly many people have been raised not to think for themselves, not to become mature Christians as described in Heb 5:14 who developed by practice the ability to discern the right from the wrong, but instead are conditioned to look to some other authority to tell them the answers. This is not what EGW taught.

So—for those who need an EGW quote to believe this:

Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator-- individuality, **power to think** and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. **It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought.** Instead of confining their study to that which men have said or written, let students be directed to the sources of truth, to the vast fields opened for research in nature and revelation. Let them contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny, and the mind will expand and strengthen. Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act, men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions. {Ed 17.2}

"We must study the truth for ourselves. No man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who he is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a criterion for us. We are to counsel together, and to be subject one to another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us, in order to learn what is truth. Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment. We must individually develop a character that will stand the test in the day of God." *Testimonies to Ministers* 109,110; first published in *Gospel Workers*, 1892 ed., pp. 128,129; cf. 2RH 311:3:1 (RH, June 18, 1889); CW 45; ST, Feb. 6, 1893



What makes us vulnerable to being so easily confused, and therefore so willing and eager to have someone else tell us the answer, is that we have fallen victim to the sola scriptura approach, the idea that Scripture must be kept separate from science and experience, and we must not use our reason to think about it.

But, God has given us three threads of evidence to be integrated, Scripture, Science and Experience, and we are to harmonize all three. When we learn how to do this, then we can come to conclusions and understand the reality which God created.

The great storehouse of truth is the **word of God—the written word, the book of nature, and the book of experience** in God’s dealing with human life. E.G. White, Christ’s Object Lessons 125

SABBATH

Read memory text, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Luke 19:10 NKJV

What do you hear Jesus say His mission to earth was to accomplish?

Can you think of any other statements of Jesus in which He describes His mission?

- For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Jn 3:16,17
- Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mt 20:26-28
- And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” ²³ Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. Lk 9:22-24

With all these statements—what do you hear Jesus say His mission was?

- to heal
- to save
- to recover that which was lost



- to serve
- to ransom many—which means what? To provide what was necessary to free us from our captivity—what holds us in captivity? The lies about God we believe and our own carnal natures. Then what is the ransom which is necessary to free us from such bondage? The truth about God and a new nature. Who does such a ransom get paid to?
- Give His life to die and then to rise again—Did Christ know He was going to die? Did He know He would rise again? How? What does it mean? Which law lens do you view it through? To restore his image in us!

Read the last paragraph, “This week, as we look...” Did Satan try to have baby Jesus killed shortly after His birth?

Consider the implications in light of penal substitutionary theology and the false law construct upon which it is based.

It is taught that sin is breaking God’s law, which not only requires a legal payment, but has personally offended God, inciting wrath and that the only thing that would pay the legal penalty and resolve God’s wrath was the shedding of the blood of God’s sinless Son.

Was baby Jesus sinless? Were evil men attempting to kill Him as an infant—then why stop it? If what is needed to save humanity is for a payment of innocent blood to resolve our legal debt and turn away the wrath of an offended deity, this could have been accomplished right then and there.

But, a legal payment was NEVER necessary, and killing baby Jesus would have PREVENTED the plan of salvation from being accomplished—why?

What was needed to save mankind?

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

When Adam and Eve sinned did God get changed? Did God’s law change? Did the nature of humankind change? Then whatever God was going to accomplish through Jesus it wasn’t to change Himself, nor His law, because they were not changed—the impact, the effect, the transforming energy must be applied to the species human!



So, killing baby Jesus would have prevented that work from being accomplished by Jesus, because Jesus had to actually live out a life as a human in order to reverse what sin has done to the human condition.

And specifically what was that work?

- Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil. Hebrews 2:14
- For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Colossians 1:19-20
 - Through the plan of salvation, **a larger purpose** is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. **Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government will be manifested before the universe**, the charge of Satan against God refuted, the nature and result of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. **Satan had declared that the law of God was faulty**, and that the good of the universe demanded a change in its requirements. In attacking the law, he thought to overthrow the authority of its Author, and gain for himself the supreme allegiance. **But through the plan of salvation, the precepts of the law were to be proved perfect and immutable**, that at last one tide of glory and love might go up throughout the universe, ascribing glory and honour and praise to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever. {BEcho, July 15, 1893 par. 3}

The inhabitants of all worlds will be convinced of the justice of the law in the overthrow of rebellion and the eradication of sin. When man, beguiled by Satan's power, disobeyed the divine law, **God could not, even to save the lost race, change that law**. God is love, and **to change the law would be to deny Himself, to overthrow those principles with which are bound up the good of the universe**. The working out of the plan of salvation reveals not only to men, **but to angels, the character of God, and through the ages of eternity the malignant character of sin** will be understood by the cost to the Father and the Son of the redemption of a rebel race. In Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, all worlds will behold the marks of the curse, **and angels as well as men** will ascribe honour and glory to the Redeemer, through whom they are all made secure from apostasy. **The efficiency of the cross guards the redeemed race from the danger of a second fall. The life and death of Christ effectually unveils the deceptions of Satan, and refutes his claims. The sacrifice of Christ for a fallen world draws not only men, but angels, unto Him in bonds of indissoluble union.** {BEcho, July 15, 1893 par. 4}

- Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 2Timothy 1:10
 - How does the death of Christ destroy death?



- What is the basis of life?
- What then causes death?
- What did Christ's death accomplish that destroys death?
- Christ destroyed death, Christ was NOT destroyed by death, Christ destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness, when he was tempted to save self, but instead gave his life in love! Some like this language—Christ destroyed the carnal nature at the Cross and arose in a humanity He perfected and healed back to God's original design!
- Here is an EGW quote:
- The grain of wheat that preserves its own life can produce no fruit. It abides alone. Christ could, if He chose, save Himself from death. But should He do this, He must abide alone. He could bring no sons and daughters to God. **Only by yielding up His life could He impart life to humanity.** Only by falling into the ground to die could He become the seed of that vast harvest,—the great multitude that out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, are redeemed to God. {DA 623.4}

With this truth Christ connects the lesson of self-sacrifice that all should learn: "**He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.**" All who would bring forth fruit as workers together with Christ must first fall into the ground and die. The life must be cast into the furrow of the world's need. **Self-love, self-interest, must perish. And the law of self-sacrifice is the law of self-preservation.** The husbandman preserves his grain by casting it away. **So in human life. To give is to live. The life that will be preserved is the life that is freely given in service to God and man. Those who for Christ's sake sacrifice their life in this world will keep it unto life eternal.** {DA 623.5}

The life spent on self is like the grain that is eaten. It disappears, but there is no increase. **A man may gather all he can for self;** he may live and think and plan for self; **but his life passes away, and he has nothing. The law of self-serving is the law of self-destruction.** {DA 624.1}

- The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. 1John 3:8
 - The life of Christ is to be revealed in humanity. Man was the crowning act of the creation of God, made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God; **but Satan has labored to obliterate the image of God in man, and to imprint upon him his own image.** Lift Him Up 48.
 - Jesus destroyed that work by restoring perfectly God's image in the species human!
- Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹ and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him... Heb 5:8,9



- **The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character;** and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. **But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character.** These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

So what was it Christ came to achieve?

- The revelation of truth to destroy lies, which secures the unfallen worlds in loyalty
- The destruction of the infection of fear and selfishness and the restoration of God's law of love back into the Spirit Temple where it was originally supposed to dwell
- The development of a perfect, mature, HUMAN character in harmony with God's

And here is an EGW quote:

"Now is the judgment of this world," Christ continued; "now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die." This is the crisis of the world. If I become the propitiation for the sins of men, **the world will be lighted up. [truth will be revealed] Satan's hold upon the souls of men will be broken. [lies, fear and selfishness broken by truth and love and trust restored—the ransom payment of truth and love paid to us!] The defaced image of God will be restored in humanity, [in trust we open the heart and receive the character of Christ reproduced in us! We become partakers of the divine nature, metaphorically we are drinking the blood i.e. life of Christ]** and a family of believing saints will finally inherit the heavenly home. **This is the result of Christ's death.** The Saviour is lost in contemplation of the scene of triumph called up before Him. He sees the cross, the cruel, ignominious cross, with all its attending horrors, blazing with glory. {DA 625.4}

But the work of human redemption is not all that is accomplished by the cross. **The love of God is manifested to the universe.** The prince of this world is cast out. The accusations which Satan has brought against God are refuted. The reproach which he has cast upon heaven is forever removed. **Angels as well as men are drawn to the Redeemer. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth," He said, "will draw all unto Me."** {DA 626.1}



Jesus did exactly what He said He would do—He came to save that which was lost!

SUNDAY

Read first & second paragraph, “Why did Jesus..” What do you think about restoring the dominion of Adam?

After Adam’s sin and before Christ’s victory at Calvary, was Satan the rightful ruler of planet earth? Did Satan ever have any “legal” or rightful claim to earth?

Some versions of Christianity have accepted a false idea, based on Satan’s temptations to Jesus, in which Satan claims the kingdoms of the earth as his own and offers them to Jesus. Thus some teach that Jesus had to defeat Satan in some battle of titans and reclaim the rightful title or deed to planet earth. This is all false. Satan was never the rightful ruler of earth. It is true that Satan deceived Adam and displaced Adam but Adam was subject to Christ and Christ was always the rightful ruler, and that did not change when Satan deceived Adam.

What did change was that humankind and the entire planet became infected with Satan’s principle of fear and selfishness.

Do you think all the powers we see in the life of Christ, Adam possessed before his fall? In other words, was it within Adam’s power to walk on water, heal all types of maladies (if there were any, which there were not), but manipulate the genetic code of plants and animals, talk to animals and direct the movement with sounds or thoughts, move objects etc.?

If Adam were the ruler of earth, doesn’t it make sense that Adam would have had the ability to intervene in nature and adjust, modify, change, modify and adapt nature in harmony with God’s design?

For instance, before sin Adam tended the Garden of Eden—would Adam have had the ability to hybridize plants? But would he have been restricted to the clumsy way we do it? Could Adam have had understanding of the genetic structure, epigenetic modifications, and with energy from His own person reached out and adjusted the code to cause a plant to produce different shapes or colored flowers?

Do we need an EGW quote?



Check out this description from the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*:

While they remained true to God, Adam and his companion were to bear rule over the earth. **Unlimited control was given them over every living thing.** The lion and the lamb sported peacefully around them or lay down together at their feet. The happy birds flitted about them without fear; and as their glad songs ascended to the praise of their Creator, Adam and Eve united with them in thanksgiving to the Father and the Son. {PP 50.2}

The holy pair were not only children under the fatherly care of God **but students** receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. They were visited by angels, and were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between. They were full of the vigor imparted by the tree of life, and **their intellectual power was but little less than that of the angels. The mysteries of the visible universe--**"the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge" (Job 37:16)--**afforded them an exhaustless source of instruction and delight. The laws and operations of nature, which have engaged men's study for six thousand years, were opened to their minds by the infinite Framer and Upholder of all. They held converse with leaf and flower and tree, gathering from each the secrets of its life.** With every living creature, from the mighty leviathan that playeth among the waters to the insect mote that floats in the sunbeam, Adam was familiar. He had given to each its name, and he was acquainted with the nature and habits of all. God's glory in the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolutions, "the balancings of the clouds," the mysteries of light and sound, of day and night--**all were open to the study of our first parents. On every leaf of the forest or stone of the mountains, in every shining star, in earth and air and sky, God's name was written.** The order and harmony of creation spoke to them of infinite wisdom and power. They were ever discovering some attraction that filled their hearts with deeper love and called forth fresh expressions of gratitude. {PP 50.3}

So long as they remained loyal to the divine law, their capacity to know, to enjoy, and to love would continually increase. They would be constantly gaining new treasures of knowledge, discovering fresh springs of happiness, and obtaining clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the immeasurable, unfailing love of God. {PP 51.1}

Wow—can you imagine? Amazing!



Do you see the jealousy of Satan—how Satan coveted the position of Christ, and not being able to become creator, Satan coveted the position of Adam and thus sought to usurp Adam for multiple reasons, but one to gain access to this earth with its incredible design, and diversity of life!

And what has Satan done with it? He has corrupted it, infected it, and is destroying it. Only through Christ is the destructive power of Satan held at bay and ultimately removed!

Read the third paragraph, “Second, He came to bring judgment...” Sadly, they use the word judgment here, which lends itself all too easily to be misunderstood as judicial, rather than diagnostic. But Jesus did come to accurately diagnose and expose the infection of sin and to provide Remedy.

Read last paragraph, “Third, Jesus came into...” Did anyone notice the subtle change the lesson made in the Bible reference? In the first sentence they reference John 1:29, which reads: “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the *sin* of the world!”

Notice they didn’t use the word sin; they changed it to sins? What difference does it make?

Sins leads our minds to think about deeds, behaviors, acts, breaking rules...it leads us down the false trail of imposed law with the false theology of penal substitution. It leads us to think of ourselves, our mistakes, what we have done wrong and the lie that says God must punish sinners for breaking the law.

When we use what the Bible says, and realize Jesus came to take away the sin of the world, we realize that sin is a condition, a state of being which is out of harmony with God’s design, and which we cannot fix. Jesus came to fix this condition. We further realize that the sins, the actual bad deeds, are symptoms of the condition of sin and only by fixing the condition, being reborn, etc. will the symptoms remit.

Thus, without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin—without the Remedy procured by Jesus our sinful condition would not remit back to God’s perfect design!

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read Matthew 3:7-12:



But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰ The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

The lesson asks why John uses language like this to introduce the Messiah?

Which law lens do you see it through?

If imposed law then you hear a scary power monger who will use power to punish and destroy—this is sadly how many people conceive of God.

But what if you understand God’s law as it really is, the protocols upon which reality is constructed, the law of love built into reality and to which we are currently out of harmony?

What is the current “natural” state of humankind? The Bible says we are dead in trespass and sin—which means what? We have a terminal condition, that we did not choose to have, but with which we were born.

So, what happens if God does nothing?

What happens if we refuse to receive what God has done through Christ?

So, what is it we need? To be healed and restored to unity with God, anything short of this results in our suffering and death.

So, here are these verses from *The Remedy*:

But when he saw the lawyers and theologians of the Pharisee and Sadducee schools arrive where he was dipping people in the Jordan, he said to them: "You poisonous snakes! What are you doing here? Do you think you can get right with God by washing in the Jordan?"⁸ Your hearts must be cleansed and characters renewed, so that your lives bring forth actions in



harmony with God's character of love.⁹ And don't try claiming you're right with God because you're a genetic descendant of Abraham. Biologic descent is irrelevant. The descendants of Abraham are as numerous as the stones lying on the shore.¹⁰ The axe of selfishness is already cutting through the roots of Israel, and every person who refuses to be renewed in love and bring forth character of righteousness will be cut off and destroyed.

¹¹ "I immerse people in water, symbolizing their repentance. But one is coming after me whose sandals I am not even fit to hold. He will immerse you in the Holy Spirit and the cleansing fire of God's love and truth.¹² He sifts the wheat from the chaff, purifying his people by consuming all defects with unstoppable fire."

Read bottom section and green section, "It [Christ's first coming] came, however..." How might faithful people today have misconceptions about Christ's second coming?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "When Jesus..." Jesus did not invite temptation, meaning Jesus didn't go where He knew He would be tempted. However, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness—did the Holy Spirit foreknow what would happen there?

Then why did the Holy Spirit lead Jesus there knowing that He would be tempted by Satan?

Because, it was necessary for Christ to achieve His mission—Jesus had to be "tempted in every way just like we are" in order to overcome with His human brain and develop a perfect human character.

What about us? Should we purposely go where we know we will be tempted? No! An alcoholic should avoid alcohol etc.

But, will the Holy Spirit lead us in paths where we will have opportunity to overcome, grow, mature, and develop mature character?

A refining, purifying process is going on among the people of God, and **the Lord of hosts has set His hand to this work.** This process is most trying to the soul, but it is necessary in order that defilement may be removed. Trials are essential in order that we may be brought close to our heavenly Father, in submission to His will, that we may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. . . . **The Lord brings His children over the same ground again and again, increasing the pressure until perfect humility fills the mind, and the character is transformed; then they are victorious over self,** and in harmony with Christ and the Spirit



of heaven. **The purification of God's people cannot be accomplished without suffering. . . . He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth.** True grace is willing to be tried. If we are loath to be searched by the Lord, our condition is one of peril. . . . {ML 92.2}

Read second paragraph, “There are dramatic...” And what did they build? They built a sanctuary, what is the object lesson application/parallel to Jesus in this?

Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord.’¹³ It is he who will build the temple of the Lord, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two. Zech 6:12-13

Jesus also built a sanctuary, what temple or sanctuary did Jesus build?

What is the application of this to our understanding of the heavenly sanctuary?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about when Satan tempted Jesus to throw Himself off the temple.

Read third paragraph, “Jesus was not...” Yes, Jesus had genuine trust in His Father, but there is another critical element that Jesus had that is left out and to which the temptation targeted, what was it?

Jesus knew who He was, the temptation was not merely about trust in God, it was targeting human fear and insecurity. We are all infected with fear and insecurity—fear rejection, fear not being liked, fear not being accepted, fear not being understood etc.

Thus, this temptation was about playing on the fear that humans struggle with in regard to our own identity.

Think through your own life experiences, how many times were you tempted (or still are) by insecurity in your own identity to do things to be accepted?

How many times do we get tempted into doing something in order to “prove” ourselves to others?



Jesus trusted His Father, but Jesus also had confidence in who He was; He was content with who He was and thus didn't NEED approval from others. Jesus didn't need to convince an angel that He was who He said He was, but only need to BE Himself.

So many people get trapped into focusing on what others think of them, rather than focusing on being the healthiest, most Christlike person they can be!

THURSDAY

The lesson is about receiving the kingdoms of the world if He will worship Satan.

read fourth paragraph, "This test focused..." What direct intervention did God do after Adam's fall?

- God intervened in the hearts of humans to put a desire for good, without this human beings would have been fully united on Satan's side
 - The Lord says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." The enmity does not exist as a natural fact. **As soon as Adam sinned, he was in harmony with the first great apostate, and at war with God; and if God had not interfered in man's behalf, Satan and man would have formed a confederacy against heaven,** and carried on united opposition against the God of hosts. **There is no natural enmity between evil angels and evil men;** both are evil through transgression of the law of God, and evil will always league against good. Fallen men and fallen angels enter into a desperate companionship. {ST, July 11, 1895 par. 5}
- God intervenes with the powers of darkness
- God intervened in the natural course that sin does to the sinner, by Jesus becoming sin though he knew no sin so that we might become the righteousness of God.
- Jesus never intervenes with God to change God in some way

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, "Though one..." What do you think they mean by a physical conflict? Are they speaking of Jesus on earth physically battling with hunger, thirst, fatigue, and pain when whipped and crucified? Or are they speaking of some battle of physical might between two super-beings?

Or perhaps the physical battle of what sin is doing to creation with mutations and amalgamations and Jesus working in nature to physical heal and restore all that Satan has mutated and damaged?



And what if we have the Great Controversy theme, but we fail to rightly understand the nature of God's law as design law, and instead continue to believe it is imposed law?

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Dr. Jennings has been named a ***Champion of Health*** by True Health Broadcasting Network in association with Health Institute for Preventive Care, Access, Research and Education (HIPCARE) and True Health TV and will be presented with the “***Legacy Champion of Health***” award at a Gala on Saturday, April 9, 2016, at the Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC), Atlanta, Georgia.

This award is being presented to Dr. Jennings, as it states in the award letter, “because of your unselfish commitment to community health exemplified by your leadership in the community and as author of “*The God-shaped Brain*” and “*Could it be this Simple? A Biblical Model for Healing the Mind*”.

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website: http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

January 29-30, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven Church in St. Helena, CA.

February 20, 2016: Class will meet at Hamilton Community Church due to the Courthouse being unavailable.

March 11-12, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Village Church, College Place, WA.

April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.



Rebellion and Redemption 1Q 2016 Lesson 7

Jesus' Teachings and the Great Controversy

Introducing a new resource available on the comeandreason.com website: James Ehrlich has taken a full 5 years' worth of notes – all the notes from 2010 through 2015 - and combined them into one single, **searchable** PDF document! This is huge for being able to pinpoint specific topics or key words. Find it in the Archive column of the Bible Study Class menu.

By its very definition, the GC theme is a “big-picture” view...the **biggest** picture...and we tend to think of it only in grand, over-arching terms, because it is a “meta-narrative” that explains a large portion of our reality. But the lesson makes the point that no matter how grand and all-encompassing the GC theme is, or how substantial the issues at stake, in many ways the Great Controversy gets played out daily, right here on our little planet...right here in our own daily lives. How?

- How we represent and reflect God's true character of love
- How we demonstrate his healing, transforming power in our own characters
- How we practice his methods, principles, government (truth, love, and freedom)
- How we love others

In Romans 3:4, Paul tells us that God is the One on trial, God is the One accused, and God is the One who will be proved innocent: Paul says:

God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. Romans 3:4 KJV

May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, “That You may be justified in Your words, And prevail when You are judged.” NASB

Certainly not! God must be true, even though every human being is a liar. As the scripture says, “You must be shown to be right when you speak; you must win your case when you are being tried.” GNT

No! God will continue to be true even when every person is false. As the Scriptures say: “So you will be shown to be right when you speak, and you will win your case.” NCV

God, may you be proved right and true in the hearts and minds of your intelligent creatures when you present yourself openly for their judgment. The Remedy



How will that happen? How will He win His case and be proven...right...the winner of the Great Controversy? It will all be decided based on the evidence. Jesus Christ is Exhibit A...He is the most convincing evidence of the true, loving character of God – if you have seen me you’ve seen the father...the father and I are one. And His life, death, and resurrection are the most convincing evidence that God is nothing like Satan has alleged Him to be. When my character is transformed from selfish to selfless I am Exhibit B...when you practice His methods of truth, love, and freedom you are Exhibit C! We all have a role in how this plays out. There is no way to have insight into this big-picture Great Controversy perspective, and think that your life is insignificant...there is no way to be unsure about your purpose here.

SUNDAY

Many Kinds of Rest

This week’s memory text is a very familiar passage from Matthew 11:28 –

“Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.”

From the Message:

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

The concept of rest is very rich in Scripture. The Greek word for “rest” – “anapausis” – is very similar to words associated with Sabbath, and can be used as both a noun and a verb meaning “solemn rest”...so the same Greek word is used in “I will give you rest” and “a day of rest”.

So...we have talked about yokes in this class before: What is a yoke? What is its purpose?

A yoke is not a harness but an instrument that shares the load between two animals allowing them to work as a team to pull the load. Take My yoke upon you,” Jesus says. The yoke is an instrument of service. Cattle are yoked for labor, and the yoke is essential that they may labor effectually. By this illustration Christ teaches us that we are called to service as long as life shall last. We are to take upon us His yoke, that we may be co-workers with Him. The yoke that binds to service is the law of God. The great law of love revealed in Eden, proclaimed upon Sinai, and in the new covenant written in the heart, is that which binds the human worker to the will of God...{DA 329.3} (notice she didn’t say written on stone)



By wearing His yoke and learning of Him, we become like Him in aspiration, in meekness and lowliness, in fragrance of character. {AG 322.5}

So, what does it mean to yoke with Christ? Consider these quotations, do you agree or disagree? What are the implications?

While God was working in Daniel and his companions "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), they were working out their own salvation. Herein is revealed the outworking of the divine principle of cooperation, without which no true success can be attained. Human effort avails nothing without divine power; and without human endeavor, divine effort is with many of no avail. To make God's grace our own, we must act our part. His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. {LHU 193.4}

We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God. The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). Man is to work with the facilities God has given him. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}

There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies-- divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. It is in this way only that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding, but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . . . Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}

"Lifting the cross cuts away self from the soul, and places man where he learns how to bear Christ's burdens. We cannot follow Christ without wearing His yoke, without lifting the cross and bearing it after Him. If our will is not in accord with the divine requirements, we are to deny our inclinations, give up our darling desires, and step in Christ's footsteps."—Sons and Daughters of God, p. 69.

How can taking on His yoke bring rest to our souls? Hebrews 5:5 in The Remedy says,



“If they refuse the truth, if they reject the evidence I have provided, their minds will never find rest and they will not get well.”

If we surrender our lives to God, surrender our plans and our best efforts – surrender the “outcomes” to Him and simply follow His directions in carrying out our duty – doesn’t that remove worry, stress and anxiety?

MONDAY

Planting and Harvesting

Monday's lesson talks about the parable of the sower and how it contains implicit Great Controversy themes...as well as natural law themes! The law of sowing and reaping is natural design law. This is likely a familiar story to most of you, but let’s do a quick review of it in Matthew 13:

“³Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

Any thoughts on how this parable reveals great controversy themes?

The 2nd paragraph of Monday’s lesson contains a small quote from Christ Object Lessons, but the book’s entire Chapter 2 is devoted to this parable of the sower, and we could honestly spend the whole rest of the hour on this because it is really good...but I highly recommend it for further study.

“The sower soweth the word.” Christ came to sow the world with truth. Ever since the fall of man, Satan has been sowing the seeds of error. It was by a lie that he first gained control over men, and thus he still works to overthrow God’s kingdom in the earth and to bring men under his power. A sower from a higher world, Christ came to sow the seeds of truth. He who had stood in the councils of God, who had dwelt in the innermost sanctuary of the Eternal, could bring to men the pure principles of truth. Ever since the fall of man, Christ had been the Revealer of truth to the world. By Him the incorruptible seed, “the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever,” is communicated to men. 1 Peter 1:23. In that first promise spoken to our fallen race in Eden, Christ was sowing the gospel seed. But it is to His personal ministry among men and to the work which He thus established that the parable of the sower especially applies. {COL 37.1}



The word of God is the seed. Every seed has in itself a germinating principle. In it the life of the plant is enfolded. So there is life in God's word. Christ says, "The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life." John 6:63. "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life." John 5:24. In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the word is receiving the very life and character of God." {COL 38.1}

"But the teacher of sacred truth can impart only that which he himself knows by experience. "The sower sowed *his* seed." Christ taught the truth because He was the truth. His own thought, His character, His life-experience, were embodied in His teaching. So with His servants: those who would teach the word are to make it their own by a personal experience. They must know what it is to have Christ made unto them wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. In presenting the word of God to others, they are not to make it a suppose-so or a maybe. They should declare with the apostle Peter, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty." 2 Peter 1:16. {COL 43.1}

Soil by the Wayside:

"The battle for souls is real, and the enemy uses whatever means he can to turn people away from salvation. For instance, in the context of the seed falling by the wayside, Ellen G. White wrote: "The seed sown by the wayside represents the word of God as it falls upon the heart of an inattentive hearer. Like the hard-beaten path, trodden down by the feet of men and beasts, is the heart that becomes a highway for the world's traffic, its pleasures and sins. Absorbed in selfish aims and sinful indulgences, the soul is "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Hebrews 3:13. The spiritual faculties are paralyzed. Men hear the word, but understand it not. They do not discern that it applies to themselves. They do not realize their need or their danger. They do not perceive the love of Christ, and they pass by the message of His grace as something that does not concern them. {COL 44.2}

As the birds are ready to catch up the seed from the wayside, so Satan is ready to catch away the seeds of divine truth from the soul. He fears that the word of God may awaken the careless, and take effect upon the hardened heart. Satan and his angels are in the assemblies where the gospel is preached. While angels of heaven endeavor to impress hearts with the word of God, the enemy is on the alert to make the word of no effect. With an earnestness equaled only by his malice, he tries to thwart the work of the Spirit of God. While Christ is drawing the soul by His love, Satan tries to turn away the attention of the one who is moved to seek the Saviour. He engages the mind with worldly schemes. He excites criticism, or insinuates doubt and unbelief.



The speaker's choice of language or his manner may not please the hearers, and they dwell upon these defects. Thus the truth they need, and which God has graciously sent them, makes no lasting impression."—Christ's Object Lessons, p. 44."

Soil In Stony Places:

The seed sown upon stony ground finds little depth of soil. The plant springs up quickly, but the root cannot penetrate the rock to find nutriment to sustain its growth, and it soon perishes. Many who make a profession of religion are stony-ground hearers. Like the rock underlying the layer of earth, the selfishness of the natural heart underlies the soil of their good desires and aspirations. The love of self is not subdued. They have not seen the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the heart has not been humbled. This class may be easily convinced, and appear to be bright converts, but they have only a superficial religion...But those who in the parable are said to receive the word immediately, do not count the cost. They do not consider what the word of God requires of them. They do not bring it face to face with all their habits of life, and yield themselves fully to its control... But the stony-ground hearers depend upon self instead of Christ. They trust in their good works and good impulses, and are strong in their own righteousness. {COL 46.4}

There are very many who claim to serve God, but who have no experimental knowledge of Him. Their desire to do His will is based upon their own inclination, not upon the deep conviction of the Holy Spirit. Their conduct is not brought into harmony with the law of God. They profess to accept Christ as their Saviour, but they do not believe that He will give them power to overcome their sins. They have not a personal relation with a living Saviour, and their characters reveal defects both hereditary and cultivated. {COL 48.1}

Soil Among Thorns:

The gospel seed often falls among thorns and noxious weeds; and if there is not a moral transformation in the human heart, if old habits and practices and the former life of sin are not left behind, if the attributes of Satan are not expelled from the soul, the wheat crop will be choked. The thorns will come to be the crop, and will kill out the wheat. Grace can thrive only in the heart that is being constantly prepared for the precious seeds of truth. The thorns of sin will grow in any soil; they need no cultivation; but grace must be carefully cultivated. (Anyone here have a garden and find this to be true? The weeds flourish with no effort at all) The briars and thorns are always ready to spring up (remember, "an enemy has done this"), and the work of purification must advance continually. If the heart is not kept under the control of God, if the Holy Spirit does not work unceasingly to refine and ennoble the character, the old habits will reveal themselves in the life. Who here has not experienced this first-hand? Men may profess to believe the gospel; but unless they are sanctified by the gospel their profession is of no avail.



If they do not gain the victory over sin, then sin is gaining the victory over them. The thorns that have been cut off but not uprooted grow apace, until the soul is overspread with them. {COL 50.4}

Who or what determines what kind of soil a person is?

“Throughout the parable of the sower, Christ represents the different results of the sowing as depending upon the soil. In every case the sower and the seed are the same. Thus He teaches that if the word of God fails of accomplishing its work in our hearts and lives, the reason is to be found in ourselves. But the result is not beyond our control. True, we cannot change ourselves; but the power of choice is ours, and it rests with us to determine what we will become. The wayside, the stony-ground, the thorny-ground hearers need not remain such. The Spirit of God is ever seeking to break the spell of infatuation that holds men absorbed in worldly things, and to awaken a desire for the imperishable treasure. It is by resisting the Spirit that men become inattentive to or neglectful of God’s word. They are themselves responsible for the hardness of heart that prevents the good seed from taking root, and for the evil growths that check its development. The garden of the heart must be cultivated. The soil must be broken up by deep repentance for sin. Poisonous, Satanic plants must be uprooted. The soil once overgrown by thorns can be reclaimed only by diligent labor. So the evil tendencies of the natural heart can be overcome only by earnest effort in the name and strength of Jesus...This work He desires to accomplish for us, and He asks us to cooperate with Him. {COL 56.2}

The quarterly says, "We need to be careful how we approach those who don't seem to respond to the gospel as we think they should." How should we always respond? Speak the truth in love and leave people free. Let everyone be fully persuaded in their own mind.

Pink box: Why do we sometimes see people, just newly baptized, walk out the door...or others who simply show no interest at all?

TUESDAY

Building on Rock

Another familiar parable told by Jesus in Matthew 7 starting with verse 21...this is from The Remedy:

21 “Not everyone who professes me as ‘Lord’ will enter the heavenly kingdom of love, but only those who have partaken of the Remedy, have been healed in heart, and live in harmony with my Father who is in heaven. 22 There will be many who will cry out to me that day, ‘Lord, Lord,



don't you remember that we preached many sermons, saying "Jesus saves," we performed exorcisms, saying "Jesus cast you out," and performed many miracles, saying "in Jesus' name, be healed"?' 23 Then I will tell them the reality of their situation: 'You never trusted me, and we were never united in heart. Depart, because you are hardened in selfishness!' 24 "So understand this: Those who hear the truth I speak, and apply it to their lives, are like the wise person who built their house upon a solid rock foundation. 25 Then when it rained, and flood waters rose, and winds beat against that house, it did not fall, because it stood upon solid rock. 26 But everyone who hears the truth I speak and does not apply it to their lives is like the foolish person who built their house upon sand. 27 Then when it rained, and flood waters rose, and the winds beat against that house, it collapsed with a loud crash."

The Message says: 24-25

"These words I speak to you are not incidental additions to your life, homeowner improvements to your standard of living. They are **foundational** words, words to build a life on (design law/reality). If you work these words into your life, you are like a smart carpenter who built his house on solid rock. Rain poured down, the river flooded, a tornado hit—but nothing moved that house. It was fixed to the rock. 26-27 "But if you just use my words in Bible studies and don't work them into your life, you are like a stupid carpenter who built his house on the sandy beach. When a storm rolled in and the waves came up, it collapsed like a house of cards."

The quarterly asks: What is so frightening about this parable? Is it frightening? The quarterly also says that "there is no way to tell the difference between the two completed houses until the floods come"...do you find that to be true...in your own life? In others?

Ms. White says in Our High Calling that building upon the rock is not merely a feeling, but a changed life.

"Satan leads people to think that because they have felt a rapture of feeling, they are converted. But their experience does not change. Their actions are the same as before. Their lives show no good fruit. (this seems to be inherent in penal substitution theology – they have a form of godliness but deny its power...there is no victory) They pray often and long, and are constantly referring to the feelings they had at such and such a time. But they do not live the new life. They are deceived. Their experience goes no deeper than feeling. They build upon the sand, and when adverse winds come their house is swept away. Many poor souls are groping in darkness, looking for the feelings which others say they have had in their experience. They overlook the fact that the believer in Christ must work out his own salvation with fear and trembling...When Jesus speaks of the new heart, He means the mind, the life, the whole being. To have a change of heart is to withdraw the affections from the world, and fasten them upon



Christ. To have a new heart is to have a new mind, new purposes, new motives. What is the sign of a new heart?—A changed life. There is a daily, hourly dying to selfishness and pride. {OHC 159.5}

WEDNESDAY

Do Not Judge

The quarterly talks about the revolutionary nature of Christ's Sermon on the Mount given early in His ministry...and it really was. He told ordinary/despised/rejected people that they were valued and blessed in God's eyes, and that they were like the two highly-prized commodities of salt and light. He told how He was the embodiment of God's law (of love), and warned of trying to impress others with their own good behavior. And Jesus taught that character is determined by what a person thinks, not just by visible actions. All these were antithetical concepts to what was commonly taught by Jewish leaders and Pharisees.

Matthew 7:1-5 says,

“Do not be a fault finder, condemning and judgmental toward others, or you will discover that you are only exposing your own defects of character. For the way you treat others reveals the attributes of your own character, and the reality of your own condition is what determines your destiny. Why do you try to find the smallest defect in someone else's character, but ignore the malignant pathology in your own? How can you possibly think you can help another remove defects in their character when all the while your character is corrupt with selfishness? You charlatans! Healthy interventions require healthy minds: first address the defects in your own character, and then you will have the clarity and ability to help another remove defects in theirs.” (Remedy)

In what ways is the reality of the great controversy revealed in these texts – how is the interplay between good and evil manifested here?

What an invitation to conduct a relentless self-examination of our own actions and motives. Rarely do we look at ourselves squarely, critically, and honestly. We set ourselves up as the standard for everyone else. The problem with this is that there is so much we do not know or understand about other people. (Man can only look on the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart motives.) It is all too easy for us to see the mistakes in them. As a consequence of our tendency to sit in judgment of others, many people have been misrepresented. Aspersion has been cast on their characters unfairly. Unfortunately, in some cases, these individuals have left the church. Christ's teaching on this subject is direct and urgent based on the spiritual damage (to self and others) that judging others can cause. Do you think this advice is also for those who tend to be too hard, judgmental, and unforgiving of themselves?



DOA quote in the middle of the page, but in context:

“Judge not, that ye be not judged.” Do not think yourself better than other men, and set yourself up as their judge. Since you cannot discern motive, you are incapable of judging another. In criticizing him, you are passing sentence upon yourself; for you show that you are a participant with Satan, the accuser of the brethren. (yikes!) The Lord says, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.” This is our work...The good tree will produce good fruit. If the fruit is unpalatable and worthless, the tree is evil. So the fruit borne in the life testifies as to the condition of the heart and the excellence of the character. Good works can never purchase salvation, but they are an evidence of the faith that acts by love and purifies the soul. And though the eternal reward is not bestowed because of our merit, yet it will be in proportion to the work that has been done through the grace of Christ. {DA 314.2}

Pink box: What is the difference between judging a person and judging the rightness or wrongness of their actions...is there a difference?

THURSDAY

I Am With You Always

God made the promise, “I will be with you,” and similarly “I will never leave you nor forsake you,” a number of times in scripture...and many times the promise is made in times of hardship and duress, when God’s words would be most relevant. What should that mean to us, in practical terms, in our own lives, in our own struggles, failures, and disappointments, and even when we feel that God has let us down?

“We fail many times because we do not realize that Christ is with us by His Spirit as truly as when...He moved visibly upon the earth. The lapse of time has wrought no change in His parting promise to His apostles as He was taken up from them into heaven...The Great Teacher has delegated power to His servants, who ‘have this treasure in earthen vessels.’ Christ will superintend the work of His ambassadors if they wait for His instruction and guidance.” {LHU 175.3}



Rebellion and Redemption 1Q 2016 Lesson 8

Comrades in Arms

I received a few of emails I wanted to share with you.

I have been listening to your teaching of 01/23/16 and spent most of the time giggling about your "here's a quote from Ellen White" and wondering why it's such a big deal. Not being raised or currently Adventist it seems both sad and silly. But then I began to wonder how is the clutching reliance on an Ellen White quote different from the Catholics who have a similar clutching reliance on the Virgin Mary? Both groups look to a human female for their spiritual guidance and neither trusts what God and Jesus say in the Bible without the "blessing" of the human female.

I'm sure I'm missing some profound historical SDA church doctrine. But from an outsider's perspective, it sure looks similar. –Washington State

Dear Dr Jennings, I want to give God thanks and praise for what he is accomplishing through the ministry He has given you.

We had 5 sessions at my church last week as a revival program entitled "Rekindling a Lost Passion."

We used the concepts from your ministry and some of your stories to remind people that GOD is LOVE and everything is to be understood from this principle.

People have made many comments about the program including one Pastor. People have commented that they have not looked at things from that perspective before. We are so grateful to God for the positive impact the revival program has made.

Personally, since I started studying God's word from this viewpoint my life has been transformed. I can say my troubled marriage of 15 years has been healed and my husband and I are truly happy for the first time in 15 years.

Now, when I read the word of God I understand it so much better and I can't help but see God's love radiating through the pages to humanity. God's word is living and active and I am blessed beyond measure to be having this amazing experience.

God has given me a beautiful understanding of Jn 3:16 that amazes me more and more each day.

Thank you again for your ministry. I continue to lift you and you team and your ministry up in



prayer.

I have asked the South England Conference Personal Ministries Director to check out your ministry and consider inviting you to come to visit us in the UK to share. We continue to pray for God's guidance in this.

May Our God continue to bless and keep you and your family and your ministry. -- England

Greetings. I had the special privilege of hearing Dr. Jennings speak in Sacramento a few weeks ago. (I introduced myself to him as someone employed by a ministry known for its, er, emphasis on "conservative Adventism"—but I wasn't spying!) Hearing his presentations came at a pivotal moment in my spiritual journey. This pivot began about nine months ago, when the fault lines inherent in my belief-set began to crack under questions that, I suspect, most reasonable people end up asking about God and His nature. These were questions I couldn't find answers to, and they shook my faith; I was unable let it go any longer and be satisfied. My Christian experience became distant, and I was afraid; the fear in me rose like thorns, pushing me away from Jesus. And then someone heard my questions and introduced me to Graham Maxwell. And then they introduced me to Dr. Jennings' teachings, and my life has totally changed.

While I am forever indebted to the ministry that brought me into the fold of Adventism, I can tell you that this new "present truth" message is far grander and life-changing than when I shifted from agnostic and nominal Christian to Adventism. It has radically altered my worldview because it reveals a God that makes sense. It is a revolution. I believe that, whether perfected or not yet perfected, Dr. Jennings' message is the final message that must go to the world. If any message could be called "righteousness by faith," as abused as that term is by the right and the left, this is that message. One reason is that Jennings' biblical message identifies a God who is different not just over a day or a duration in hell—but whose character isn't an impossible contradiction. It's made all the difference in the world, and it gives me hope.

My journey to know God isn't complete and will never be—but I walk this path now without fear. I see people differently, and the Holy Spirit burns in my heart. Many call Dr. Jennings' message false and compromising, but it isn't false because I've seen the fruits within my mind and body. It is not compromising, because in this message is the only road to holiness that makes any sense. No longer do I behold a pagan god who is always angry, always suspicious, and therefore, by its own nature, gives me sufficient excuse to bend others to my will by might or manipulation. Instead, I behold a God who is freeing and loving, always working for our good—giving me every reason to love my enemy even to my own death, just as Jesus pleads with us. God is good.



You have a supporter and friend. Thank you for the courage to stand among Pharisees and be stoned.-- California

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “From the earliest...” The lesson notes that Jesus chose humans to take part in preaching, teaching, and ministering. The lesson says this like it is almost a surprise, like it is something amazing that He would choose humans to participate in His gospel ministry.

Do you hear it almost implied that way or is it just me?

But when we understand God’s design law, and how reality actually works, it is no surprise at all. In fact, it is not only predictable that Jesus would choose humans, it is necessary—why?

What was Jesus able to do all by Himself, and what was He not able to do without human involvement?

- Jesus, singly and alone, procured the Remedy to sin.
- Jesus singly and alone perfected the human condition.
- Jesus fixed in the humanity He assumed what Adam broke.
- Another way to say it is, Jesus perfectly restored God’s law of love into humanity and purged the infection of fear and selfishness.
- Another way to say it is, Jesus developed a perfect human character!
- Jesus revealed the Father perfectly.
- Jesus defeated the devil by using His human brain and living a perfect human life.
- All this Jesus did without any help from humanity.

But, what can Jesus NOT do without human participation? Save (i.e. heal) any other human being. Why not?

Because the healing God wants is the healing of the inner man, the renewal of character to be like God. This takes the cooperation of the sentient being. Without the cooperation of the free-will being God’s power working in them would destroy them, i.e. destroy their individuality, erase their identity.

The only way for us as individuals to be restored to righteousness is for our active cooperation with God. Thus, Jesus chooses people to be part of His mission team. Because of several of God’s design laws, this is the only way it is possible. Can you name some of them?



- **The law of worship**—by beholding we are changed. We actually become like the God we worship. If we spend no time thinking, contemplating, admiring, loving, desiring, choosing, embracing and internalizing more and more of our God, we are not being changed.
- **The law of exertion.** If you want to get stronger you must exercise. By participating with God, by experience with Him, by trusting Him, by turning to Him, by talking with Him, by acting in harmony with His design and methods, by sharing His truths, by teaching His message, by living His principles all under the guidance and influence of the Holy Spirit we are transformed, renewed, healed.
- **The law of love.** The more you give the more you will receive. It is by giving we open our hearts to receive. Thus God's prescription to give, to give offerings, to give of our time and energy, to minister.
- **The law of liberty.** Love only exists and flourishes in an atmosphere of freedom. This is why God cannot heal or save any human without their cooperation and active participation.

In other words, our involvement in ministry is part of the plan to heal us.

This is taught in the parable of the talents, those who invest what they have will be given more, those who don't invest but bury their talents lose what they have. This is not an arbitrary law. It is not about money. It is about the abilities and talents we have been given. If we invest what we have been given, practice our art, music, math, reasoning, compassion, hospitality, or whatever ability we have been given, it will grow and our talents and abilities will increase. If, however, we bury our ability and don't exercise it, don't use it, well—if we don't use it we lose it!

So, it is no surprise at all that God has chosen humans to share in the gospel ministry—we need it far more than God does!

Read last paragraph, “Pride, doubt...” Do you know what obedience is in Bible terms? It is, in the New Testament Greek **πακούω** [*hupakouo* /hoop·ak·oo·o] which means hupa, from which we get hypo, as in hypoglycemia—low blood sugar, or hypotension—low blood pressure. It means low, under, or humble. And akouo, from which we get acoustical, to listen.

Thus Bible obedience is a humble willingness to listen and learn, to be corrected, to be educated, to have your understanding “set right” to have your operating system updated and the erroneous code replaced with accurate code. It means, developing a mind that loves truth, recognizes truth and assimilates truth at the earliest possible moment.



This requires we be won to trust, if we don't trust then we won't be open to be corrected, to have error removed. We will not have our data bases updated with accurate code!

I love this quote from *The Desire of Ages*:

The Comforter is called "the Spirit of truth." His work is to define and maintain the truth. He **first** dwells in the heart as **the Spirit of truth**, and thus He becomes the Comforter. **There is comfort and peace in the truth**, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. **It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind.** By directing men to **false standards**, he **misshapes the character**. Through the **Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul.** It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. {DA 671.1}

Thus the disciples when they were not listening, not open to be taught, redirected, educated, set right, were "disobedient."

What about us, we don't have to have every answer, or have every fact right, or know every question on every Bible quiz, but we have to have hearts that love truth and minds that can be taught, that are humble and willing to listen and learn—when the evidence is reasonable!

The traditional penal view of teaching focuses on behavior and claiming legal payments, and this leads to minds which become rigid and unwilling to learn. It develops attitudes of hardening hearts around a fixed set of doctrines or creeds and rejecting any advancing truth which would modify or change one's current understanding, thus even if one has a correct fact, one is a disobedient person. This is exemplified by the Pharisees in Christ's day who had the right Sabbath day, but rejected the Creator of the Sabbath—why? Because they focused on a legal religion of rules, rather than developing hearts that were willing to listen and be educated and led by advancing truth!

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "When one considers..." First, now that we understand design law, and what Jesus accomplished in His person, versus what He accomplishes in us, is it really surprising that Jesus would use human beings to aid Him, or do we realize there was no option if Jesus wanted to save other human beings?

Second—what are the incredible issues at stake?



Setting the entire universe right through revealing the truth about God's character of love!

Does humanity have any part to play in that revelation?

What was God's original design for humankind? To be what? In whose image was humanity created? God's and what would be the operating system designed and uploaded into humankind originally? Would it not be perfect love?

And what is another name for this operating system? God's law, which is a living law, God's law of love is the protocol upon which life is constructed, and cannot be understood written on stone. It was only written on stone, when it was no longer written in God's original repository—the hearts and minds of human beings!

Thus the new covenant—"I will write my laws on their hearts and minds..."

So, does humanity have a role to play in the incredible issues? What was revealed when Adam sinned? What questions could be raised by an enemy?

Perhaps that there was a manufacturer's defect, that God's creation, God's construction, God's design is flawed this is why we see so much pain, suffering and sin on earth.

Jesus overcame as a human—this reveals not only God's true character, but that there was NO manufacturer's defect. Adam was perfectly designed and built!

Further, God's methods, God's law, is so perfect, that even those who were born defective, born with fear and selfishness in their hearts, if they unite with Christ can have that old corrupt system overwritten by a new operating system, i.e. a new heart and right spirit, and we who were dead in trespass and sin can be brought to spiritual life and bring forth peaceable fruits of righteousness!

Here are a couple of interesting historical quotes I found while preparing this week:

The people of God are the repositories of his law, and he tells us that we are to be a separate and distinct people. {RH, January 4, 1887 par. 14}

So, at this time, there is a people whom God has made the repository of his law. [how is this statement heard by level four and below thinkers? We have the Sabbath law and we obey



the right rules, we are the guardians of the Sabbath and must protect it from violations and if you keep violating the Sabbath you will get the mark of the beast. How is it heard by level five and above? We are corrupt with fear and selfishness and we need to have our hearts and minds renewed to love God and others more than self so that “it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me.” The law of love must be written into our hearts and minds.] To those who obey them, the commandments of God are as a pillar of fire, lighting and leading the way to eternal salvation. But unto those who disregard them, they are as the clouds of night. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Better than all other knowledge is an understanding of the word of God. **In keeping his commandments there is great reward,** [what reward? It would be like saying in exercising, eating right, avoiding tobacco there is great reward—why? Because there is great reward in being healthy, and health comes from being in harmony with the law upon which all life and health and happiness is designed to function] and no earthly inducements should cause the Christian to waver for a moment in his allegiance. Riches, honor, and worldly pomp are but as dross that shall perish before the fire of God's wrath. {ST, April 1, 1880 par. 29}

So notice this quotation from *The Desire of Ages* regarding the role our healing from sin has in revealing the truth about God and His character of love!

Of the Spirit Jesus said, "He shall glorify Me." The Saviour came to glorify the Father by the demonstration of His love; so the Spirit was to glorify Christ by revealing His grace to the world. **The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people.** {DA 671.3}

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “Some time later...” Does this mean they were “inspired by God?”

- Did they know all things?
- Did they answer every question correctly?
- Did they win every battle and confrontation with evil?
- Were they infallible?

What about these same Apostles after Pentecost, were they inspired by God?

- Were they then infallible?
- Did they ever make any mistakes? (What about Peter having to be corrected by Paul?) Did that make Peter's epistles less inspired?



- What about Paul's writings, were they without any human error? What about 1Cor 1:14-15? "I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ so no one can say that you were baptized into my name." Was this an inspired statement? Oh, quickly read verse 16 "(Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.)"

What is the point? Was Paul relying on his own memory or was the Holy Spirit having trouble remembering? Inspiration is not divine dictation. We do not have God as a writer expressed in Scripture. Inspiration inspires fallible human beings with new characters, new motives, new wisdom and insight, not with omniscience, or perfect biology, or infallibility. Thus, the Bible teaches, each person is to be fully persuaded in their own minds. We are not to surrender our thinking to others, even inspired persons—consider the old and the young prophet in the Old Testament!

We must think out the truths for ourselves,

"We must study the truth for ourselves. No man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who he is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a criterion for us. We are to counsel together, and to be subject one to another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us, in order to learn what is truth. Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment. We must individually develop a character that will stand the test in the day of God." *Testimonies to Ministers* 109,110; first published in *Gospel Workers*, 1892 ed., pp. 128,129; cf. *2RH* 311:3:1 (*RH*, June 18, 1889); *CW* 45; *ST*, Feb. 6, 1893

What is this passage saying? Why must we study for ourselves? Why are others not to do our thinking for us?

For the same reason others are not to do our physical exercises for us; why is it others are not to do our physical exercises for us? Because we cannot grow stronger if we don't exercise, and our minds cannot grow stronger, our characters cannot grow stronger if we don't think for ourselves.

But think about the analogy of physical exercise, is it okay to get a coach, a trainer, and instructor to guide you in exercise? Absolutely, but at the end of the day you must still do the exercises for yourself.



Likewise having a teacher someone who can present ideas to your is okay, as long as you think them through for yourselves and only believe when you are able to comprehend, just like you did when you learned math or any other subject.

There is real danger in taking the position that we should believe based on the authority of the person who told us:

"There are today **thousands of professors of religion** who can give no other reason for points of faith which they hold **than that they were so instructed by their religious leaders**. They pass by the Saviour's teachings almost unnoticed, and place implicit confidence in the words of the ministers. **But are ministers infallible?** How can we trust our souls to their guidance unless we know from God's word that they are light bearers?" *4SP* 413-415 (1884); *Great Controversy* 595-597 (1888); *RH*, June 7, 1906

"**All whom God has blessed with reasoning powers are to become intellectual Christians. They are not requested to believe without evidence;** therefore Jesus has enjoined upon all to search the Scriptures. Let the ingenious inquirer, and the one who would know for himself what is truth, **exert his mental powers** to search out the truth as it is in Jesus. Any neglect here is at the peril of the soul. **We must know individually the prescribed conditions of entering into eternal life. . . . We cannot allow these questions to be settled for us by another's mind,** or another's judgment. . . . We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to ministers, to idle traditions, to human authorities, or to pretensions. . . . **The Lord positively demands of every Christian an intelligent knowledge of the Scriptures.**" *Review and Herald*, March 8, 1887 (*2RH* 117:1:1 - 2:0); *The Medical Missionary*, May 1, 1892

Why does the Lord positively demand this? For the same reason He positively demands we breathe—He is saying "I want you to know how life is constructed and live in harmony with that Design. Therefore, I want you to know me and my Father because life is built to operate upon the law of love, an expression of our character. This design has been recorded in Scripture along with the evidence of what happens when our designed is broken. So study for yourselves, understand how reality actually works and choose life, choose to live in harmony with our design!"

Read last paragraph, "One would not be..." There is much truth in this paragraph. Truly the world has suffered throughout history from the abuses of people calling themselves Christian.

What do you think the authors mean by those who go on a mission for Jesus that don't know Him? Who would you think they would include in that group?



Do you think if a person goes to a denominational training program i.e. seminary, they are considered having been taught by Jesus?

Does going to seminary and getting a degree in theology mean one has spent time with Jesus learning from Him?

What criteria does our church use for choosing leadership? Is it spending time with Jesus or getting degree in theology, or would they say both?

If Peter and Andrew, James and John—four fishermen, who had no formal seminary training, as well as Luke—a physician, and Matthew—a tax collector, we might call him an accountant today ☺, if these men were in our church today could they be elected to conference president? Is there something wrong with a system that would preclude Christ's own Apostles from leadership?

How can one know if someone has spent time with Jesus and learned of Him? Are there evidences? What would those be?

What did Jesus say? "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Jn 13:35

Here is another interesting quote:

...love is the evidence of their discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples," said Jesus, "if ye have love one to another." **When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love,** they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. **Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted.** It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart. {DA 678.1}

Notice the focus of Jesus was on character development—there was not a test of creeds, of holding to right doctrines and as this thought came to me I found this very powerful quote, what do you think?

The apostle showed that **religion does not consist in rites and ceremonies, creeds and theories.** If it did, the natural man could understand it by investigation, as he understands



worldly things. Paul taught that **religion is a practical, saving energy, a principle wholly from God, a personal experience of God's renewing power upon the soul.** {AA 451.3}

He showed how Moses had pointed Israel forward to Christ as that Prophet whom they were to hear; how all the prophets had testified of **Him as God's great remedy for sin**, the guiltless One who was to bear the sins of the guilty. He did not find fault with their observance of forms and ceremonies, but showed that while they maintained the ritual service with great exactness, they were rejecting Him who was the antitype of all that system. {AA 451.4}

Levels 1-4 thinkers get stuck on the symbols, the rituals, the rules, the creeds, the do's and don'ts, the behaviors and fail to see the reality to which all God-given rituals, symbols, metaphors and parables point. And that reality is first and foremost Jesus and then to the design protocols upon which all creation is constructed to operate!

What do you think is the number one ploy Satan has used to co-opt people who profess to be followers of Christ into actually misrepresenting God? I think it is by infecting their minds with a wrong conception of God's law, getting them to believe God's law functions no different than human law, thus all the methods and attributes of Satan, compelling power, coercive power, punishing power etc. come in and are taught as if these actions are of God.

I was at the town hall meeting in Atlanta a few weeks ago in which the ACA was discussed. One of the panelists argued for the government to do a massive redistribution of wealth in order to provide equity in health care to the poor and disadvantaged.

I made comments then about how there are two general ways to redistribute wealth but have thought about it more:

- One way is through charitable giving—those who have, from love in their hearts see the less fortunate and actively choose to give to help those in need. This is God's method, taught by Jesus Himself. In this method those who give are blessed with ever increasing love, grace, compassion and Christlike character development in the act of giving. Those who receive are blessed with thankfulness, their hearts are warmed in appreciation knowing that what is given is not earned, is not a right, is an expression of love for they are valuable and this inspires thanksgiving in their hearts and a desire for application of love in giving to others and improving oneself to become a giver. It is by love that love is awakened in the heart.
- But there is another way to redistribute wealth—it is the way of the beast, the way of earthly governments which the Bible describes as beasts. It is by coercive force, taking from people not yet willing to give, forcing them to give their resources to people that someone else has



deemed worthy of receiving those resources. In this system those who have their wealth taken are cheated of the privilege of giving, rather than love and compassion growing in their hearts, often there is resentment, a feeling of being exploited and taken advantage of. Such actions plant seeds of discord into the heart and cause division rather than unity in society. Those who receive the redistributed wealth, often rather than feeling appreciative and thankful, feel they are entitled, that it is their right and demand more and more from others, and in fact get angry and protest when more is not given—cause further division rather than unity in society.

We cannot win God's causes by using Satan's methods! There is a reason that the church and state are to be separated. The state always uses Satan's methods, and even when their goal is a good goal, like helping those in need, they will do it with methods that ultimately contaminate the hearts of humans rather than heal their hearts.

We have a message to free people from fear and selfishness, and it is the truth about God's character of love, which is also the law of love, which is the protocols upon which reality is built, which is design law. No earthly government operates upon this law—this is the church's responsibility. We are to be the light that shines in the darkness of this world showing a better way!

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Though we don't fully..." Remember what Paul said in Romans 8, that all nature groans under the weight of sin. What do you think this means?

What about the parable of Jesus that an enemy has planted tares into the field, what is implied?

Do you agree with this historical perspective?

Christ never planted the seeds of death in the system. Satan planted these seeds when he tempted Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge which meant disobedience to God. **Not one noxious plant was placed in the Lord's great garden, but after Adam and Eve sinned, poisonous herbs sprang up.** In the parable of the sower the question was asked the master, "Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?" The master answered, "An enemy hath done this" (Matthew 13:27, 28). **All tares are sown by the evil one. Every noxious herb is of his sowing, and by his ingenious methods of amalgamation he has corrupted the earth with tares.** {2SM 288.2}



Did Satan only alter plant life on earth, or animals and humans as well? Is all creation corrupted? Genetic defects are in all living things, God did not put them there; these are a result of sin.

Should we feel bad or guilty because of this?

Recently, I received some feedback from a group of individuals who were advocating for LGBT Adventists. They reported that my presentation on homosexuality in the Christian world, on the *God and Your Church* DVD, was generally experienced as very positive and helpful, but some felt I was calling them defective and made them feel bad all over again. One person expressed the idea that sexual identity variation is not a deviation that resulted from sin, but something that was built into the genome by God.

I personally reject this view, and view all biological degradation from God's design as being a result of sin, being born:

- blind
- deaf
- Down's syndrome
- Autistic
- Gay or lesbian or chimeras or AIS

Now, some groups have begun advocating that these are not defects but simple variations. Some deaf individuals resist interventions that might cure deafness because the deaf have their own language and culture. Some with high functioning autism are arguing this isn't a defect just a difference in brain wiring that confers certain advantages.

I am convinced that when all things are made new, there will be no person in heaven who is blind, deaf, paralyzed, autistic, mentally retarded, gay, lesbian, transgendered, old, weak, wrinkled, bald, suffering with arthritis, or any other deviation that is not perfect.

So, I say to someone who is blind or deaf, do you feel you are less of a human being, cursed by God, not loved by Him, not useful in His cause? I hope not, because being blind or deaf has no bearing on your worth as His child—likewise having some issue which confuses one's sexual identity has no bearing on one's value and worth as God's child. If you are Gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered, you need to stop feeling bad because of that condition and start realizing you are a child of God, and the issue is one of character, not biology! All of us have defective biology!



Read last paragraph, “Though the lessons...” What do you think of the idea of the “extent of Jesus’ power?”

When Jesus was on earth what was the extent of Jesus’ power?

Was Jesus using His own innate divine power? Jesus said of His own self He can do nothing—He was a human and was dependent upon His Father.

What about Samson—did Samson have supernatural strength of his own accord? So, what Samson did was dependent upon God. But, while Samson was endowed with that strength was Samson left free to use it as Samson chose?

What about Adam in Eden, did Adam in Eden have powers over nature? Remember what we read in the references last week? Where did Adam’s ability to have power over nature originate? So Adam’s abilities were from God, but did God control Adam’s use of those abilities?

What about the abilities you and I possess, music, art, intelligence or other abilities, do these originate in us or do they come from God? But, are we left free to develop them and use them how we see fit?

What about Jesus when on earth? I do not think Jesus had the same strength and innate abilities that Adam had. Jesus however was able to be the conduit of God’s life giving energy as manifested in many settings, but so were the Apostles. The question is how much of that power was endowed, like Samson’s strength, or our talents, and how much was special event driven conduction—like miracle healings? We don’t really know.

In the bottom green section it states, “Though we can see the reality of the Lord’s power, even over nature, the one place where He will not force that power is on our won will.”

Well said! Why not?

So, how many doctrines in Christianity are eliminated if we apply this truth?

- Any doctrine of God inflicting punishment (not discipline) upon sinners is eliminated
- Any doctrine in which pain and suffering originate in God
- Any doctrine in which God executes the wicked for sin (eternal death not temporary sleep—which is not punishment but therapeutic intervention)
- Any doctrine in which God must be appeased, propitiated or assuaged
- Any doctrine in which legal payments must be made



All such doctrines violate this idea of God apply His power to our will.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson focuses on the final journey to Jerusalem, right before the last supper, and the disciples were arguing over who was going to be the greatest.

Read last paragraph, “Perhaps the most...” What lessons do we learn from this?

Did the disciples know what they were doing was wrong? Were they trying to hide it from Jesus? Had they already, at some time in the past, been shown by Jesus their attitudes were wrong? Were they stumbling back into a known sin and repeating it? Were they rejected or cast off by Jesus?

How many have struggled with sin in their lives? Sin that they know is sin, sin that they have been convicted of in the past, and sin which they are repeating?

What lesson do you learn from this?

- Jesus doesn’t cast you off
- The issues isn’t one of legal standing
- The issue is one of changing oneself, hardening one’s heart, searing one’s conscience, damaging one’s character.
- It is just like a doctor patient relationship, if you are non-compliant the doctor doesn’t worsen your blood sugar if you are a diabetic and eat candy, or refuse to take your medicine, but you get worse and yet the doctor still works to heal all the damage. But this requires one to understand reality through design law and move past the false imposed law construct.

THURSDAY

The lesson focuses on the two men on the road to Emmaus and their encounter with Jesus who took them through the evidences of Scripture before revealing Himself to them.

Read fifth paragraph, “Notice that Jesus...” The lesson seems to be using this encounter of Jesus as proof for using only Scripture. However, there is a reason that only Scripture was used here, what is it?

Because this encounter was about demonstrating to these men that the Bible is true and accurate in regards to Jesus being the promised Messiah; it was only in Scripture one found the prophecies of the



Messiah and God's plan of salvation laid out. Thus, Jesus used the Scripture in this particular encounter exclusively because of the truth that needed to be taught.

However, Jesus also used the two other threads repeatedly in His teaching of others. He constantly used nature and science, and taught people by experience, particularly their actual experience with Him. What did the spies say when they reported back to the Pharisees? No man speaks like Him—in other words they had an experience with Jesus and based on that experience they were changed. Doubting Thomas Jesus said place your hand in my side, stop doubting, believe—based on what in that setting?

We must integrate all the threads, not exclude two.

In the green section it states, “How, then, can we guard ourselves against any type of thinking that would cause us to question the authority of Scripture?”

What is the authority of Scripture? Is the Scripture an authoritative source of:

- Mathematics
- Physics
- Astronomy
- Medicine
- Dentistry
- Nursing

What is the authority of Scripture? It is the accurate and authoritative record of God's dealing with the rebellion against His design.

The Scripture is NOT—a codebook of rules listing how one should live and act. It is a revelation of God's character, which reveals the principles upon which one should live and act!

The Scripture is NOT—a legal document with a legal constitution or rights we may access and exercise. It is a revelation of God's law of love, the protocols upon which creation is constructed.

The Scripture is NOT—a mystical book with secret phrases, incantations, or magic mantras that we can learn to gain power or salvation. It is God's revelation of His secret plan to heal and restore all who trust Him back into His original design.



The Scripture is NOT—a powerful talisman, lucky charm, or amulet that one can carry with them to ward off evil powers or protect from painful events. It is the revelation of God’s power of love and truth to free the mind from such superstitious thinking and enlighten with reality based understanding, harmonized with science and experience that leads us back to the true knowledge of God.

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Dr. Jennings has been named a ***Champion of Health*** by True Health Broadcasting Network in association with Health Institute for Preventive Care, Access, Research and Education (HIPCARE) and True Health TV and will be presented with the ***“Legacy Champion of Health”*** award at a Gala on Saturday, April 9, 2016, at the Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC), Atlanta, Georgia.

This award is being presented to Dr. Jennings, as it states in the award letter, “because of your unselfish commitment to community health exemplified by your leadership in the community and as author of *“The God-shaped Brain”* and *“Could it be this Simple? A Biblical Model for Healing the Mind”*”.

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website: http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

February 20, 2016: Class will meet at Hamilton Community Church due to the Courthouse being unavailable.

March 11-12, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Village Church, College Place, WA.

April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX. I want to give special thanks to Rudie Bivens, his daughter Christina, and Dann Wyatt, who graciously took the time to drive me (and my rental car) back to San Francisco from St. Helena after an all day seminar in which I was exhausted. THANK YOU!



Rebellion and Redemption 1Q 2016 Lesson 9

The Great Controversy and the Early Church

SABBATH

Read memory text: “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.” Acts 4:13 NIV

What do you think is meant by their courage? To whom were they speaking? Who was trying to silence them? What were the potential consequences of speaking out? (They faced the religious and political authorities who threatened to beat, imprison and kill them)

Do you think they had fear? If yes, what enabled them to overcome their fear? If no, why not? Isn't fear a normal human response in such circumstances?

So what enabled them to overcome their fear?

Taking the focus off themselves and focusing on something more than self—what enables us to do this?

- Love—for another person or for God—the love of a mother for her child will cause the mother to sacrifice self without thought if she perceives the life the child is in danger
 - soldiers in combat—the reason they go into harms way is love for their brother in arms
 - Love activates the anterior cingulate cortex and calms the fear circuitry—amygdala
- Understanding reality in larger terms and operating within that reality—Matthew 10:28 the Great Controversy perspective that a person reconciled to Christ is beyond killing, they can only shut down the body, they cannot destroy the individuality, the personhood. In other words the perceived danger isn't exactly as everyone else perceives it.
 - Our understanding can be false, be delusional even, but if it is of a certain nature it can still take away fear—consider the Branch Davidians, or those who drank the Kool-Aid in Jonestown...
- Trust—trusting someone to handle the outcomes and problems for you, trusting someone has your back
 - Our trust can be placed well or can be placed poorly, but trusting in something larger than self can alleviate fear
- Having a mission, a purpose which we believe is important enough that we are willing to give ourselves for it—and this can either be good or evil.



- consider suicide bombers

Notice—all these actions take the focus off of self, thus fear decreases.

So Peter and John had courage—why did they have courage? They had all four:

- They loved God and loved others
- They understood reality in it's larger Great Controversy setting
- They trusted Jesus with their lives
- They had a mission, a purpose, larger than themselves
- Thus, they were not focusing on self!

What about the second part of the memory verse, that these ordinary, unschooled men, were able to know truth and speak words of truth beyond the understanding of the religious leaders and seminary professors. How was it possible and what does it mean for us today?

- Truth is not the exclusive property of a elite group—sometimes called the clergy
- Truth is available to every human being, what is the only requirement? A humble willingness to learn, to think, to be taught, to allow God to reveal and teach you.

I found this quote in *The Desire of Ages* this week, what do you think?

Christ affirmed that **His word was in itself a key** which would **unlock the mystery** to those who were prepared to receive it. It had a self-commending power, and this was the secret of the spread of His kingdom of truth. He desired Pilate to understand that **only by receiving and appropriating truth could his ruined nature be reconstructed.** {DA 727.3}

What do you understand this to be saying?

Jesus said, “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” Jn 8:32 Free from what? Lies—what lies hold us in bondage?

How do we assimilate the truth? What Bible metaphors are used to teach the assimilation of truth?

- Eating the flesh of the sacrificial lamb, which Christ transferred to Himself when He said that we must eat His flesh—which is what? -The truth, the Word!
- Eating manna—Jesus is the bread of heaven
- Eating the unleavened bread during Passover, or during communion and drinking the wine

What do all of these metaphorical examples have in common and what lesson are they teaching?



- They are eating—what law does eating operating upon?
- Design law—which is the body must have digestible molecules to provide energy and building blocks to sustain itself, repair, grow, heal—what is the lesson applied to our spiritual need?
- What happens if we eat a meal once a week?
- When we eat, do we think about consuming food as a legal work we must do in order to be healthy? “I can’t believe all these legal requirements. I have to eat every day....”
- What about when we consider daily devotional time with God? Do we consider it work? A checklist, a duty, a penance?
 - What if some say, “I don’t study the Bible, that is salvation by works, I’m saved by grace.”
- Does eating food for your body and why we do it, give us some insight into why Daniel prayed three times a day?
- Can people eat food that tastes good but is not nutritious and instead of building the body up, actually tears it down?
- Can people do spiritual ingestion, partake of spiritual activities, internalize books, songs, other ideas that instead of building up the character actual damage the mind?
- How do we know what to put in our bodies? What is healthy and what is not? Understanding God’s design—the more we understand of God’s design for life, the easier and easier it is to determine what is healthy and what is not
- What about what to put into our minds? This is one of the reasons I stopped listening to certain preachers, because they almost always misrepresented God, presented God in some way that perpetuated one of Satan’s lies about God.
 - Remember the integrative evidence-based approach, use the three threads and always come back to Jesus. If something is being taught about God that is contradictory to what Jesus revealed, then something is wrong!

We have reasoned out God’s Word, thinking through the metaphors to come to a reality based conclusion that the flesh and blood represent assimilating into our being the truth that comes from Christ. Now, here are some historical quotes:

Those who believe present truth are to practice the truth, live the truth. **They are to study the Word and eat the Word, which means eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God.** They are to bring that Word, which is Spirit and life, into their daily, practical life. It is the bread from heaven, and it will give life to the world.—Letter 34, 1896. {Christ Triumphant 247.5}



In the study of the Bible the converted soul eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God, which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words, that are spirit and life.”
Fundamentals of Christian Education 378

How little children are educated to **study the Bible as the word of God, and feed upon its truths, which are the flesh and blood of the Son of God!** "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. **Whoso eat[s] My flesh, and drink[s] My blood [that is, continues to receive the words of Christ, and practice them], ha[s] eternal life;** and I will raise him up at the last day. {FE 385.3}

Consider a computer operating system with corrupt code—what is needed? Our minds have many corrupt ideas, only by internalizing truth based ideas can our minds be healed!

Read first paragraph, “The greatest barrier...” How do preconceived opinions create a barrier?

Our preconceived opinions are like filters which determine how we hear and understand data as it comes into our minds.

For instance, if we have the preconceived opinion that a person is an ISIS agent, will that impact how we hear what they are saying?

What do we have preconceived ideas about:

- God’s law
- What sin is
- Why sin is wrong

Will these preconceived ideas alter how we understand the plan of salvation and the purpose of the Cross?

Many of you have told me that you know people who reject what we teach because some person told them that I teach heresy. But these same people have come to believe what we teach and get excited about these very same truths when they hear it from someone else...why? Because their preconceived ideas taint their ability to evaluate the evidence for themselves.



SUNDAY

Imagine you were alive 2000 years ago, Jesus has been crucified, but is now risen from the dead. You are among the people to whom He has appeared—what would you like to ask Him?

- What can we do to hasten the end of sin?
- What was the earth like before sin?
- Are we in a time dilation field?
- What can I do to help?
- Can you fix me?
- What causes people to radiate light as they come into closer unity with you?
- Or would you simply like to give Jesus a hug and tell him you are sorry that He has had to suffer all that He has?

The last paragraph points out that even after the disciples had seen Jesus for themselves they needed something else before they were ready to go and evangelize the world—what? The indwelling of the Holy Spirit—why?

Here is how our church has taught about the Holy Spirit:

The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead,** who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. **It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature.** Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. {DA 671.2}

Consider the battle between Christ and Satan:

- It started in heaven with Satan misrepresenting God's character by attacking the legitimacy of Jesus and the position Jesus held in heaven
- It spread to earth by attacking the trustworthiness of God
- After Adam sinned, God has been working to save humanity and Satan has been working to obstruct that work



- In OT times we see the back and forth between these forces working on the hearts of men. Satan seeking to get humanity to close their hearts to God—and thus obstruct God’s healing plan; and God working to win humanity back to trust in Him.
- We see when Jesus was born that Satan tried to have Him killed, but failed.
- Satan tempted Jesus but failed.
- Satan had Jesus killed, but failed to destroy Him and Jesus conquered death and every other obstacle and fixed what sin did to the species human. Jesus Christ is the Remedy to our terminal sin-condition!
- But now that Jesus has achieved the Remedy, the Remedy still needs application into the hearts/minds of sinful humans, without that application it doesn’t do us any good, so what is Satan’s strategy at this time in history?
- To get people to either accept a false remedy, which has no power to actually transform—they have a form of godliness but deny the power...
- OR—to deny the Agency through which the true Remedy is applied to the believer—to teach the Holy Spirit is not real, there is no Trinity.
 - This idea that there is no Holy Spirit undermine God’s character of love, as love cannot exist in a singularity (in fact a singularity is sometimes called a black hole, which sucks everything in and gives nothing back).
 - The idea that there is no Holy Spirit implants lies into the minds of human beings that prevent them from experiencing the indwelling Spirit, which would heal and transform them. After all, if you don’t believe there is a Holy Spirit would you ask God for the indwelling of the Spirit?
 - There is also another false remedy and that is accepting a counterfeit spirit which gives wonderful emotional experience, but doesn’t transform the character to be like Jesus’!

MONDAY

Pentecost—what happened at that first Pentecost after Christ’s resurrection?

The Holy Spirit came upon them and they saw something—what?

Streams of fire—what kind of fire? Did anyone get burned? Did the building catch fire? Was this the fire a fire of combustion?

How many streams? Two, why two? Any significance?



What are the two main attributes used to describe the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of....Truth and Love. The two streams were the streams of truth and love!

And what do truth and love do?

What does truth burn out? Lies!

What does love burn out? Selfishness!

From where does truth burn out lies and love burn out selfishness?

Do you see why we need the Holy Spirit?

Read bottom green section, “Some who had...” What is the power of God to change hearts?

What power is a power that never corrupts and never wears out and never corrodes?

Let’s examine this idea of power—what kinds of power are there?

- Coercive power of various kinds—physical power with threats, intimidation, punishment—is this type of power reliable? Will the use of this type of power to gain converts result in reliable, stable, trustworthy, unshakable followers? In other words if you get converts this way do they stay loyal, will they stand against all opposition? What will cause them to collapse?
 - A bigger threat!
 - Or a better inducement!
 - Love
- Inducing power—the power of bribes, payoffs, promotions, money and power, advancement, praise, adoration—does this power result in reliable, stable, trustworthy, unshakable outcomes? Will people stay loyal who follow for what they can get against any and all opposition? What will cause them to collapse?
 - A serious threat!
 - Or a better payoff!
 - Love
- The power of lies—deceit and deception, will getting people to join your cause based on lies result in predictable, reliable, trustworthy outcomes? Will people stay loyal against all opposition? What will cause them to collapse?
 - The truth—as the truth exposes the lies they will turn on you!
 - Will threats work? Not if they still value and believe the lie—consider those in cults and extremist groups



- Will bribes work? Not if they value and believe the lie
 - Love—perhaps...love may cause one to act right but still believe the lie
- The power of love! To be loved and to love others genuinely more than self, does this result in reliable, stable, trustworthy, unshakable outcomes? Will those who follow be loyal against all opposition? What will cause them to collapse?
 - Lies—lies **believed** break the circle of love and trust!
- The power of Truth & Love—does truth combined with love result in something impenetrable? Yes—Lies cannot defeat understood and experienced truth, fear cannot overcome love founded upon truth! Only those who are partakers of God's nature of truth and love, which is received through the indwelling Spirit of truth and love, are transformed into beings who are unshakable. They are sealed of God, which is being so settled into the truth, but intellectually and spiritually, that they cannot be moved.

Do you see again why we need the Holy Spirit?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “The priests...” What is happening? How do those who have gone on record, writing, preaching, speaking about a certain viewpoint react when their views are exposed as false?

If they are Christlike in character, they humble themselves, step back, correct their previous teachings and move forward in the truth. But, if they instead are driven by pride, by a need to justify themselves, to prove self right, they react with hostility and anger and seek to destroy the message and messenger who exposes their ideas as false.

Have any of you experienced this?

We have friends from all over the world who write us and tell us as they share these views about God's true character of love in their churches certain people become angry, upset and begin attacking them and using authority or other intimidating tactics to try and stop the truth.

Our position has always been that the truth loses nothing by close investigation. We have no need to try and silence others, let them share their ideas, we are happy to discuss with them and share our ideas and let the people decide which is more reasonable, which is more evidenced based.

However, those who hold to positions for which the evidence doesn't support get threatened at such an approach and instead will seek to silence those who teach truths that expose their errors.



WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “The disciples...” Is this surprising? Is it surprising that those who oppose the truth would make up lies and spread them about Stephen? Why is this not surprising?

In fact, is this predictable?

“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Mt 5:11,12

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. Mt 24:9

How could Jesus predict this? Was it only because God lives outside time and can see the future? Or is there another reason He could predict this?

Can you predict what will happen if:

- I let go of this pen?
- A person smokes two packs of cigarettes per day?
- If a man cheats on his spouse?
- If someone violates liberty in a relationship?

God’s laws are constants upon which reality is built—understanding those laws and how they work, one can predict what will happen when someone violates those laws.

- It is predictable that selfish people will exploit others.
- It is predictable that when fear increases people who do not have love in their hearts become more selfish.
 - What happens in society when people are feeling scared for their lives? What happened in New Orleans after Katrina?
- It is predictable, that the more effectively we present God and His kingdom of love, the more those who hold to the other view will work to stop us.

Read bottom green section? “Sometimes we see...” Have you ever experienced evil? How do you understand it when it appears evil seems to win?



Understanding the nature and character of sin will prevent you from ever thinking evil can win—evil can never win, it is impossible, it would be like saying death results in better life, or disease brings better health, or sewage brings fresh water.

When you understand God’s design law, you understand that the person perpetrating evil is in a self-destructive spiral down, there is no good outcome for evil.

THURSDAY

Read Acts 10:9-16 (from the NIV):

⁹ About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. ¹³ Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”

¹⁴ “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.”

¹⁵ The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”

¹⁶ This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

What is the lesson? Is this vision about food? What is it about?

Here it is from *The Remedy*:

⁹ The next day around noon, as they were approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to talk with God. ¹⁰ He was hungry, and smelling the aroma of the meal being cooked, was longing to eat. Just then, he had a vision ¹¹ in which he saw the skies open, and an object—that appeared to be a large sheet—being lowered to the earth by its four corners. ¹² It contained every known animal, reptile and bird. ¹³ A voice instructed him, “Peter, sacrifice any of these and eat.”

¹⁴ But Peter protested, “Lord, there must be some mistake! I have never sacrificed nor eaten anything impure or not on the approved script.”

¹⁵ The voice spoke to him again. “Don’t reject as ‘unapproved’ or ‘impure’ what God has healed and made clean.”



¹⁶This vision was repeated three times, and then the sheet disappeared into the sky.

What is the lesson being taught?

The bottom green asks, “First, how can we recognize the prejudices that we hold, and, second, in the power of God, how can we be purged of those prejudices?”

What power can purge us from prejudices? The power of truth and love!

What truth? That all human beings are descendants of Adam, and all of us are suffering with the same condition and all are in need of the same Remedy and that Remedy is found only in Jesus Christ!

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Dr. Jennings has been named a ***Champion of Health*** by True Health Broadcasting Network in association with Health Institute for Preventive Care, Access, Research and Education (HIPCARE) and True Health TV and will be presented with the ***“Legacy Champion of Health”*** award at a Gala on Saturday, April 9, 2016, at the Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC), Atlanta, Georgia.

This award is being presented to Dr. Jennings, as it states in the award letter, “because of your unselfish commitment to community health exemplified by your leadership in the community and as author of *“The God-shaped Brain”* and *“Could it be this Simple? A Biblical Model for Healing the Mind”*”.

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website: http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

February 20, 2016: Class will meet at Hamilton Community Church due to the Courthouse being unavailable.

March 11-12, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Village Church, College Place, WA.

April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.

The Remedy App Features (Be sure to close and reopen for updates)

1. Touch a verse and a blue button pops up at the bottom right corner of the screen. Touch the button to see a list of the following options you can do with a verse:
 1. Share the text via SMS text, email, social networks, etc.
 2. Add a note to the verse. If a note is added to a verse a yellow note pad icon will appear next to the verse. You can see a list of your verses with notes under the Notes menu at the bottom (2nd button from the right). You can also delete your notes by opening up the specific note and touching the Delete button at the top or you can edit your note too and touch the Save button to save the changes. You can search your notes’ text too by using the top search field on the notes screen.
 3. Bookmark the verse as a favorite. A red bookmark ribbon will appear next to the verse. You can access your bookmarked verses under the bookmark menu at the bottom of the



screen (2nd button from the left). On iOS you can delete your bookmarks here why swiping left on a line in the list of bookmarked verses.

4. Copy the verse' text to your clipboard.
5. Highlight the verse in different colors or delete the highlight by selecting the red X.
2. You can select multiple verses too by touching different ones and then touching the blue options button to see a list of options you can do with the list of verses you selected.
3. You can unselect a verse by touching it again and it will then become unselected.
4. Use the left and right arrows buttons at the bottom menu to go from chapter to chapter.
5. To search the Bible you can use the top right icon that brings up the search screen.
6. To see a list of settings for the app you can touch the gear icon on the top left. It will take you to the search screen which will let you change font size, turn on and off red letters for Christ's words, turn on and off nighttime reading mode (dark background), turn on and off paragraphs by showing 1 verse per line and turn on and off justified text. You can also share the app with friends via email, SMS text, social networks, etc. The Android version has a few more settings options too.
7. To go to a specific Bible reference touch the middle top menu of the app where the Bible book and chapter name text is located. It will then bring up a screen of a list of Bible books where you can select a book and drill down to a chapter and verse.
8. When you exit the app the app will save the last chapter you were reading.



2016 Q1 Rebellion and Redemption Lesson 10

Paul and the Rebellion

SABBATH

“When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory’ ” (1 Corinthians 15:54, NIV).

Does this text trigger anything in your minds? What do we understand “death” to be? [See John 17:3.] From the Lesson:

“But as anyone who has read Paul knows, the apostle’s emphasis has always been on Christ and His ultimate victory for us. However much Satan succeeded in overcoming God’s covenant people through the centuries, the devil utterly failed against Jesus, and in Jesus all the covenant promises have been fulfilled, thus ensuring salvation for all who claim it in faith and obedience, Jew and Gentile. Christ’s faithfulness also ensures the ultimate demise of Satan (Heb. 2:14) and the end of the great controversy.”

Read this paragraph through the lens of “imposed” law. What does it tell us through this lens?

Now read it through the lens of “natural” law. Does it tell us something else?

SUNDAY

Adam and Jesus

What was Adam & Eve’s primary task after creation? To reveal God’s Character and Government to the on looking universe.

Since they failed, what was needed? To reveal God’s Character and Government to the on looking universe, AND a healing remedy for mankind.

If Adam needed Eve to reveal God’s government, why didn’t Jesus marry?

What does it mean to be “spared from God’s last judgment against sin”? [1st paragraph].

Romans 5: 12-21 from the Remedy

Therefore, the infection of distrust of God, which deformed humanity's heart and mind with selfishness and fear, and which results only in death, infected the human race when Adam



accepted Satan's lies about God and broke trust with him. This infection of fear and selfishness is inherited by all human beings, so all are born infected.¹³ This is revealed by the fact that before the written law was given, the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness was already present in the world. But this infection of distrust, fear and selfishness is not diagnosable without the law.¹⁴ Nevertheless, even without being diagnosed as infected with this terminal condition, humans still died, all the way from the time of Adam to Moses—even those who did not break a specific command, like Adam did—revealing that the problem is the infected state of our minds and not a legal issue with God. Adam, the first man, being the conduit through which the infection entered humanity, also represents the one man who is the conduit of the antidote that cures all those who accept it.

¹⁵But the gift of the antidote is not like the infection. For if everyone is born infected with a terminal condition because of the choice of Adam, how incredibly effective must the antidote supplied by Christ be, since it cures all who take it!¹⁶ Again, the gift of the antidote is not like the result of the breach of trust. Adam's breach of trust infected all humanity, therefore all humanity is diagnosed as sick and dying. This occurred without each individual choosing to be infected; but the antidote, which came after humanity had been severely damaged and deformed by selfishness and sin, brought cleansing, purification, health and complete restoration.¹⁷ If, by the choice of one man's distrust, selfishness and death permeated all humanity, how much more will those who accept the Remedy that Christ has achieved experience restored trust and complete healing to live forever with God!

¹⁸Therefore, just as Adam's distrust infected humanity with the fatal condition of fear and selfishness, so too Christ's choice to sacrifice self achieved the life-giving Remedy for all humanity.¹⁹ Just as Adam's choice infected the human race with a terminal condition, so too Christ's perfect life has brought the Remedy to heal all who accept it.

²⁰The written law was added so that the infection of distrust and selfishness could be more easily seen and diagnosed. As the exposure of sin and selfishness increased, God's willingness to heal increased all the more,²¹ so that, just as distrust and selfishness brought deformity and death, even more importantly God's gracious Remedy, brought by Jesus Christ, results in complete healing and life eternal.

Does this passage give us any insights in to the Great Controversy? Did you read any other versions/paraphrases?

From the lesson: *“Even the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai could not stop death and the sin problem. The law only clarified what sin is. It was not the answer to sin. The problem of sin and death could only be solved through the sacrifice of Jesus. Jesus paid the debt through the “gracious gift” of His own life (Rom. 5:15, 16, NLT).”*

The law **began** to clarify [i.e. diagnose] what sin is. There's no commandment against molesting a dead horse, so that must not be a sin, right?



The problem of sin and death **could** only be solved through Jesus' **self sacrifice**.
Who did Jesus pay the "debt" to?

MONDAY

The Church "Building"

Earth is the quarry and the work-shop where men are to be fitted and refined for the courts of Heaven. As the stones composing Solomon's temple came together in the wall a perfect fit, without the touch of ax or hammer or any other instrument, so will the resurrected saints, and those who are alive at the time of his coming be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, each one fitted for the great change and taking his proper place in the **temple of God's love**. 3SP. 41 [emphasis added].

Does this give any new insights to the passage about us being "God's temple" ? [1 Cor. 3: 16, & 1 Cor. 6: 19].

What is the purpose of "The Church"? See Ephesians 3: 1-12.

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. Eph. 3: 8-12.

How is the church "built"?

What is the purpose of the "Spiritual Gifts" ? See 1 Cor. 12 [full chapter]

Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel. 1 Cor. 14: 12.

From the lesson:

"We need to notice two things. The first is that the context is speaking about the church and how it is built up. It is not talking primarily about health. God does not destroy people who abuse their bodies with bad lifestyle choices; they destroy themselves. (Later, Paul does talk about our bodies being the temple of the Holy Spirit in connection with our moral choices in 1 Corinthians 6:15-20.)"



The second thing is that each time the word you is mentioned in these two verses, it is plural in the Greek. An individual is not being addressed, but a group. So, if anyone does anything to destroy the church, he or she is in serious trouble. God warns that He will destroy the person who tries to destroy the church.” [Emphasis added].

Where does “God warn He will destroy the person who tries to destroy the church”?

I searched “destroy the church” in Scripture [12 translations] and in EGW writings – only one version of Scripture [New Life Version] and 16 EGW references contain the phrase. See below.

“Yes, I know that when I am gone, hungry wolves will come in among you. They will try to destroy the church. Also men from your own group will begin to teach things that are not true. They will get men to follow them. I say again, keep watching! Remember that for three years I taught everyone of you night and day, even with tears.

“And now, my brothers, I give you over to God and to the word of His love. It is able to make you strong and to give you what you are to have, along with all those who are set apart for God. Acts 20: 29-32.

In vain were Satan's efforts to destroy the church of Christ by violence. The great controversy in which the disciples of Jesus yielded up their lives did not cease when these faithful standard-bearers fell at their post. By defeat they conquered. God's workmen were slain, but His work went steadily forward. The gospel continued to spread and the number of its adherents to increase. It penetrated into regions that were inaccessible even to the eagles of Rome. Said a Christian, expostulating with the heathen rulers who were urging forward the persecution: You may “kill us, torture us, condemn us.... Your injustice is the proof that we are innocent Nor does your cruelty ... avail you.” It was but a stronger invitation to bring others to their persuasion. “The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed.” GC 41.

Note: This quote was repeated in 6/16 references, and the others were references to Paul’s efforts to destroy the early church, and other men’s efforts to destroy the modern church.]

I didn’t find any reference saying God would destroy those who try to destroy the church. In fact, Paul states he gives his readers “...over to God and to the word of His love.”

Is there something that happens “naturally” to the one who, in confederacy with Satan, attempts to “destroy the church”?

TUESDAY

The Church as a Body

Why do you think the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to compare the church with the human body? Why not some branch of human government or legal process?



If God had a perfect design for the human anatomy & physiology, doesn't it stand to reason that he has a perfect design for the anatomy & physiology of His church, as well? Even with diseased members.

WEDNESDAY

The Armor of God

Is there a danger in taking the “warfare” metaphor literally? [reference the Dark Ages, or current branches of Islam, Judaism, & Christianity, etc.] What kind of war are we fighting? [see 2 Cor. 10: 4, 5]

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ

Let's examine the armor [Eph. 6: 10-17]:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God

Note that Paul, first, tells us what the warfare is, and why the armor is important [vs 10-13], and then explains what that armor is.

Belt = Truth [Truth eradicates the lies that are part of our DNA].

Breastplate = Righteousness [heart transformation yields Righteousness – Christ weaves His character in to ours, i.e. “covered with the robe of righteousness”]. Doing that which is Right, because it's right.

Shoes = Gospel of Peace [True conversion cannot happen without our wanting to share our experience. Note it's a gospel of “Peace” NOT the “wrath of the Lamb”].

Shield = Faith [syn. Trust based on EVIDENCE. Not a blind faith.]

Helmet = Salvation [conscious understanding & cooperation with God's methods, principles, &



government yields healing or Salvation]. Level 7 – Friend of God.

Sword of the Spirit = Word of God [see Heb. 4: 12] This is not a “God said it, I believe it, that settles it” use of the Word of God, nor is it an actual weapon to beat others over the head with. Again, it’s a “Friend of God” approach, where we understand God’s Word is LIFE itself, because He designed it to function in harmony with His Character of Love.

THURSDAY

The Last Enemy

Death had already been defeated [2 Tim 1: 10], so why does Paul tell the Corinthians that death is the last enemy? [1 Cor. 15: 26] Which death is Paul talking about in 2 Timothy? Is it a different death than in his letter to the Corinthians? Consider that the “sleep” we know as “death” is an untold blessing to humanity.

The coming of the Lord has been in all ages the hope of His true followers. The Saviour’s parting promise upon Olivet, that He would come again, lighted up the future for His disciples, filling their hearts with joy and hope that sorrow could not quench nor trials dim. Amid suffering and persecution, the “appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” was the “blessed hope.” When the Thessalonian Christians were filled with grief as they buried their loved ones, who had hoped to live to witness the coming of the Lord, Paul, their teacher, pointed them to the resurrection, to take place at the Saviour’s advent. Then the dead in Christ should rise, and together with the living be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. “And so,” he said, “shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 GC. 302.



Rebellion and Redemption 1Q 2016 Lesson 11

Peter on the Great Controversy

Last weekend I was privileged to be invited to attend an event in Scottsdale, AZ called The Agape Project—Love and Transformation Two-Day Symposium. There were thought leaders from all over the nation, from across a wide range of denominational backgrounds, but all came together for one purpose—to discuss God’s character of love and how to we make the message of God’s love the central message in Christianity.

The organizers had read *The God-Shaped Brain* and it really helped them personally make a positive change in their lives and this is why I was included. They also read *Could It Be This Simple?* and recommended the books to the attendees. I met several wonderful people who are passionate about putting God’s character of love front and center in their ministries and in Christianity as a whole.

They created a Facebook page to promote the message about God’s love and in a few months have over 8000 people following. We are excited to be part of this project and will keep you informed as we move forward in sharing this message.

SABBATH

Read Memory Text: “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1Pet 2:9 NKJV).

What does this text mean?

This is quite profound—who, prior to Christ, was chosen by God? Abraham and his descendants—they were God’s chosen people, His priesthood, His nation, His special people. But Peter, who is a Jew, is saying that now that is no longer true—God’s special people are not Israel—they are not the chosen, select, royal priesthood, holy nation—who is? All those who accept Jesus and leave the lies of Satan and the methods of fear and selfishness behind and enter into the truth about God and His methods of love and truth!

Now, some fail to understand the Bible is teaching about a spiritual kingdom, made up of people with Christlike character and instead think that genetics are what matters. They don’t understand the



meaning of what Peter is writing and promote the idea that literal Israel, the nation in the Middle East, is God's chosen nation. Not so, look at the methods they practice, they practice the methods of the world, coercion, deceit, threats, intimidation—thus they have not left the darkness for the light.

Further, when Peter uses the term “nation” is Peter speaking of a specific territory, with physical boundaries, national identifiers like flags etc.? In other words a member of the United Nations?

No, Peter is not speaking of a nation with physical boundaries, but a nation that is unified in its trust in God and its people being transformed to be like Jesus in character!

As Paul wrote to the Philippians:

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ... Php 3:20

What does it mean to be chosen generation or chosen people? (The Greek is *genos* and means descendants, people, generation, kind, kindred, race, nation, sort).

Is it speaking of a specific generation, that group living only in the first century AD, or is Peter speaking of the people who partake of Christ?

What does *chosen* mean?

Well consider the Jewish nation—were they chosen by God? Yes—for what? Was God saying “I choose to save you and not the rest of humanity?” No!

Many people get confused on this idea of God choosing—because they misunderstand what God is choosing people for, they forget John 3:16:

“For God so loved the *WORLD* that he gave his only begotten Son...”

God, through Christ chose to save the entire world—not just a select few. The reason all humanity won't be saved is not because God chose some and didn't choose others, but because people refuse to partake of what God accomplished through Christ.

But throughout human history God has chosen people (individuals and groups) for specific *missions*!

- Abraham was chosen to be the father of a many nations and his descendants to be God's helpers in teaching the truth



- Jacob was chosen to be the avenue through which God's healing plan would be realized
- Moses was chosen to lead Israel out of Egypt
- Israel, as a nation, was chosen to be God's representatives to the world to tell the world the truth about God and lead the entire world into a trust relationship with God—but they failed and rejected their calling
- Christians were then chosen to be God's ambassadors, taking the truth about God to the world—they are chosen to be God's agents to the world so that a vast multitude from every nation, kindred, tribe and people may be saved!

Remember in Old Testament times people didn't have to be descended from Abraham to be saved—look at:

- The patriarchs before Abraham
- Melchizedek
- Rahab
- Ruth
- Naaman
- Nebuchadnezzar
- Queen of Sheba

So here is the memory verse for today from *The Remedy*:

But you, who trust God and build upon the Stone, are a select and special people—royal ministers of God's healing Remedy, a clean and purified nation, a people whose hearts and minds are in unity and oneness with God—who with words and lives may commend him who called you out of the darkness of fear and selfishness into his wonderful light of truth and love.

SUNDAY

The lesson explores what it means to go from Darkness to Light. Read 1John 1:6-7

If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the **darkness**, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the **light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another**, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

What is the darkness? What is the light?



What about the Dark Ages—what made them dark? Did the Dark Ages happen because people did not believe in God—or is it that the god in which they believed was a lie and thus their minds became darkened?

Paul says in Romans chapter one that the people of that time exchanged the truth about God for a lie, they preferred images made with their own hands to the knowledge of God and their minds became **darkened**, depraved and futile.

The Bible is making the point that the concept of God we hold either enlightens if it is accurate and true, or darkens if it is false. Is there any scientific evidence to support this?

Yes—modeling—by beholding we become changed. Our brains actually rewire based on the things we admire, worship, spend time engaged in doing. All the way down to our DNA, our genes change expression based on what we admire and worship. Remember the studies by Newberg and his group at the University of PA, or the studies on CBT and brain function. All described in *The God-Shaped Brain* and presented in the God and Your Brain Seminar.

This is from the book, *Christ's Object Lessons* p 415:

"Behold," says the Scripture, "the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee." Isa. 60:2. {COL 415.2}

It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. **At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed,** a message **illuminating** in its influence and saving in its power. **His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth...** {COL 415.3}

The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. {COL 415.5}

The light of the Sun of Righteousness is to shine forth in good works--in words of truth and deeds of holiness. {COL 416.1}



Is the world in darkness about God and His character of love today? The people from all over the country that were at the symposium I attended last week would say—absolutely.

Paul prophesied to Timothy:

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the **last days**.² People will be **lovers of themselves**, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,³ **without love**, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, **not lovers of the good**,⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God**—⁵ **having a form of godliness but denying its power**. Have nothing to do with them. (2Tim 3:1-5)

Notice—these are not the atheists and agnostics, these are people who have a form of godliness but deny the power—we would say they deny the power because they deny the power of love—how and why?

What is it that breaks the power of love?

Lies believed break the circle of love and truth... You remember the cascade of events.

As long as we hold to lies about God, those lies obstruct God's love from doing its healing work—we deny the power of God.

What lie, is the core, most foundational lie of all lies currently operating within Christianity that undermines the ability of people to see God's true character of love?

The lie about God's law!

God is Creator—He made space, time, energy, matter, life, relationships, our minds. His laws are the protocols upon which all reality is constructed to operate, like the laws of gravity, physics, thermodynamics, health, and the laws that govern relationships and the functioning of our minds.

God is love and when He built His universe all reality is constructed to operate upon the principle of love, the principle of giving... You remember the examples in nature and science, respiration, water cycles, citrus acid cycle etc. etc.



The NT church taught this, that love is fulfillment of the law, because the law of love is the protocol upon which life is built, as the Bible says, “The law of the Lord is perfect reviving, bringing life to the soul.” Remember the example of someone with a plastic bag over their head, if we simply remove the bag and put them in harmony with the law, what happens? They revive!

But after Constantine converted the idea of God’s law was changed and the church began to teach that God’s law functions no different than that of what created beings can make, rules which require coercive enforcement.

With this change in the way humans think about God’s law the world entered into an age of Darkness:

Remember the differences between design law and imposed law:

Design Law

Violations incompatible with life
Require the designer to heal lest
death ensue
The problem is sin in humanity
Christ’s mission to fix what was wrong
in humans
Transformation of heart is the key
God is viewed as Healer

Imposed Law

Violations not incompatible with life
Require the ruler to execute lest
unpunished rebellion ensue
The problem is anger in God
Christ’s mission to pay legal penalty
to God and assuage is wrath
Legal adjustment is the key
God is viewed as executioner & judge

With the imposed law in mind—what is the problem, what happens?

One of God’s design laws (how things actually works) is the law of worship, by beholding we become changed. So when the church began teaching the wrong idea of law, they distorted the character of God into a severe judge and taught justice is not delivering and healing the oppressed, but punishing the oppressor. So, by beholding this type of god Christians became like this god and what resulted:

- The crusades
- The inquisition
- Indulgences
- Burning dissenters at the stake
- Arbitrary beliefs and rules
- The Dark Ages!



And today?

- Child abuse rates no different in Christian homes than non-Christian homes
- Spouse abuse rates no different
- Pornography use no different
- Addictions no different

Why? Because Christianity is still infected with a lie about God's law and character, and thus a misdiagnosis about our own condition: most Christians believe they are in legal trouble and thus they seek legal solutions. If the diagnosis is wrong, the solution is usually wrong. Thus this entire false law construct, with its false legal diagnosis, and its false legal solution obstructs the transforming power of love from doing its work in the hearts, minds and characters of people. There is a form of godliness while denying the power thereof.

We need to leave the darkness and enter the light!

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read 1Pet 4:1-7, unfortunately it asks us to stop one verse short of the most significant verse in the text, so let's read through verse 8:

Therefore, since **Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.** ² As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. ³ For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. ⁴ They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. ⁵ **But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.** ⁶ For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be **judged** according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit. ⁷ The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. ⁸ **Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.**
(NIV)

Let's examine first verse one—what does it mean? Does it give a key to being done with sin? What key?



Some read this as physical mortification of the body, using devices to flagellate or beat oneself to inflict physical pain as a means to be done with sin, is this what Peter is speaking about? –No!

Such an idea comes from the false law construct—the idea that sin is breaking rules, broken rules require infliction of punishment, Jesus as our substitute was punished for our sins, thus He suffered, so if we want to be like Him, then we must inflict physical suffering on our bodies and we will be done with sin. All false, because of a false understanding of reality—i.e. God’s law.

Come back to design law and we understand something completely different.

Peter is speaking of the conflict between our fallen (fleshly) nature and our renewed (spiritual) nature, or a neuroscientist might say between the limbic system and the Prefrontal Cortex, or between judgment and feelings.

Let’s take the example of an addict to any substance, first determine what makes using such substances wrong?

- Is it wrong to smoke because the law says so—so if a teen turns 18 then is it no longer wrong to smoke? Or, is it wrong to smoke regardless of age because it violates the laws of health? This is a good example of the difference between God’s laws and man’s—humans can pass laws to make marijuana legal, they can never pass laws to make it healthy.
- So, back to the addict, if they are convicted of the need to quit, and they choose to stop, will they go through a period in which they suffer in their flesh—cravings? But as long as they are suffering, what are they not doing? They are not partaking of their addiction, thus they are done with it. It is only by giving in to the desire that they are engaging in sin, i.e. violating God’s design laws. This is true across all sin, whether it is lust, anger, greed, arrogance, we will initially suffer in our flesh, or human impulses, but if we say no, if we restrain ourselves and follow our good judgment enlightened by the Holy Spirit, then we are done with sin.

What do you think about the rest of the passage?

The reason we are admonished to live in harmony with God’s physical health laws and moral health laws is because when we deviate from His design we damage ourselves and make it harder to choose what is healthy and right.

Consider the example of alcohol intoxication—it is wrong, not because it breaks a rule for underage drinking, or driving while drunk, or that some angel in heaven writes you a citation and your



intoxication gets registered in your heavenly ledger and you now need to get some legal payment applied in order to resolve the legal debt—no!

It is wrong because it impairs your higher cortical function and disinhibits your limbic system and results in increased likelihood of you doing something your better judgment would stop you from doing.

- Why to adolescent guys want to get girls drunk?
- Why do casinos give away free alcohol?
- More than 50% of fatal accidents are associated with an impaired driver (30% from alcohol)
- Violence is increased when alcohol is involved—almost 700,000 college students are assaulted each year by someone who has been drinking
- Each year 97,000 students between 18-24 report alcohol-related sexual assault
 - <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/alcohol-facts-and-statistics>

When we fail to care for our bodies we are more likely to become sick, and when sick we are impaired in our ability to be of use (service) i.e. love others and instead need others to minister to us. Thus, as Christians we have the responsibility, to the best of our ability, to maintain the health of our bodies so that we maintain the health of our minds and stay in the best condition to be of the greatest usefulness to others. This reveals God's character of love in action.

Do you see the difference between design law and imposed rules?

What about verse 8, what is it saying? Love doesn't merely cover over sin, love destroys it and heals the damage of sin!

From *The Remedy*:

Therefore model yourselves after Christ, who, when tempted to save himself, chose instead to sacrifice himself and thus suffered in his human nature. So, be like Jesus: love others first, and say 'No' to temptations to act selfishly. Your selfish nature will suffer, but you will be done with sin.²As a result, right now on earth, you will no longer live your life controlled by feelings, passions, and desires, but rather you will live intelligently—choosing to follow God's will—in harmony with the law of love.³You have surely spent enough time living like pagans and the ungodly, who allow their impulses, desires, and lusts to control them as they engage in orgies, debauchery, drunkenness, betrayal, and disgusting idolatry.⁴They think you are weird because you won't join them in debasing themselves so they criticize and make fun of



you.⁵But they will be speechless when they stand before God and have to explain to him why they rejected the Remedy—that he freely provided, and that cures all who accept it—whether currently living or dead.⁶This is the reason the good news about God has been proclaimed throughout all history—even to those who are now dead, but who were diagnosed while alive, as everyone is diagnosed—so that everyone could partake of the Remedy and have their characters restored to perfect love, as God’s character is perfect love.

⁷The end of life as we know it on planet earth is near. Therefore, keep your mind clear and sharp, and maintain governance of yourself so that you can always talk clearly with God.

⁸Above everything, love each other completely because love destroys sinfulness.

Read second paragraph, “Peter encourages...” What do you think about this idea of giving account of oneself before God? How do you understand this idea? Do you see God as a magistrate, a judicial being, seeking to find what is wrong in order to inflict just punishment? Or do you see God as the heavenly physician who always diagnosis accurately the condition of each person’s heart in order to therapeutically intervene and heal?

The third paragraph states, “Instead of us being concerned about being accepted by others and conforming to their opinions and their demands and their expectations of us, Peter admonishes believers to be kind and loving to those we come in contact with.”

What is the danger in allowing the opinions of others to influence your actions?

What happens inside of you when your judgment directs you to a certain course of action, but you allow your fear of what others will think to overrule your judgment and you instead go along with others?

Every time this happens we damage ourselves, our judgment is an ability, it is not instantly destroyed when we do this. But when we go along with others instead of following our own judgment, we then judge ourselves internally and say to ourselves, “I’m ashamed of you, you make me sick, you’re weak, spineless...” our self-esteem (self-estimation) falls and we then become more needy of validation from external sources to offset or internal insecurity and low feelings. Thus, we will be more vulnerable the next time to give in because we can’t tolerate rejection.

The only way out of this is to apply the truth—to *thine own self be true*—which means to choose to do in governance of self, what your own judgment determines is best and leave other’s free to have whatever opinion of you they wish.



This is a design law, the law of liberty, when we violate this design law then love is damaged, rebellion instilled and individuality destroyed.

The last paragraph notes that Israel was influenced by the pagan cultures around them rather than converting those cultures to the truth about God.

How has the church today been influenced but the world rather than converting the world?

Primary way is by accepting the world's type of law and teaching God's law functions the same way, rules imposed that are coercively enforced. This type of thinking has corrupted Christianity.

Think of places where Christians are actively seeking to use Satan's method of coercion to enforce their way, rather than converting people with truth and love.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, "Maybe this is why..." What does it mean to be a partaker of the divine nature?

What is God's nature? Love—God is love. How do we become partakers of God's nature of love?

Consider a computer—hardware, software, and energy source. Humans, Soma (body, hardware), Psyche (soul, software), Pneuma (spirit, energy). Mankind was constructed with perfect physiology (hardware) and software, but the software became corrupted. Humanity is an organism that is capable of reproduction—but from what source does the reproduction come? In other words, if a person wants to reproduce, from where does the reproductive template, (gametes) come? -From themselves. And if the ones reproducing have corruption in their code what will they pass along?

This is the human condition—corrupted by Adam and infected with fear and selfishness. We need new natures. But how to get a new nature into the species that is corrupted?

Some person must rewrite the code, rewrite into the character (heart/mind) of human beings God's original operating system—God's divine nature of love must be put back into humanity. How?

Jesus became human and by the exercise of His human brain loved perfectly as a human being and wrote into the species human God's design parameters (law) of love. We don't have to create this perfect human nature—Jesus did.



And now, because of what Jesus did, the Holy Spirit will take Christ's victory and reproduce it in us, so that it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me, we get new motives, desires, thoughts that are in harmony with God. We become partakers of the divine nature—but this is only possible because of:

1. Christ's life, death and resurrection—victory
2. The work of the Holy Spirit in us

Because Christ's victory is historic, there is nothing Satan can do to stop what Christ has already done, i.e. defeat him. Christ has already won the victory and has destroyed the infection that causes death and developed a perfect human character.

So, Satan's goal today is to obstruct human beings from partaking of the Remedy Christ has procured. He has multiple strategies to do this:

- getting people to believe there is no God and thus they have no need of a remedy to heal their character
- getting people to believe their problem is not a defect in heart/mind/character but a legal problem so they pursue legal solutions rather than heart renewal
- getting people to deny the existence of the Holy Spirit so that even if they believe in God and Jesus they close their hearts to the working of the Holy Spirit and do not experience the application in their being of the Remedy Christ achieved

THURSDAY

read third paragraph, "How we view..." What do they mean "God disturbing our little world"?

What do you think of when you think of the end of time?

Consider ISIS—they see themselves as fulfilling prophecy, they are working to incite a world war, which they believe is analogous to Armageddon and will result in the coming of their messiah, who will punish all their enemies.

What kind of a messiah are they longing for? A god of vengeance and violence, who uses power to coerce and kill to get his way.



What about Christians—what is a common teaching about how Christ will return? That He returns with a rod of iron to use power to kill and torture His enemies. Is such a depiction any different in character than the god that ISIS is looking for?

Can God get what He wants by the use of might and power?

What does God want? He wants our love and trust—can you get love and trust by the use of might and power? Zech 4:6. If the conflict between God and Satan were a question of might and power then the war with Satan would have ended a millisecond after it began.

It has never been about might, it has been about love and trust and love and trust cannot be obtained by using might and power. This idea that God is coming back to use might and power to torture and kill is a lie and if God did this rather than winning beings to love and trust Him such actions would result in instantaneous fear and rebellion.

So how do we understand the final end of sin and sinners? According to Scripture what is God's presence described as? And who lives in this fiery presence? And what happens to those who prefer lies and selfishness when they experience infinite unveiled love and truth? What do they do? They beg for the mountains to fall on them, they don't want to live, they voluntarily surrender their lives, why?

Is this an external infliction or the unavoidable results of living out of harmony with God's design and what sin does to the sinner?

Read bottom green section, "In our quest..." What do you think of this idea of Christ's righteousness credited to us? If it is credit to we have to pay it back? Is it merely a loan—credit? Is it a declaration of something that is untrue?

This idea of credited righteousness is based on the false law construct—it is not credited, it is gifted! We become partakers of the divine nature, we become transformed, we become renewed, we get new hearts and right spirits.

Justification is taking what was out of harmony and putting it right, and what was out of harmony was humankind, our hearts operating on fear and selfishness. Justification was first established in the humanity of Jesus Christ who set the human species right with God by writing God's law of love into the humanity He lived out, and then for each sinner, we are set right (justified) when our distrusting hearts are set right with Him again (i.e. we trust Him) and rebuilding us back into His image.



Here is a quote from a book *The Desire of Ages*:

The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. **But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character.** These He offers as a free gift [not credit a gift] to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. **Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."** Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Notice what is just—it is just and right to heal and save, to put people out of harmony with design back into harmony. This is justification!

WEDNESDAY

Read 2Pet 3:3-7:

First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. ⁴ They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." ⁵ But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. ⁶ By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. ⁷ By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. (NIV)

From *The Remedy*:

First, understand and don't be surprised that in the last days, scoffers and doubters will arise; they will prefer the sickness of selfishness while ridiculing the cure, labeling the infection of selfishness as 'normal.'⁴They will say, "Survival-of-the-fittest is the way the universe runs. We are here because of this law, not because of divine creation. Where is this so-called God? Where is the 'coming' He promised? Ever since human history has been recorded, the principles of evolution have governed life, and all things continue just as they always have."⁵But these scoffers deliberately deny the truth and ignore the fact that long ago, by God's word, the world was created out of water and with water.⁶They reject the fact that it was by these same waters that a flood destroyed the world,⁷and they refuse to believe that the same



word has testified that the present world, which is kept for the day of final diagnosis and the elimination of everyone and everything deviant from God's design, will be destroyed by fire.

Do you think the scoffers Peter is referring to includes those who embrace the idea of evolution?

What about Theistic evolution?

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Dr. Jennings has been named a ***Champion of Health*** by True Health Broadcasting Network in association with Health Institute for Preventive Care, Access, Research and Education (HIPCARE) and True Health TV and will be presented with the ***“Legacy Champion of Health”*** award at a Gala on Saturday, April 9, 2016, at the Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC), Atlanta, Georgia.

This award is being presented to Dr. Jennings, as it states in the award letter, “because of your unselfish commitment to community health exemplified by your leadership in the community and as author of *“The God-shaped Brain”* and *“Could it be this Simple? A Biblical Model for Healing the Mind”*”.

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website: http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.
Features (Be sure to close and reopen for updates)

1. Touch a verse and a blue button pops up at the bottom right corner of the screen. Touch the button to see a list of the following options you can do with a verse:
 1. Share the text via SMS text, email, social networks, etc.
 2. Add a note to the verse. If a note is added to a verse a yellow note pad icon will appear next to the verse. You can see a list of your verses with notes under the Notes menu at the bottom (2nd button from the right). You can also delete your notes by opening up the specific note and touching the Delete button at the top or you can edit your note too and touch the Save button to save the changes. You can search your notes’ text too by using the top search field on the notes screen.
 3. Bookmark the verse as a favorite. A red bookmark ribbon will appear next to the verse. You can access your bookmarked verses under the bookmark menu at the bottom of the screen (2nd button from the left). On iOS you can delete your bookmarks here why swiping left on a line in the list of bookmarked verses.
 4. Copy the verse’ text to your clipboard.
 5. Highlight the verse in different colors or delete the highlight by selecting the red X.
2. You can select multiple verses too by touching different ones and then touching the blue options button to see a list of options you can do with the list of verses you selected.
3. You can unselect a verse by touching it again and it will then become unselected.
4. Use the left and right arrows buttons at the bottom menu to go from chapter to chapter.
5. To search the Bible you can use the top right icon that brings up the search screen.



6. To see a list of settings for the app you can touch the gear icon on the top left. It will take you to the search screen which will let you change font size, turn on and off red letters for Christ's words, turn on and off nighttime reading mode (dark background), turn on and off paragraphs by showing 1 verse per line and turn on and off justified text. You can also share the app with friends via email, SMS text, social networks, etc. The Android version has a few more settings options too.
7. To go to a specific Bible reference touch the middle top menu of the app where the Bible book and chapter name text is located. It will then bring up a screen of a list of Bible books where you can select a book and drill down to a chapter and verse.
8. When you exit the app the app will save the last chapter you were reading.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a HARD COVER book at Amazon as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

March 11-12, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Village Church, College Place, WA.

April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.

May 18-20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at *The Struggle Is Real* Conference at Seacoast Church in Charleston SC, for more info and to register click this link <http://www.2016summit.net>



Rebellion and Redemption 1Q 2016 Lesson 12

The Church Militant

I received the following email a couple of weeks ago (edited for length):

Just wanted to share with you a short Letter to the Editor which I wrote that was just published on Thursday, 2/25/16.

A gentleman had written into our local Harrisonburg, VA paper, the Daily News-Record, to point out a number of questions that were not answered by the Bible plus some others that were, but seemed to go against science. He was implying that the Bible was of little value to a thinking person. This really bothered me! :) I prayed about how to reply to his letter. I once was equally as confused, and I truly empathized with him and with so many others who believe the Bible is full of contradictions and misinformation. I was limited to no more than 150 words, so I just pointed him - and others who think the Bible makes no sense to a rational person - to your ministry.

I wish now that I had been able to state what you recently said in a [Bible Study Class], that the Bible is not actually an "authority" on everything in this world. It is an account of how God has been managing the fallout for mankind from The Great Controversy. While we can learn much from it and from reading between the lines, it does not hold all the answers - such as how dinosaurs fit into Creation? (That was one of his questions.) However, I did at least get across the message that God EXPECTS us to use our brains to understand Him, ourselves, and this world by quoting Isaiah 1:18.

I also mentioned you and the Integrated, Evidence-based Approach you developed and Come and Reason Ministry as being a source for solid answers to the questions this man had presented.

You and your ministry have been tremendously helpful to me and my husband. I always thought of myself as having a very strong faith, but it is so much stronger now that I am learning to apply your Integrative, Evidence-based Approach to what the Bible tells us about God's true character of Love and Mercy. My cognitive dissonance has been resolved, finally, and I did not have to wait until I reached Heaven!

It used to be so hard to believe in the inspiration of all Scripture and also believe that God IS Love. For 20 of my younger years, I actually could not rationalize it. I actually HATED God when I first started to read the Old Testament for myself at Age 15 and wanted to run as far from Him as I could. It's a miracle I survived those years, but He protected me in my ignorance and folly. He drew me closer, little by little, with amazing personal miracles that built up my belief and love for Him. I eventually gave in and rationalized that His ways were beyond my



understanding, loftier than my thoughts and ways. It worked for me, but it left me uncomfortable when witnessing to my agnostic, science-minded friends.

No one else was willing to give God the benefit of any doubt as I was. Your ministry has changed that! Now, the Bible makes sense to me, and I am able to intelligently discuss Jesus and The Great Controversy with everyone and anyone, confident that I won't be thought a fool for believing the God of the Old Testament is Love, just as Jesus is Love.

Before, it seemed I didn't have "two legs to stand on," but now, I can actually say I have THREE! God's Word, Nature/science, and direct evidence from personal experience all come together for me now in a meaningful way. It all makes perfect sense now. Finally, I am totally secure in knowing God is and always was CONSISTENTLY loving toward all, including Satan. What a cosmic relief!

Thank you for so effectively sharing your open-minded, rational approach to knowing our God. No one else that I know is so capably merging science with God's word. It's just such a blessing to us believers with scientific training, especially ones like me who consider Ellen White a modern day prophet. I also want to say that your analysis of Evolution vs Creationism in your blog is so "elegant" in its simplicity. Brilliant! I have shared it with many, who all agree.

Be blessed many times over for all you do for the Lord and others!

SABBATH

The Church Militant

What do you think of the title? What is the church? Who makes up the church?

My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you.¹² What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."

¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? 1Cor 1:12, 13

What is Paul saying? If he was speaking today what might he say, "One of you says 'I follow Calvin,' another 'Wesley,' another 'Ellen White,' still another 'I follow Christ.' Is Christ divided...?"

What is the church? Is it a denomination? Do we show we are growing up into maturity by divisions? Listen to Paul in Chapter 3 of 1Cor:

Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ.² I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.³ You



are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? ⁴ For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere men?

⁵ What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. ⁶ I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. ⁷ So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸ The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. ⁹ For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building. 1Cor 3:1-9

Heb 5-6 says those who are on milk “are not acquainted with righteousness” – in other words they are not righteous. Those described as being on milk are still worldly – and what is his description of this? Divisions within the church arguing over who follows who, would this include denominational divisions?

Any thoughts on how we should view denominations?

John Wesley’s Dream:

John Wesley had a dream which affected his life’s work tremendously. He dreamed that he died and came to the gate of heaven. He was anxious to know who had been admitted, so he questioned the keeper:

“Are there any Presbyterians here?”

“None”, replied the keeper of the gate.

Wesley was surprised. “Have you any Anglicans?” he asked.

“No one!” was the reply

“Surely, there must be many Baptists in Heaven?”

“No, none”, replied the keeper.

Wesley grew pale. He was afraid to ask his next question:

“How many Methodists are there in heaven?”

“Not one,” answered the keeper quickly.

Wesley’s heart was filled with wonder. The angel at the gate then told Wesley that there were no earthly distinctions in heaven. “All of us here in heaven are one in Christ. We are just an assembly who love the Lord”.

Wesley was then taken downward, downward to the entrance of Hell. He met the keeper of the



gate there.

"Have you any Presbyterians here?" asked Wesley.

"Oh, yes, many," answered the keeper.

Wesley stood still, "Have you any Anglicans?" he asked.

"Yes, yes, many", answered the keeper.

"Are there Baptists in there"? Wesley continued to ask.

"Of course, many," replied the keeper.

"Wesley was afraid to ask the next question. "Are there any Methodists in Hell?"

The keeper of the gate grinned. "Oh Yes, there are many Methodists here."

Wesley could hardly speak. "Tell me, have you any there who love the Lord?"

"No, no, not one, not one" he answered. "No one in Hell loves the Lord"!

What about SDAs, will there be SDAs in heaven? What about in hell?

What do you take as the truth of this dream? It affected Wesley profoundly and his theology was shaped by it.

John Wesley's words:

"What then is the mark? Who is a Methodist, according to your own account?" I answer: A Methodist is one who has "the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him;" one who "loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength. God is the joy of his heart, and the desire of his soul; which is constantly crying out, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee! My God and my all! Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever!"

If any man say, "Why, these are only the common fundamental principles of Christianity!" thou hast said; so I mean; this is the very truth; I know they are no other; and I would to God both thou and all men knew, that I, and all who follow my judgment, do vehemently refuse to be distinguished from other men, by any but the common principles of Christianity, -- the plain, old Christianity that I teach, renouncing and detesting all other marks of distinction. And whosoever is what I preach, (let him be called what he will, for names change not the nature of things,) he is a Christian, not in name only, but in heart and in life. He is inwardly and outwardly conformed to the will of God, as revealed in the written word. He thinks, speaks, and lives, according to the method laid down in the revelation of Jesus Christ. His soul is renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and in



all true holiness. **And having the mind that was in Christ, he so walks as Christ also walked.**

Did Wesley leave out anything essential from this statement? How many groups does the Bible describe when Christ returns? Two:

- Sheep and goats
- Virtuous woman and harlot
- Fruitful vine and withered vine
- Wheat and tares
- Saved and lost

So, when we think of the Church Militant, what do we think? Do we think of an organized denomination, or all of those who are like Christ in character and accurately reveal God and His will on earth?

This is what one of the founders of the SDA church said:

There is a strife between the forces of good and evil, between the loyal and the disloyal angels. Christ and Satan are not at an agreement, and they never will be. **In every age the true church of God has engaged in decided warfare against satanic agencies.** Until the controversy is ended, the struggle will go on between wicked angels and wicked people on the one side, and holy angels and true believers on the other. {Christ Triumphant 28.2}

And,

Satan is trying to lead men and women away from right principles. The enemy of all good, he desires to see human beings so trained that they will exert their influence on the side of error, instead of using their talents to bless their fellow men. **And multitudes who profess to belong to God's true church are falling under his deceptions.** They are being led to turn away from their allegiance to the King of heaven. {Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students 494.1}

Paul writing to the Corinthians said they were being worldly, would that be the same as being led away from God's true principles? What might it look like to be led away from God's true principles? What is a principle? A design protocol – and how do people get led away from principles? By replacing them with imposed rules, arbitrary commands—this is being worldly and this is how Rome infected the church with the idea that God's law is a list of imposed rules.

Thus the church, rather than being a organization of love and truth, becomes authoritarian, imposes rules, enforces rules, polices, criticizes etc. Just look at history:

- Dark Ages



- Today—look at how Christians are acting regarding marriage, abortion etc. They are too often trying to use authority, state authority to enforce their beliefs, rather than promoting their views with love and freedom

What do you think of this quote?

The life of Christ was a life charged with a divine message of the love of God, and he longed intensely to **impart this love** to others in rich measure. **Compassion beamed from his countenance**, and his conduct was characterized by grace, humility, truth, and love. **Every member of his church militant must manifest the same qualities**, if he would join the **church triumphant**. The **love of Christ is so broad, so full of glory**, that in comparison to it, everything that men esteem as great, dwindles into insignificance. When we obtain a view of it, we exclaim, O the depth of the riches of the love that God bestowed upon men in the gift of his only begotten Son! {Christian Education 76.3}

Was Christ at war when He lived on earth as a human being 2000 years ago?

And what kind of war did He wage? What about the church today? What kind of war are we to wage?

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2Cor 10:3-5

What kind of war is this? Where is it fought? What weapons do we use?

What is God, through Christ, fighting to achieve?

He is fighting to save the lives of His children—from what? Sin—which is what? Deviation from God's design for how life is constructed, thus God is fighting to restore in human beings His law of love—His character of love, which is the protocol upon which life is based.

So—God wants our love and trust—and if we trust Him, He will pour out the Holy Spirit to transform us through love and truth!

Some like to focus on the fact that God will destroy sin—yes God destroys sin. The question is how? How do God's weapons work (this is just a partial list)?

- truth destroys lies and wins to trust
- compassion disarms guardedness
- grace overcomes prejudice
- humility defeats pride and arrogance



- gentleness vanquishes cruelty
- peace triumphs over uncertainty
- forgiveness eradicates resentment and bitterness
- freedom destroys coercion and promotes love
- life destroys death
- love destroys selfishness and fear and transforms the soul

Why don't we get more victories in the church? Because we too often substitute Satan's weapons for God's—and ***we cannot win God's cause with Satan's methods!***

- truth destroys lies and wins to trust—Satan's method is to use lies:
 - Have you ever seen deception used by church leaders?
 - Those religious leaders who crucified Christ, look at the testimony of those who spoke against Christ at His trial
 - What about those who
- compassion disarms guardedness—Satan's method is to justified guardedness:
 - Have you seen actions taken by church leaders against an individual because the leaders were afraid of what would happen if they didn't?
- grace overcomes prejudice—Satan's method is to promote prejudice:
 - Consider the KKK and supposedly they use the Bible
 - Or all types of prejudice—religious prejudice, Protestant against Catholic or vice versa...
- humility defeats pride and arrogance—Satan's method is to justify pride and arrogance: How is this seen in the church?
 - We are the remnant?
 - We are the chosen?
 - We have the truth?
 - We are rich and in need of nothing?
 - We are theology professors, pastors, priests....
- gentleness vanquishes cruelty—Satan's method is to justify cruelty but call it justice:
 - God is required to punish wickedness
 - God will torture each person for unrepentant sin
- peace triumphs over uncertainty—Satan promotes uncertainty:
 - How can you know what God's will is?
 - Do you really believe God wants you do to that?
- forgiveness eradicates resentment and bitterness—Satan promotes accountability, record keeping, legal pardon, i.e. don't forgive until the person repents, thus we must punish the unrepentant
- freedom destroys coercion and promotes love—Satan's method to coerce:
 - Dissenters should be burned at the stake
 - Crusades
 - Let's get control of our governments and pass laws requiring people to live in accordance with our beliefs



- life destroys death—Satan’s method states that death destroys death and thus Christianity is infected with the idea that God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering, torture and death
- love destroys selfishness and fear and transforms the soul—Satan’s method is to replace love with fear and selfishness and thereby destroy the soul:
 - God’s law is no different than ours and God therefore must punish lawbreakers—therefore we must fear God
 - We can claim legal pardon for our sins, but we experience no transformation as we continue to live in fear of facing God in the judgment and pray Jesus will be there to protect us and plead our case

Here is a fascinating quote from *The Faith I Live By*:

Has God no living church? He has a church, but it is the church militant, not the church triumphant. [meaning what? the church is at war, and the war is for the hearts and minds of people, a war over two methods, principles of living, a war over love versus selfishness] We are sorry that there are defective members. . . .While the Lord brings into the church those who are truly converted, Satan at the same time brings persons who are not converted into its fellowship. While Christ is sowing the good seed, Satan is sowing the tares. There are two opposing influences continually exerted on the members of the church. One influence is working for the purification of the church, and the other for the corrupting of the people of God. . . . {FLB 305.2} [do you believe this? there are influences WITHIN the church that are working for the corruption of God’s people? What would those influences look like? Would it not be those influences that are antagonistic to the truth about God? Those influences which represent God as severe, arbitrary, imposing laws, punishing, the source of inflicted torment and death?]

Although there are evils existing in the church, and will be until the end of the world, the church in these last days is to be the light of the world that is polluted and demoralized by sin. . . {FLB 305.3}

Then I found this perspective very interesting:

The church militant is not in this world the church triumphant. From generation to generation, the enemy has been marshaling his forces against God. **His enmity against the law of God has increased as time has passed.** And his followers are at enmity with any one who has moral courage to depart from evil, and bear witness to the truth. **They pay no respect to the divine law, but they are strict in enforcing human laws.** [How do you hear that statement? Do you hear it as, “They pay no respect to the design protocols of love upon which God constructed life to operate, but they strictly enforce imposed rules...”? And could those human rules be constituted around the commandments?] **They are not in harmony with God.** They are not attracted by his righteousness. **In their human judgment they will condemn men who conscientiously keep the commandments of God.** But God's children will not be



frightened from their purpose by the proud, presumptuous opposition of evildoers. By faith they see a crown of life awaiting those who are victorious, and they press forward toward the mark for the prize of their high calling in Christ Jesus. {RH, July 26, 1898 par. 8}

SUNDAY

The lesson begins a review of the seven churches listed in Revelation to draw lessons from what was written to them. How do you understand those churches, who do they represent, who is the message for? Does it have any application in our day?

Read first paragraph, “In Revelation 2:1...” What part is symbol or metaphor, and what part is literal?

Was Jesus holding seven stars in His hand or are the stars symbolic? Then what about the lampstands—are they literal or also symbolic? If symbolic are there actual lampstands in heaven?

So, if we consider what the lesson is saying, that the seven lampstands represent seven churches—is there some place where such symbols originate?

What about in the OT sanctuary service, which itself was a pattern of something seen in heaven. What is it all trying to reveal?

What is the key? -To understand the truth about God in the setting of the Great Controversy.

MONDAY

The lesson focuses on the messages to Smyrna and Pergamum. Revelation 2:9, part of the message to Smyrna: “I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”

What is the synagogue of Satan? What is the temple of the Holy Spirit?

What then would be the synagogue of Satan? Would it be human beings who have solidified their characters to represent Satan and his methods?

Here is a quote from one of the founders of the SDA church:

The great controversy between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness has not abated one jot or tittle of its fierceness as time has gone on. The stern conflict between **light and**



darkness, between error and truth, is deepening in its intensity. The synagogue of Satan is intensely active, and in this age the deceiving power of the enemy is working in the most subtle way. Every human mind that is not surrendered to God, and is not under the control of the Spirit of God, will be perverted through satanic agencies. {CTr 249.2}

The enemy is working continually to supplant Jesus Christ in the human heart, and to place his attributes in the human character in the place of the attributes of God. He brings his strong delusions to bear upon the human mind in order that he may have a controlling power. He seeks to obliterate the truth and abolish the true pattern of goodness and righteousness, in order that the professed Christian world shall be swept to perdition through separation from God. He is working in order that selfishness shall become worldwide, and thus make of no effect the mission and work of Christ. {CTr 249.3}

Christ came to the world to bring back the character of God to humankind, and to retrace on the human soul the divine image. Through His entire life Christ sought by continuous, laborious efforts to call the world's attention to God and to His holy requirements in order that people might be imbued with the Spirit of God, might be actuated by love, and might reveal in life and character the divine attributes. . . . {CTr 249.4}

Satan has a large confederacy, his church. Christ calls them the synagogue of Satan because the members are the children of sin. The members of Satan's church have been constantly working to cast off the divine law, and confuse the distinction between good and evil. Satan is working with great power in and through the children of disobedience, to exalt treason and apostasy as truth and loyalty. And at this time the power of his satanic inspiration is moving the living agencies to carry out the great rebellion against God that commenced in heaven. {CET 207.1}

What do you think is the root of this synagogue? It is the false belief that God's law is like human law, and that God is like Satan in character a being who must inflict pain, suffering, torture and death to punish lawbreakers. People who hold to this type of false god are those who compromise the synagogue of Satan.

TUESDAY

The lesson focuses on the message to Thyatira and Sardis, lets read Revelation 2:18-29 first (from *The Remedy*)

Rev 2:18 "To the messenger to my recovering children in the church in Thyatira, write:

This message is from Jesus—the Son of God—whose eyes shine brightly like a fire, and whose feet glow like metal in a furnace: ¹⁹ I know the choices you have made, your love and devotion,



your service and dedication, and how your healing progresses as you are achieving more now than when you first took the Remedy.

Rev 2:20 Yet I have diagnosed this problem: You have accepted the teachings of Jezebel, which make me look like Baal—a being who imposes law, inflicts torture, and must be appeased. Her teachings mislead people into internalizing pagan ideas about God—including God being like Baal and requiring bloody payments—and thus committing spiritual adultery by giving their hearts to a false god. ²¹ I have given her time to turn away from the lies about God, but she refuses; ²² so I will let her reap the suffering that comes from operating outside my design for life. And all those who accept her view of God commit adultery with her and will suffer terribly unless they reject the lies and return to the truth about God and his methods of love. ²³ I will destroy her offshoots—then all my children will know that I diagnose perfectly the condition of hearts and minds—and I will provide to each person what is in accord with their own choice. ²⁴ Now for the rest of you in Thyatira: Those who have rejected the lies about me and refused to believe that I am like Satan alleges—no other burden will come upon you; ²⁵ just hold true to what you currently know until I return.

Rev 2:26 Everyone who prevails by completing the treatment and lives in harmony with my methods of love until the end, I will free from the power and authority of the nations.

Rev 2:27 ‘He will intervene with an unbreakable shepherd’s rod; he will destroy the nation’s ability to coerce and deceive, like iron crushing pottery.’

I will give them the same power to break free as I received from my Father. ²⁸ I will give them the morning star—I will give them all of myself.

Rev 2:29 Those whose minds are open to truth will understand what the Spirit reveals to the churches.

Read Revelation 3:1-6 (from *The Remedy*):

Revelation 3:1 “To the messenger to my children in the church in Sardis, write:

This message is from Jesus, who directs the seven intelligent beings standing before the throne of God, and the seven messengers who are—like bright stars—shining forth the truth: I know your choices. You appear to be alive—living in harmony with the law of love—but you are dead in fear and self-centeredness. ² Wake up before it is too late! Heal what remains viable but is about to die if you don’t take action soon, for despite all your rituals and religious acts, you are devoid of love in the sight of my Father. ³ Remember the Remedy you have received: accept it, apply it to your lives, and turn away from the ways of the world. But if you refuse to



wake up to your condition and embrace the truth, you will be unaware of what is happening, and my coming will be like a thief's—you will not know the time I will come to you.

Rev 3:4 Yet you still have a few faithful people in Sardis whose characters have not been stained with selfishness. They will walk by my side, dressed in the perfection of my character of love—pure and white—for they are healed. ⁵ Everyone who prevails by completing the treatment and lives in harmony with my methods of love until the end will also have character perfect and pure. I will never remove them from the book of life, but proclaim to my Father and his angels that they have been completely healed. ⁶ Those whose minds are open to truth will understand what the Spirit reveals to the churches.

WEDNESDAY

The first sentence states, “The church is commended for keeping Christ’s word and for not denying His name, even though their strength appears to be quite weak.”

What does it mean to deny the name of Jesus?

What is the name? It is the character of Jesus—so what would it mean to deny the character of Jesus? —It would be to call yourself a Christian but to misrepresent Christ. How does this happen?

Is it referring to those who, after accepting Christ, stumble and fall and commit sin? —No—absolutely not! It is speaking of people who say they are Christian but live and teach the very opposite of God’s character of love:

Last paragraph states, “The promises to the overcomer from this church include being made a pillar in God’s temple...” What does this mean?

Does it mean they are turned to granite, or stone, or silver and become a load-bearing column in a building in heaven?

Is this literal or symbolic? Then what about the temple in heaven? Is the temple in heaven real? —Absolutely—the question that is most significant, and for which many have failed to answer is—from what is the temple in heaven constructed?

This passage informs us the building blocks of God’s heavenly sanctuary are the saved—living beings who have been rescued and healed from sin! Consider what Peter wrote, we are living stones built together into a house for the Lord.

THURSDAY

The lesson focuses on Laodicea, read Revelation 3:14-22 (from *The Remedy*):



Rev 3:14 *“To the messenger to my children in the church in Laodicea, write:*

This message is from Jesus—the consistent, reliable, faithful and true Witness—who is the origin of God’s creation: ¹⁵ I know your choices. I know that you are neither on fire with love, nor do you appear cold with selfishness. I wish you were either on fire for my kingdom, or clearly opposed to it! ¹⁶ But because you are a lukewarm mix of cold hearts practicing selfish methods while appearing to be on fire for my kingdom, you misrepresent me and make me sick to my stomach. I am about to vomit you out. ¹⁷ You claim to be spiritually rich and full of heavenly treasure, thinking you have the truth and are in need of nothing, but you are so self-deceived that you don’t realize you are devoid of my character of love. You are decrepit, pathetic, bereft of true godliness, with minds so closed that you can’t even comprehend truth. You stand naked and exposed. ¹⁸ My prescription for you is to exchange your corrupt motives for the gold of godly love purified through fiery trials, so that you can be rich in what heaven values. Exchange your filthy, selfish characters for the perfect character of Christ—pure and white—so that you can cover the shame of your imperfection. And apply the salve of the Holy Spirit to your minds, so that you can see and understand the reality of your own condition, and that of God’s kingdom of love.

Rev 3:19 *It is those whom I love that I diagnose and provide these therapeutic interventions, so take ownership of yourselves: turn away from destruction and apply the Remedy. ²⁰ I am here now! I am standing at the door to your hearts, knocking with truth and love. If any hear my voice and open their hearts, I will come in and commune with them, and they with me.*

Rev 3:21 *Everyone who prevails by completing the treatment, and lives in harmony with my methods of love until the end, will sit enthroned with me—just as I overcame, and sit enthroned with my Father. ²² Those whose minds are open to truth will understand what the Spirit reveals to the churches.”*

FRIDAY

Read the quote—what does it mean? Are you thinking through imposed law or design law?

Here is a key:

- divine law—God’s character of love and the protocols upon which all creation is constructed to operate
- atonement—oneness, unity, fixing what was broken, restoring creation back into God’s original design. Only the One who is the source of perfect truth and love could restore it into humanity.
- Only Jesus could fix what Adam did to humanity and restore the species to unity with God—because the curse of breaking God’s design for life is death—Jesus destroyed death by perfectly living out the law of love, the law of life



- Jesus was treated despicably and had the guilt and shame of such treatment poured upon Him

When you read the author's thoughts on the quote, what level of moral development are they explaining things through?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Dr. Jennings has been named a ***Champion of Health*** by True Health Broadcasting Network in association with Health Institute for Preventive Care, Access, Research and Education (HIPCARE) and True Health TV and will be presented with the ***“Legacy Champion of Health”*** award at a Gala on Saturday, April 9, 2016, at the Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC), Atlanta, Georgia.

This award is being presented to Dr. Jennings, as it states in the award letter, “because of your unselfish commitment to community health exemplified by your leadership in the community and as author of *“The God-shaped Brain”* and *“Could it be this Simple? A Biblical Model for Healing the Mind”*”.

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website: http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

March 11-12, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Village Church, College Place, WA.

April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.

May 18-20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at *The Struggle Is Real* Conference at Seacoast Church in Charleston SC, for more info and to register click this link <http://www.2016summit.net>



Rebellion and Redemption Q1 2016 – Lesson 13

Redemption

SABBATH

Think about how the final events in Earth's history make sense in the framework of "The Great Controversy". I think this is the only context that we can make sense of them.

“ ‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away’ ” (Revelation 21:4, NKJV).

If God will wipe away every tear, might there be some tears shed to be wiped away?

From the lesson:

“People often ask, why did evil arise in the first place? Central to the answer is freedom. True freedom, true moral freedom, involves risk, because if persons (or beings) are truly free, then they must have the option to do wrong.” *Option to do wrong? Imposed or natural law lens? Is speeding wrong if you're not caught? Does Newton's 3rd Law of Motion care if you're caught?*

“Fair enough, but the next question arises: Why then didn't God just blot them out when they did wrong and spare the rest of us the horrible results of rebellion?

The answer gets to the heart of the great controversy. As we will see this week, the Lord runs a kind of “open” government, and though much about Him and His ways are mysterious, He will resolve the great controversy in a way that will forever end all questions about His self- denial, goodness, justice, love, and law.” *God's government is not “kind of open” – it's OPEN wide. Anything we don't understand about it is because we could not conceptualize, appreciate, tolerate, comprehend the truth of it. See John 16: 12.*

SUNDAY

Binding Satan

What is it that “binds” us to Satan's side in the controversy?

1. Lies Believed about God's Character, Law, Trustworthiness, etc.
2. Our genetic sinful “Nature” passed on from our 1st parents.

What breaks those bonds?

1. TRUTH.
2. Application of Christ's Character, Donning the Robe of Righteousness, Dying daily to self,



replacing the heart of stone with one of flesh, circumcision of the heart, etc.

What will “bind” Satan after the 2nd Coming of Christ?

We could say that Satan has been bound to Earth since the Crucifixion. Since Calvary, human beings have been the only species that would listen to him. With no more humanity on Earth [righteous in Heaven & wicked killed by the glory of the 2nd Coming], where would he go, and what would he do?

Have you ever heard the theory that God will “bind” Satan to Earth for 1,000 years to ponder his sins? Does this make sense, given Scripture’s account of what happens after the Millennium?

Isn’t it more reasonable to consider that with the Holy Spirit completely withdrawn from Earth, that Satan will be “bound in darkness” just like before Creation? He may even be in a “sleep” like his human followers, we don’t know.

MONDAY

The “Why” Questions

The lesson asks us to read Revelation 20: 4.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. Rev. 20: 4-6. NKJV.

What will our role in “judgment” be? What does it mean to have judgment committed to you? Any other texts coming to mind? Daniel 7: 22, maybe?

21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; 22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. 23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. Dan. 7: 21-23. KJV.

NOTE the difference in translations:

21 “I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, 22 until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom. 23 “Thus he



said: ‘The fourth beast shall be^[SEP]A fourth kingdom on earth,^[SEP]Which shall be different from all other kingdoms,^[SEP]And shall devour the whole earth,^[SEP]Trample it and break it in pieces. Dan. 7: 21-23. NKJV.

Which one is correct? Which one has a legal connotation? Which one sounds transformational? I think the lesson is on point regarding us being able to get our “why” questions answered, however, I believe most of our “judging” will still be regarding God’s methods & principles and how they were applied or rejected [i.e. the medical record model].

TUESDAY

Final Judgment.

From the lesson:

“In Bible times, there were two places for judgment: the city gate and before the king’s throne. The elders at the gate decided all the small cases, but the king decided all the large issues. His was the final word in ensuring justice. Similarly, the Bible pictures God enthroned as King of the universe, guaranteeing that justice is finally done (Rev. 20:11–15).”

What’s wrong with this comparison? See John 18: 36.

Jesus answered, “**My kingdom is not of this world.** If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now **My kingdom is not from here.**”

7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. 9 They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. 10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. Revelation 20: 7-15. NKJV.

The lesson asks “how do we understand these momentous events?” I echo that question.

WEDNESDAY

A New Heaven and a New Earth

What will make Heaven, “Heaven” for us? Streets of gold? Pure clean air/water? Healthy food? A mansion? No sickness or death? The presence of Christ? What about being surrounded with people who love you more that they love themselves? People who would sacrifice their place in Heaven if it made you happier?

Read Isaiah 30: 26 below.

Moreover the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, And the light of the sun will be sevenfold, As the light of seven days, In the day that the Lord binds up the bruise of His people And heals the stroke of their wound. NKJV.

This is the prophetic text that some use to support the theory that the Flood was caused by mankind, and not a judgment from God & He simply warned humanity for 120 years via Noah that the calamity was coming. They believe that the Earth “made new” will be just as it was at Creation. I’m not so sure on this one, though it does have some merits.

Envision the Holy City landing on Earth. Revelation 21 tells us it will be the shape of a cube [12,000 furlongs = 1,500 miles]. Imagine a city 1,500 miles high [7,920,000 feet].

On 12, October 2012, Felix Baumgartner climbed in to a capsule attached to a weather balloon, rose to 127,851 feet [23.4 miles], and jumped. He reached a speed of 846.3 mph in his descent. He jumped from 1/100th of the height of the Holy City [? the 1st floor?].

Does this give any perspective?

We simply cannot picture what God has in mind for the restoration of Creation.



But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man, The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” I Cor. 2: 9. NKJV.



THURSDAY

No More Tears

When Scripture tells us “God will wipe away every tear ...” [Rev. 21:4], doesn’t it make sense there will be some tear that need to be wiped away? If we spend 1,000 years in Heaven pouring over the medical records [the books], and being trained in the diagnostic process [judging humans & angels], we will, undoubtedly, have some questions, and some tears, when we see why some of our loved ones are absent.

I’ve been thinking that our time on Earth functions like medical school. Medical school provides a *foundation* to be built on. When physicians finish their didactic training, they still don’t know much about their eventual specialty.

Out time in Heaven will function like a medical residency / clinical training. Most physicians choose a specialty that entails another 4-10 years of clinical training. A lot of building on the foundation of medical school occurs here.

But the learning [hopefully] isn’t finished yet. Most physicians like to stay current with techniques/research, and attend continuing education classes. Also, by this time in their career, are starting to encounter other practitioners that need teaching along the way. This is how the rest of eternity will function – always learning and always teaching [angels and other intelligent “sons of God”] about the healing remedy Christ provided us in His life, death, and resurrection.



The Book of Matthew Lesson 1 2Q 2016

Son of David

I received this email from an online listener:

I recently downloaded the Remedy app and have been reading it alongside my other Bibles during my quiet time.

So many times, turning to your paraphrase is like using (pardon the illustration) nasal spray, in that it often clears the congestion of some tricky passages. Like I said, I have only had it for a few days, but thus far it's been a joy.

Thank you and the team at Come and Reason for making this resource available, and may God use it to further grow His Kingdom.

Here is another email recently received:

THANK YOU so much for you podcast. My wife, sister-law, and best friend have had their lives impacted TREMENDOUSLY! Please use this offering for whatever ministry needs it most. Blessings!

An update from Gary Jones and Come and Reason Ministries in Canada:

*We have started receiving email request for DVDs from across Canada and we have purchased envelopes and a tape gun for shipping the DVDs. We have set up an account with Canada Post that gives us a 5% discount. We also started a Bible study class with non-Adventists; we have 5 to 7 people coming so far. One person in the class has already said that the DVDs and the book *Could It Be This Simple?* has changed his way of thinking and has give him back a God that he loves, not fears. Another guy comes from a Mormon and Baptist back ground, he also likes the *Could It Be This Simple?* book and has requested a couple of copies he can share others.*

We are working on starting other study Class in Nova Scotia, Plus helping the ones others have started. I received a email from someone in Alberta yesterday asking for 5 DVDs for their class and I know of one other class in British Columbia as well. Do you thing C&R could maybe build a page on the C&R Web page that could be set up for people that would like to start a home and or church study groups but do not know where to start and how to plan a class? I would be willing to work with some others from the C&R family in Tennessee to discuss what and how to put together a study group starter page.



P/S you said some people from the church would not like the C&R approach to sharing the gospel, well it's starting to happen.

SABBATH

Read memory text: "He will save His people from their sins." MT 1:21 NKJV

What does this mean? What lens do you read this text through—design law or imposed law?

If this is through imposed law what is commonly taught?

One of our class members emailed me a paragraph from a sermon she heard in her church a couple of weeks ago. What do you think?

"Jesus died on Calvary. Here's a question: **'What did it do for God?'** It is called, in theological terms, the 'objective' side of the atonement.

What did it do for God? God was involved, the Bible says 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself'. So, what did it do for God? **There was a legal issue.** Man had broken the law, the punishment was death. How is it God can preserve His law, preserve His righteousness, preserve His integrity, and take care of man at the same time? The cross has an objective side - what God did, what God accomplished - it's called by theologians the 'forensic' side, forensic meaning legal. There was a legal issue and God solved it with the cross. We can read in Romans 3 verse 26, it identifies the struggle that God had regarding the salvation of man. It says in verse 26, 'To demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.' So, how can God be just and justify the sinner at the same time? That's the side called the objective side. What did the cross do for God? Well, it settled the legal problem. It gave mankind the opportunity to be right with Him." <http://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/audio.collegedalecommunity.com/2016/EN-2016-01-30-Faith-and-Works.mp3>

What law lens is this pastor preaching through? This is through human law constructs, not God's law, this is a false understanding that misrepresents God and is part of what keeps Christians trapped in a form of godliness with no power.

God's law is not imposed but design law. When we understand this then we realize that the memory verse means what it says, Jesus came to restore us to wholeness, to heal us, to cleanse us, to fix what is broken in us, to cure us from sinfulness.



Save—the Greek *sozo* actually means to heal, to make whole, to restore—so if you are injured, poisoned, snake bitten—and go to the ER and say “Please, save me!” For what are you asking? Healing! This is salvation!

In fact salvation is the root salvo—from which we get salve, (ointment to heal) or salvage (to reclaim from the garbage and restore to good use).

There is nothing in Bible salvation that has to do with a judicial process—those are man’s laws, God’s laws are the laws of life, and it is all about healing and restoring.

From *The Remedy*:

She will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus—God heals—because he will heal and restore humanity from selfishness and sin."

The pastor used Romans 3 to promote the idea of a forensic legal atonement, notice how Ellen White uses the same Scripture:

The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. [Why does the law require this? As a payment? No, for the same reason the law of respiration require we breathe—it is how life is designed/constructed to operate] He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. **But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character.** [Is this subjective or objective? This is the objective achievement of Christ that the legal theologians miss. In other words they diminish Christ's true achievement of actually rebuilding the species human to perfection and instead pervert Christ's sacrifice of healing love into a legal payment to an offended god.] **These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have **remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.** [remission of sins through what? God's forbearance NOT a legal payment] More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty.** [Notice this is Christ developing a perfect human character and then healing humans back to this perfect state. This is healing, this is design law, this is how life is actually built to work!] **Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ.** God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2} [If you see your child drowning, is it right or just to pull them from the water and administer CPR to revive them? What law are you operating under? Why if you want them to live must you do this? This is God's justice and what He accomplished for us through Christ.]

The lesson points out that, “humans might look on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart.”



What is the outward appearance? It is behavior, and what kind of law monitors behavior? Imposed law! But what about the heart? What kind of law monitors the heart?

SUNDAY

Matthew starts his book by establishing the genealogy of Jesus, thoughts about this?

The lesson asks us to discuss what the following texts tell us about Jesus?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. John 1:1-3

What do we learn about Jesus from this passage?

- Was there a time Jesus didn't exist?
- Was there anything made that didn't come through Jesus?
- What type of being is described in this passage?
- Who then, is Jesus?
- This verse doesn't tell us, but why do you think Jesus was the member of the Godhead through whom all things were made?

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. ³ The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. Hebrews 1:1-3

What do we learn about Jesus from this verse?

- Appointed heir over all things—what is the context?
 - It is the context of fallen humanity and God reaching out to communicate to fallen men, and having used all other means of communication, God finally sends His Son, and appoints His Son heir over all things.
- What does this mean?
 - Some use passages like this to suggest Jesus isn't fully God, or isn't eternal because He was appointed heir. He was appointed Adam's replacement, the second Adam, the human heir to the human kingdom, by becoming incarnate and curing the terminal condition that Adam plunged the world into. Yet, this being—is the one who actually made all things, thus is able to cure and fix it!
- He not only made all things, He achieved the remedy and having done so, returned to His rightful place in the universe—next to His Father.



“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” Micah 5:2

What do we learn about Jesus from this verse?

- That Jesus would become human
- That Jesus would rule over Israel—and who does Israel represent in the little theater? –The entire world!
- And where does Jesus come from? –Ancient time—eternity!

While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, “How is it that the teachers of the law say that the Christ is the son of David? ³⁶ David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: “ ‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.” ’ ³⁷ David himself calls him ‘Lord.’ How then can he be his son?” Mark 12:35-37

What do we learn of Jesus from this verse?

- That Jesus is king David’s Lord!

Read fourth paragraph, “By coming to dwell..” What do you think of the idea that Jesus was revealing God to angels?

How many people say they have a hard time believing in God because they can’t see Him, that if they were in heaven they could believe more easily? What, then, about this idea that one of the goals of Jesus coming to earth was to reveal God to angels?

Do you ever think that here on earth we get a better view of God from earth than the angels in heaven? How?

- We must first recognize that Jesus is fully God—if we take the view that Jesus is anything less than God, then Jesus reveals a God who is willing to sacrifice a lesser creature to protect Himself.
- But, accepting Jesus is fully God, what do we learn about God in Jesus that the angels needed to understand?

What did Jesus reveal about God that needed to be revealed to angels?

- **But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe.** To this result of His great sacrifice--its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man--the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: "Now is the judgment of this world:



now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me." John 12:31, 32. **The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin.** {PP 68.2}

- **By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels.** He was the Word of God,--God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name,"--"merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"--"that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." **But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe.** God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. **In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God;** and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. DA 19, 20
- **To the angels and the unfallen worlds** the cry, "It is finished," had a deep significance. **It was for them as well as for us** that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ's victory.

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion. {DA 758}

- **That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels.** Fallen men could not have a home in the paradise of God without the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Shall we not then exalt the cross of Christ? The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, **for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven. Human perfection failed in Eden, the paradise of bliss.** All who wish for security in earth or heaven must look to the Lamb of God.

The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. {5BC 1132.8}



Did angels need God revealed to them? Col 1:18-20, why?

What kind of a war are we in? Is it over might and power? Why not? Can God get what He wants by exercising might and power?

Why was it necessary for Christ to become human?

Why didn't Christ merely manifest in human form like He did in OT times to Abraham? –Because that is not how reality works, the way reality works—God's law—is that Christ had to actually partake of the sinful/sick/terminal condition in order to cure it.

God could create a new species out of dirt at any time he chooses, but to save this particular species, Christ had to partake of it and cure the infection and restore it back to God's original design—the only design upon which life actually works!

MONDAY

The lesson emphasizes that Jesus is a descendant of David—why is this important? It establishes that Jesus was actually human, but also in the little theater that Jesus was a member of the royal line, the one prophesied to be ruler, king, deliverer.

Have you considered David was a type of Jesus?

- David was the least significant of his brotherhood—Jesus became not just a human, but a slave, humbling Himself to the cross (Philippians 2:5-8)
- David was a shepherd whose flock was being attacked by a lion and who singly and alone defeated the lion—Jesus is our Shepherd whose flock is being attacked by Satan a roaring lion and Jesus singly and alone defeated Satan
- David and his people were attacked by an army with a giant leading it, all the people were afraid, but David, trusting God, defeated the giant cutting off his head—the human race was attacked by an angel army led by the father of lies and Jesus left all power behind, became a lowly weak human and by trusting His Father defeated that giant crushing his head—just as the Scripture says.
- David broke with tradition and fed his men show bread, applying design laws of love and health over arbitrary rules—Jesus broke with tradition and healed on Sabbath, touched lepers, spoke to women, foreigners, prostitutes, tax collectors, refused to stone the woman caught in adultery and instead applied design law—law of love and healing!
- David was pursued and harassed by his own government and attempts were made on his life, but he eventually becomes king—Jesus, as a human, was pursued and harassed by his own government and multiple attempts were made on His life, but even though they eventually kill him, he destroys death and arises to be King of Kings!
- David fell into terrible sin as king and repented and out of his repentance came forth, from that terrible event, wisdom—Solomon. Jesus became sin though He knew no sin, and from that



terrible experience came forth the true wisdom of God—God’s perfect character of love restored into humanity!

I mentioned above that one of the things David and Christ did, is that they ignored arbitrary rules and applied design law, the law of love. What do you think about this quote, which my sister emailed me this week?

The great sin of the Jews was their rejection of Christ; **the great sin of the Christian world would be their rejection of the law of God, the foundation of his government in Heaven and earth.** The precepts of Jehovah would be despised and set at naught. Millions in bondage to sin, slaves of Satan, doomed to suffer the second death, would refuse to listen to the words of truth in their day of visitation. Terrible blindness! strange infatuation! {4SP 22.2}

Do you hear the warning that the great sin of the Christian world will be in accepting human law instead of God’s law? And God’s law is the foundation of His government—which means what? The protocols upon which reality is built. When we exchange design law for human imposed law concepts we fall into this category of rejecting God’s law!

TUESDAY

Read first three paragraphs, “Women weren’t...” Why would such a woman be specifically listed in the genealogy of Christ? Well, consider the men who are in the genealogy of Christ?

- Abraham—warrior, liar, polygamist
- Jacob—liar, polygamist
- Judah—polygamist and adulterer
- David—murderer and adulterer
- Solomon—polygamist, idolater, child killer
- Manasseh—idolater, murderer, child killer

These are just the highlights—what does it tell us?

That the entire human race is infected with sin and that all suffer from the same condition, male or female, and all are in need of the same solution. Further, it tells us Christ didn’t inherit any advantages, but took upon Himself our humanity, with all its liabilities.

So, back to the women in the genealogy of Christ three women are mentioned besides His mother Mary: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth—what do all three have in common? –They are not descendants of Abraham!

This is the point, not that Tamar pretended to be a prostitute, or that Rahab was a prostitute, or that Ruth was the descendant of incest—the big point is that they were NOT Jews, Hebrews, descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob!



What does this signify—why is this important? It reminds us that Jesus didn't come to save only the Jews—He came to save the entire race!

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “As has often...” thoughts? What does this mean?

What does Romans 5:12-14 mean?

¹² Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— ¹³ for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

What do you hear happening? Is it that the world is condemned under a judicial death sentence and the heavenly magistrate is lining people up and executing them? No, that death reigns because of the condition of humanity since Adam's sin, even before the written law was given at Sinai, because it wasn't about a legal problem but a condition of being out of harmony with design law—the law upon which life is constructed.

Here is this passage from *The Remedy*:

Therefore, the infection of distrust of God—which deformed humanity's heart and mind with selfishness and fear, and which results only in death—infected the human race when Adam accepted Satan's lies about God and broke trust with him. This infection of fear and selfishness is inherited by all human beings, so all are born infected.¹³ This is revealed by the fact that before the written law was given, the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness was already present in the world. But this infection of distrust, fear and selfishness is not diagnosable without the law.¹⁴ Nevertheless, even without being diagnosed as infected with this terminal condition, humans still died, all the way from the time of Adam to Moses—even those who did not break a specific command, like Adam did—revealing that the problem is the infected state of our minds and not a legal issue with God. Adam, the first man, being the conduit through which the infection entered humanity, also represents the one man who is the conduit of the antidote that cures all those who accept it.

Remember Oswald Chambers quote about not being condemned because of the heredity of sin, but for not accepting the remedy to the heredity of sin?

Read last paragraph, “That's the point...” Does one's view of the sin problem contribute to greater or lesser discouragement?



In other words, when we view sin as a legal problem, and our behaviors as demerits to be punished does it result in greater discouragement?

What about when we view it as a health problem?

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “It’s a great irony...” What does it mean that the people who came to worship Christ were Gentiles?

How did they know about Christ?

The light of God is ever shining amid the darkness of heathenism. [What does this mean? Can a person be walking in a saving relationship with God in a heathen religion?] As these magi **studied the starry heavens**, and sought to fathom the mystery hidden in their bright paths, **they beheld the glory of the Creator.** [What were they studying? Who were they learning about? What kind of law would they discover in studying nature?] Seeking clearer knowledge, they turned to the Hebrew Scriptures. **In their own land were treasured prophetic writings that predicted the coming of a divine teacher.** [Are these prophetic writings included in the 66 books of the Bible?] Balaam belonged to the magicians, though at one time a prophet of God; by the Holy Spirit he had foretold the prosperity of Israel and the appearing of the Messiah; **and his prophecies had been handed down by tradition from century to century. But in the Old Testament the Saviour's advent was more clearly revealed.** The magi learned with joy that His coming was near, and that the whole world was to be filled with a knowledge of the glory of the Lord. {DA 59.3}

Does this mean people can come to know God from sources other than the Bible?

All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) Rom 2:12-15

Did these wise men become Jews? Did they sacrifice at the Temple? Did they keep the feast days? Were they believers in Christ? Will they likely be in heaven?

What lessons for us today?



Read last paragraph, “This story should...” How many feel secure in salvation because of membership in an institution?

Is salvation found by institutional affiliation? What does it mean to be saved?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Request for Stories: Dr. Jennings is working on a new book on the power of love to transform lives. **He is seeking stories of how love was transformational in a person's life.** This could be by experiencing the truth about God's love and coming to understand His character of love, or by experiencing love through how someone treated you.

Please understand the following regarding submitting your story:

1. Submitting a story does not guarantee it will be included in the upcoming book (not all stories will fit with the flow of the book, the publishers and editors will have a say in what stories are included). Just because a story is not included doesn't mean the story is not valuable, only that it did not fit with the flow of this particular book.
2. Please limit the story to 1500 words
3. When you submit the story please include the following signed statement:
 - a. This story is mine to share and I authorize Timothy Jennings to use this story in any of his books in all formats without expectation of any compensation.
4. Please indicate one of the following:
 - a. I **do not** want my real name to be used. Please change the pertinent details to protect my confidentiality.
 - b. I **do** want my real name used. Please keep the pertinent details accurate to me.

If you would like to submit a story please email it to: stories@comeandreason.com

Dr. Jennings has been named a ***Champion of Health*** by True Health Broadcasting Network in association with Health Institute for Preventive Care, Access, Research and Education (HIPCARE) and True Health TV and will be presented with the ***"Legacy Champion of Health"*** award at a Gala on Saturday, April 9, 2016, at the Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC), Atlanta, Georgia.

This award is being presented to Dr. Jennings, as it states in the award letter, "because of your unselfish commitment to community health exemplified by your leadership in the community and as author of *"The God-shaped Brain"* and *"Could it be this Simple? A Biblical Model for Healing the Mind"*.

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website: http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.



April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.

May 18-20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at *The Struggle Is Real* Conference at Seacoast Church in Charleston SC, for more info and to register click this link <http://www.2016summit.net>



The Book of Matthew Lesson 2 2Q 2016

The Ministry Begins

I received this email from an online listener:

Dear Come and Reason Friends,

You are one of the biggest blessings I have ever received! Your DVDs and lessons could not have come on a better time in my life.

I have experienced in the past year many difficulties that if it wasn't for this wonderful view of God that I have discovered through this ministry, I would not have been able to respond in love and forgiveness. My heart is being transformed everyday by the Calvary looking God you preach. Hallelujah !! I have tears in my eyes as I write.

My life has taken a complete turn from where I was heading. My children were afraid and often confused by the rules that made no sense. They often asked me questions to which I had no answers. Questions where God would appear like a bipolar being. I often felt afraid and frustrated for not being able to have a reasonable and intelligent answer to their concerns.

My 15 year old loves listening to Dr. Jennings and even said he would like to preach some day. When I asked him what would he share about he said, "God's Wrath" He sees now that most everybody in our church has a misunderstanding of who God is(He has never preached by the way) This is very encouraging for me. To hear my boy say he wants to speak on a topic that is so miss understood and scary...

I have shared your DVDs with friends and family. Thank you. One of the great blessings that came in the last box was the lessons you sent. I wasn't expecting them but I quickly devoured them. The one on abuse so resonated with me. It helped me to see that often we make God to be like an abuser when he is not and why so many of our men and woman are like that. The other lesson on The Cosmic Conflict Over God's Trustworthiness is blessing me and many more, let me explain what I do.

I am from Central America. Most of my family is scattered in different parts of the globe. They all have the same view of God that I had growing up. A distant, exacting, and ready to punish us with tragedy type-of-God. We communicate through a family chat and often one of my brothers sends devotionals from EGW writings that have been arranged in a way that it leaves one more afraid of God. He means well but thinks fear and coercion are God's ways for that is how he views Him. Some in the group respond with comments that are fear based and some



just don't. I thought I had to do something because it saddened me to see my family surrounded in this darkness.

I'm still learning and know I will continue to learn about God's beautiful character throughout eternity but I decided to share what I have been learning through the Cosmic Conflict Lesson.

I have been translating each individual lesson and voice recording them for my family. To my surprise, they have also been taking the recordings I send and sharing them with others! I prayed that God would open their understanding to this message and seal it in their heart. I can already see the difference in the devotionals my brother sends. They are taking an amazing turn from a message of "repent or burn" towards a loving God pleading to us that we won't reject him because he loves us eternally.

On our conversations on the phone he has often said, "thank you for sharing, I have never heard it this way!" I still have much work to do and pray as I come to know my Savior better each day that I can speak for him to others.

Bless you for all you do. I will continue supporting this ministry as I am able. I want to give your DVDs to my church members and I'm requesting, if possible 100 copies of each one of your three DVDs.

SABBATH

Read the second paragraph, "I didn't understand what..." What is the meaning of life? Is there a secret that we are supposed to know? What is that secret?

Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of **the mystery hidden for long ages past**,²⁶ but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him—²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen. Rom 16:25-27

What is this mystery? And why has it been hidden? Who hid it? Is it still being hidden today?

And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he **purposed in Christ**,¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to **bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ**. Eph 1:9,10

What is the mystery? Is it unity, restoration, healing? Why is this a mystery? Why is this a secret?



Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you,³ that is, the **mystery** made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly.⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the **mystery of Christ,⁵ which was not made known** to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.⁶ **This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.**

⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power.⁸ Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,⁹ and **to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.**¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the **manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,**¹¹ according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. Eph 3:2-11

What is this mystery? Again why was this mystery kept hidden? What does it mean that it is the bringing in of the Gentiles? How is this a mystery?

I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—²⁶ **the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints.**²⁷ To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles **the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.** Col 1:25-27

What is the mystery? It is the mystery of salvation—how God takes humans, deformed in sin and restores them back to righteousness. And what is the secret to this mystery?

My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know **the mystery of God, namely, Christ,³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.** Col 2:2-3

So what is the mystery and why has it been mysterious? It is the mystery about God, His nature, character, government and underpinning it all is the mystery of His law—the law of selfless love!

When we seek for appropriate language in which to describe **the love of God**, we find words too tame, too weak, too far beneath the theme, and we lay down our pen and say, "No, it cannot be described." We can only do as did the beloved disciple, and say, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." [1 John 3:1.] **In attempting any description of this love, we feel that we are as infants lisping their first words.** Silently we may adore; for silence in this matter is the only eloquence. This love is past all language to describe. **It is the mystery of God in the flesh, God in Christ, and divinity in**



humanity. Christ bowed down in unparalleled humility, that in his exaltation to the throne of God, he might also exalt those who believe in him, to a seat with him upon his throne. All who look upon Jesus in faith that the wounds and bruises that sin has made will be healed in him, shall be made whole. {CE 77.1}

What is the mystery? God's character of love, which manifests in all His actions, but most powerfully in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus—but then how this love is more than sentiment—this love is power—power to heal and restore sinners to unity with God!

What is this mystery of which Paul writes to the Ephesians and to the Colossians..."which hath been hid from ages and from generations?" {ST, March 25, 1897 par. 2}

Many have endeavored to define the **mystery** which Paul here mentions. **But it embraces much, and our ideas in regard to the love, the goodness, and the compassion of God are strangely limited.** Because our knowledge of spiritual things has become so dwarfed and enfeebled, we have not advanced from light to greater light. **The Lord has not been able to open to our understanding many precious things.** In view of the losses which we have sustained by our **earthliness and commonness**, [could this mean our earthly law concept, our common-law concept of God's government?] we have much to make us humble. {ST, March 25, 1897 par. 3}

God had a knowledge of the events of the future, even before the creation of the world. He did not make his purposes to fit circumstances, but he allowed matters to develop and work out. He did not work to bring about a certain condition of things, but he knew that such a condition would exist. **The plan that should be carried out upon the defection of any of the high intelligences of heaven,—this is the secret, the mystery which has been hid from ages.** And an offering was prepared in the eternal purposes to do the very work which God has done for fallen humanity. {ST, March 25, 1897 par. 4}

What is the mystery? How could the Creator God, the Ruler of all reality—humble Himself, divest Himself of all divine prerogatives, become a human being, with a corrupt and weakened humanity, be abused by His own creation and die a horrible death—how could this be?

This is the mystery—they mystery of God's character of love!

The incarnation of Christ is a mystery. The union of divinity with humanity is a mystery indeed, hidden with God, "even the mystery which hath been hid from ages." It was kept in eternal silence by Jehovah, and was first revealed in Eden, by the prophecy that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, and that he should bruise his heel. **To present to the world this mystery that God kept in silence for eternal ages before the world was created, before man was created, was the part that Christ was to act in the work he entered upon when he came to this earth. And this wonderful mystery, the incarnation of**



Christ and the atonement that he made, must be declared to every son and daughter of Adam, whether Jew or Gentile. **His sufferings perfectly fulfilled the claims of the law of God.** [what does this mean? How do we understand it, through what law lens? The law of God claims to be the foundation upon which life is built. It claims there is no other way of operation in which life is eternally secure and sustainable. How did Jesus suffering fulfill this claim? By demonstrating that love is more powerful than selfishness and His resurrection was its proof.] None of the apostles could have filled the deficiency, had there been any. {ST, March 25, 1897 par. 8}

Is love more powerful than selfishness? Have the claims of God's law been sustained and fully met in Christ?

Can we participate in that victory and experience that love in our lives?

Read bottom pink section, "How can we avoid..." What about witnessing to ISIS?

Christian de Chergé was a French Catholic monk and the Trappist prior of the Tibhirine monastery in Algeria. With the rise of radical Islam in 1993, Father Chergé knew that his life was in danger. But instead of leaving Algeria, Father Chergé chose to stay and continue his witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. On May 24, 1996 Father Chergé was beheaded by Muslim radicals. Anticipating his death, Father Chergé had left a testament with his family to be read upon the event of his murder. The testament in part reads:

"If it should happen one day — and it could be today — that I become a victim of the terrorism which now seems ready to encompass all the foreigners living in Algeria, I would like my community, my Church, my family, to remember that my life was given to God and to this country. I ask them to accept that the One Master of all life was not a stranger to this brutal departure. I ask them to pray for me: for how could I be found worthy of such an offering? I ask them to be able to associate such a death with the many other deaths that were just as violent, but forgotten through indifference and anonymity.

My life has no more value than any other. Nor any less value. In any case, it has not the innocence of childhood. I have lived long enough to know that I share in the evil which seems, alas, to prevail in the world, even in that which would strike me blindly. I should like, when the time comes, to have a clear space which would allow me to beg forgiveness of God and of all my fellow human beings, and at the same time to forgive with all my heart the one who would strike me down.

Obviously, my death will justify the opinion of all those who dismissed me as naïve or idealistic: 'Let him tell us what he thinks now.' But such people should know that my death will satisfy my most burning curiosity. At last, I will be able — if God pleases —



to see the children of Islam as He sees them, illuminated in the glory of Christ, sharing in the gift of God's Passion and of the Spirit, whose secret joy will always be to bring forth our common humanity amidst our differences.

I give thanks to God for this life, completely mine yet completely theirs, too, to God, who wanted it for joy against, and in spite of, all odds. In this Thank You — which says everything about my life — I include you, my friends past and present, and those friends who will be here at the side of my mother and father, of my sisters and brothers — thank you a thousandfold.

And to you, too, my friend of the last moment, who will not know what you are doing. Yes, for you, too I wish this thank-you, this 'Adieu,' whose image is in you also, that we may meet in heaven, like happy thieves, if it pleases God, our common Father. Amen!"
—Father Christian de Chergé

<http://brianzahnd.com/2015/02/last-testament-beheaded-christian/#more-4442>

Is such love a mystery? What has hidden the truth about God, His character and methods?

It has been hidden behind a wall of lies and false teachings originating with Satan in heaven and it was Christ who revealed the truth about God's character and the plan of salvation—that it is about actual state of being, not legal standing or legal processes.

The imposed law construct, penal substitution theology is part of the wall of lies that keeps the mystery of God hidden. This week I was listening to Christian radio, and the topic was about Easter. Someone called in and asked the two theology professors, who were guests on the radio program, to explain the purpose of animal sacrifices in the Old Testament:

First Theologian: The reason in Leviticus 17 for...that **there has to be punishment with death for sin**, and so in Leviticus 17 when the animal sacrificial system is being established it says this, Leviticus 17:10 “Any Israelite or any alien living among them who eats any blood—I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from his people. For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.” See blood represents life and **there has to be the punishment of death for sin, so therefore an animal had to take the punishment and give its life—it's blood—so that the offerer could live. That was the substitution.** What my former professor here at Moody used to call, **the exchange of life.** Louis Goldberg called it that, the exchange of life. **The animal dies, the person lives.** And so that's the reason for the Old Testament sacrifice for atonement.”

Second Theologian: “A couple of things in the New Testament. In Luke's gospel it talks about how on the night that he was betrayed and Jesus was having the Passover meal “And in the



same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.” That is it's the death of Jesus that comes about because of **his blood loss among other things, his blood loss as well is the thing whereby he was our atoning sacrifice.** His death is required for us as well in order to save us. Paul talks about in Romans 5:9 “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.” And so it's very much the same principle. **In the Old Testament, the death of an animal was required to take care of the human sin problem and now we have not the death of an animal but of the very Son of God who dies for us.** And so his loss of blood is the thing whereby he succumbed on our behalf..

We use the illustration of a credit card. The bill comes at the end of the month and you can't afford it so what do you do? You pay the minimum. And the next month you've gotten more credit on it, and you have the last bill accruing and more interest and you pay the minimum. That's what the Old Testament sacrifices were like, they were paying the minimum. But when Messiah came he paid the interest and the principle and took it all away. That's what his atonement was like.

Host: And all future bills

Second Theologian: Yes, all future bills as well (Chris Fabry Live March 23, 2016, Moody broadcasting, The second hour beginning at minute 12:25 the guests are Michael Vanlaningham and Michael Rydelnik

<http://www.moodyradio.org/Chris-Fabry-Live/2016/03-2016/2016-03-23---The-Centurion---Bible-Q---A/>)

Do you hear the layers of falsehood, distortion, darkness—I was heartbroken as I listened to this, millions of Christians being steeped in such a distortion of reality. Their entire explanation is through the false law lens. Can anyone bring evidence to bear demonstrating the falsehood of these ideas promoted on that radio program?

First identify the lies:

- Sin requires punishment
- Animal blood can atone for sin
- The death of an animal was required to deal with sin
- The physical blood of Jesus is what atones for sin
- Our sins are like legal debts that accrue and need to be paid
- That physical blood of Jesus pays for that debt

Now the evidence that exposes the lies

- Sin requires punishment
 - Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—¹³ **for before the law was given,**



sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. Rom 5:12-14

- Sin is a state of being out of harmony from God's design for life. This state-change occurred when Adam sinned, and all sinners are born in a terminal condition—dead in trespass and sin. This condition is what causes death, not breaking rules, thus people were dying before the written law was given, because they were already out of harmony with God's design law—from birth.
- Oswald Chambers wrote: **The Bible does not say that God punished the human race for one man's sin**, but that the nature of sin, namely, my claim to my right to myself, entered into the human race through one man. But it also says that another **Man took upon Himself the sin of the human race and put it away** — an infinitely more profound revelation...

Sin is something I am born with and cannot touch— only God touches sin through redemption. It is through the Cross of Christ that God redeemed the entire human race from the possibility of damnation through the heredity of sin. **God nowhere holds a person responsible for having the heredity of sin, and does not condemn anyone because of it.** Condemnation comes when I realize that Jesus Christ came to deliver me from this heredity of sin, and **yet I refuse to let Him do so.** From that moment I begin to get the seal of damnation. **"This is the condemnation [and the critical moment], that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light."** (John 3:19)
<http://utmost.org/the-nature-of-degeneration/>

- In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice.** {DA 761.4}
 - The idea that sin needs to be punished is Satan's idea, and those who promote it are promoting Satan's idea of law and government
 - God's idea is that sinners need to be cured, remedied, healed and restored— while sin is eradicated from their beings!
- Animal blood can atone for sin
- The death of an animal was required to deal with sin
 - The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. ² If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. ³ But those sacrifices are an annual



reminder of sins,⁴ because **it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.** Heb 10:1-4

- The physical blood of Jesus is what atones for sin
- Our sins are like legal debts that accrue and need to be paid
- That physical blood of Jesus pays for that debt
 - Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.⁵⁵ For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.⁵⁶ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Jn 6:53-56
 - The blood is metaphorical—we are not saved by being washed in red corpuscles. We are saved by having our hearts washed by the truth and love—the very life of Jesus who is the source of truth and love and who developed a perfect character of which we may partake!

The entire construct presented in the radio show is based on false law construct, the idea that God’s law functions no different than human law, and thus requires punishment. This is the darkness in which the world is currently trapped; this is the lie that obstructs the final message of mercy from going to the world.

SUNDAY

Title—John the Baptist and “Present Truth”

What is present truth? The truth needed for the people living at that time?

Let’s see if we can uncover progressive truth. What was the truth for these times in history and see if each point in time has a more complete truth for us today:

- Adam and Eve after their fall?
 - Savior is promised to deliver humanity from sin
 - What is the more complete truth? Jesus has come and has defeated Satan and the species has been saved, now it is just a matter of individual salvation
- What was the truth for Noah’s day?
 - A way of salvation is prepared for all who will choose
 - What is the more complete truth for us today? That we are to choose not mere temporal salvation from a flood, but eternal salvation from sin
- What was the truth for Moses day?
 - God will deliver from slavery and lead to a promised land
 - What is the more complete truth for us today? That through Christ God has defeated the ruler of this world, freed us from the slavery of sin, and is leading all who will follow to



the eternal promised land—but how many of us are like ancient Israel—grumbling along the way?

- What was the truth for David's day?
 - God will deliver from enemies and establish us in his kingdom
 - What is the more complete truth for us today? God continues to deliver us from all earthly opposition and establish us in his eternal kingdom—when we accept Jesus our citizenship is in heaven!
- What was the truth for Daniel's day?
 - God will watch over his children in captivity and has a plan to deliver and save
 - What is the more complete truth for us today? God is watching over us here on earth today and has a plan to deliver and save us for all eternity—but like Daniel we may wait our entire life!
- What was the truth for Nehemiah's day?
 - Leave the world behind, build the temple of God and prepare for the Messiah
 - What is the more complete truth for us today? We are to leave the world's view of religion and law behind and establish in our Spirit temples the truth about God and His character and methods of love, preparing to meet the Messiah
- What was the truth for John the Baptists day?
 - Turn away from the kingdoms of the world for God's kingdom of love has come
 - What is the more complete truth for us today? Turn away from selfishness and sin for God's kingdom of love is at hand—Jesus is about to return!
- What was the truth for Paul's day?
 - The truth about God has been revealed and the remedy for sin has been provided to all humanity through Jesus Christ
 - What is the more complete truth for us today? The full integration of the truth about God as seen in Scripture, science and experience in the setting of the Great Controversy over God's character and methods of love—these truths are applicable to all people regardless of race, culture, or religion.
- What was the truth for Luther's day?
 - Christianity is infected with lies and must be purified with truth
 - What is the more complete truth for us today? That the root infection is the imposed law construct and we are called to worship Him who made the heavens, earth, sea and all that in them is, called back to Designer worship!
- What was the truth for EGWs day?
 - The purifying process is to continue as we come back to the truth about God's character of love in the setting of the Great Controversy
 - What is the more complete truth for us today? God's law is the law of love and The Sabbath is a sign of God's character of love and true Sabbath keepers possess the character of Christ. That God is waiting for a people on earth to be so settled into the truth about Him and His law of love, that nothing can move them and they will be empowered to share this message in the setting of the Great Controversy all over the world.



- What is the truth for us today?
 - God is waiting for a people to be so settled into the truth about Him, His character, His methods—design law of love, so that they cannot be moved—then the winds will loosen and the end will come

With this in mind here are a couple of historic quotes:

Our warfare is aggressive. Tremendous issues are before us, yea, and right upon us. Let our prayers ascend to God that the four angels may still hold the four winds, that they may not blow to injure or destroy until the last warning has been given to the world. Then let us work in harmony with our prayers. Let nothing lessen the force of the truth for this time. **The present truth is to be our burden. The third angel's message must do its work of separating from the churches a people who will take their stand on the platform of eternal truth.** [what does this mean? Could it mean separating from institutional loyalty and methods, to become members in a body motivated by Godlike love? In other words, stop focusing on level four and below, divisions, and rules, but on level five and above, God's design law, character, methods and principles?] {6T 61.2}

The very work that is essential for every one who receives the present truth, is to aim at perfection of character, and thoroughness in winning souls to Christ. Be determined that you will advance and improve in your work, and then you will be continually progressing; for those who have received this light feel that they **must bring more of the Spirit of Christ into their own life and character as they advance**, else they cannot bring it into the lives of others. {RH, July 26, 1887 par. 5}

“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. **At this time** a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. **His character is to be made known.** Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth...**The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.**” Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

Read last paragraph, “Notice how central Jesus is...” What do you think of this idea of a final reckoning?

The lesson asks us to read MT 3:7-12:

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. 9 And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for



Abraham. 10 The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

What does it mean? How do you understand it? What law lens do you look through? What do you understand the terms to mean?

What causes the division? Is Jesus a divider or uniter? Does Jesus do the dividing or is the dividing caused by sin? What do you understand judgment to be?

From *The Remedy*:

But when he saw the lawyers and theologians of the Pharisee and Sadducee schools arrive where he was dipping people in the Jordan, he said to them: "You poisonous snakes! What are you doing here? Do you think you can get right with God by washing in the Jordan?"⁸ Your hearts must be cleansed and characters renewed, so that your lives bring forth actions in harmony with God's character of love.⁹ And don't try claiming that you're right with God just because you're genetic descendants of Abraham. Biological descent is irrelevant. The descendants of Abraham are as numerous as the stones lying on the shore.¹⁰ The axe of selfishness is already cutting through the roots of Israel, and every person who refuses to be renewed in love and bring forth character of righteousness will be cut off and destroyed.

¹¹ "I immerse people in water, symbolizing their repentance. But One is coming after me whose sandals I am not even fit to hold. He will immerse you in the Holy Spirit and in the cleansing fire of God's love and truth.¹² He sifts the wheat from the chaff, purifying his people by consuming all defects with unstoppable fire."

MONDAY/TUESDAY

Is about Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. Read memory text Monday and first paragraph Tuesday, "Matthew 4:1...

Why was Jesus led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted, and why are we to pray to lead us not into temptation?

Jesus had a different mission than us—what was Jesus' mission? To overcome Satan, to overcome temptation, to exercise His human brain to be righteous, to reject sin, to develop as perfect character! Thus Jesus had to face the temptations and using His human brain choose no in order to develop a perfect character.



Why did Jesus have to do this? Because Jesus had to fix what Adam broke—and because of Adam’s sin there were no humans with sinless character, and all humans suffered with internal temptations. Jesus came to develop a perfect character and destroy the infection of selfishness and fear which tempts us.

Read bottom Tuesday pink section. There is no excuse for Adam and Eve’s sin, but what about each of us being born with sinful natures—is that our fault?

What do we not have an excuse for? For rejecting the free remedy which will heal and transform us!

WEDNESDAY

The lesson asks us to read MT 4:13-16:

When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. ¹³ Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali—
¹⁴ to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁵ “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—

¹⁶ the people living in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

What is being said? What is the point? That Jesus the light of truth shines into the minds of people darkened by Satan’s lies about God.

THURSDAY

The call of the fishermen, read last paragraph, “Jesus chose...” What does this tell us about the mindset we need in order to be useful in God’s cause?

FRIDAY

The top section states, “Though, no question, some parts of the Old Testament, such as the sacrificial system, are no longer binding upon believers, we must never make the mistake of somehow relegating the Old Testament to an inferior status to the New.”

First the lesson is correct, the Old Testament is not less inspired than the New Testament—but it was written by different people, with different assumptions, different immediate concerns, different levels



of revealed truth, different premises. The New testament has the advantage of having Jesus in person to clarify and interpret and set in right ways the meaning of the Old.

But what of the idea of the sacrificial system being binding—was it ever binding? And if so, in what way, for whom and for what purpose?

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Request for Stories: Dr. Jennings is working on a new book on the power of love to transform lives. **He is seeking stories of how love was transformational in a person's life.** This could be by experiencing the truth about God's love and coming to understand His character of love, or by experiencing love through how someone treated you.

Please understand the following regarding submitting your story:

1. Submitting a story does not guarantee it will be included in the upcoming book (not all stories will fit with the flow of the book, the publishers and editors will have a say in what stories are included). Just because a story is not included doesn't mean the story is not valuable, only that it did not fit with the flow of this particular book.
2. Please limit the story to 1500 words
3. When you submit the story please include the following signed statement:
 - a. This story is mine to share and I authorize Timothy Jennings to use this story in any of his books in all formats without expectation of any compensation.
4. Please indicate one of the following:
 - a. I **do not** want my real name to be used. Please change the pertinent details to protect my confidentiality.
 - b. I **do** want my real name used. Please keep the pertinent details accurate to me.

If you would like to submit a story please email it to: stories@comeandreason.com

Dr. Jennings has been named a ***Champion of Health*** by True Health Broadcasting Network in association with Health Institute for Preventive Care, Access, Research and Education (HIPCARE) and True Health TV and will be presented with the ***"Legacy Champion of Health"*** award at a Gala on Saturday, April 9, 2016, at the Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC), Atlanta, Georgia.

This award is being presented to Dr. Jennings, as it states in the award letter, "because of your unselfish commitment to community health exemplified by your leadership in the community and as author of *"The God-shaped Brain"* and *"Could it be this Simple? A Biblical Model for Healing the Mind"*.

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website: http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.



April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.

May 18-20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at *The Struggle Is Real* Conference at Seacoast Church in Charleston SC, for more info and to register click this link <http://www.2016summit.net>



2016 Q2 The Book of Matthew Lesson 3

The Sermon on the Mount

SABBATH

Memory Verse: “When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law” Matthew 7:28 NIV

What do the current Presidential candidates want for themselves?

What outcomes do the Democratic and Republican parties want in the current Presidential election?

What outcome does the current electorate want from the Presidential election?

Recent surveys (2010) show that about 40% of Americans believe that Jesus is likely to return by 2050. This varies from 58% of white evangelical Christians, through 32% of Catholics to 27% of white mainline Protestants.[36]

GotQuestions.org

- Question: "What is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?"
- Answer: The second coming of Jesus Christ is the hope of believers that God is in control of all things, and is faithful to the promises and prophecies in His Word. In His first coming, Jesus Christ came to earth as a baby in a manger in Bethlehem, just as prophesied. Jesus fulfilled many of the prophecies of the Messiah during His birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection. However, there are some prophecies regarding the Messiah that Jesus has not yet fulfilled. The second coming of Christ will be the return of Christ to fulfill these remaining prophecies. In His first coming, Jesus was the suffering Servant. In His second coming, Jesus will be the conquering King. In His first coming, Jesus arrived in the most humble of circumstances. In His second coming, Jesus will arrive with the armies of heaven at His side.

What was the context for Christ's delivery of the Sermon on the Mount?

- Sequence
 - Baptism
 - Fast and Temptation in the wilderness
 - Judean Ministry (approximately one year)
 - Healing of the invalid by pool of Bethsaida.
 - Rejection by the religious establishment
 - After John was imprisoned, Jesus withdrew from Judea to Galilee
 - Preaching: “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
 - First disciples were recruited



- Going throughout Galilee teaching in synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every kind of sickness.
 - Crowds flocked to see this new prophet
- Expectations
 - What was Christ's message?
 - It was about the "Kingdom"
 - "Turn away from your sins, because the Kingdom of heaven is near!" GNT Matt 4:17
 - Recruitment of Peter, Andrew, James & John
 - "The Jews looked for the coming One, not as a Saviour from sin, but as a great prince who should bring all nations under the supremacy of the Lion of the tribe of Judah." TMB 7.1
 - "In place of the one coarse garment which was their covering by day and their blanket at night, they hoped that Christ would give them the rich and costly robes of their conquerors." TMB 10.1

The Sermon on the Mount consumes approximately three chapters of Matthew:

- The Beatitudes
- The Believers and the relationship with the world (salt & light, the teachings of Moses & the prophetic writings, personal righteousness)
- Personal relationships
- Giving to the Poor: Prayer
- Fasting
- What you value (God vs wealth)
- Anxiety and God's provisions
- Judging others
- Prayer
- The Golden Rule
- The tree and its Fruit
- What foundation are you building on?

So why did Christ say these things?

- Rules of behavior?
- Principles of heaven?
- Guidelines for the believer?

Every teaching is a verbal description of what God is like

The Beatitudes... God is:

- not spiritually arrogant
- mourning for lost souls
- gentle
- hungers and thirsts for righteousness in His children
- merciful



- pure in heart
- peacemaker
- persecuted for the sake of doing the right thing
- insulted and persecuted
- subject of all sorts of evil sayings against Him

- Salt of the earth
- Light of the world
- The source of all of Moses teachings and the writings of the Prophets

- He is not angry with His brethren
- He only has good things to say about His children
- He will not divorce His wife except for unchastity

The Believers and the relationship with the world (salt & light, the teachings of Moses & the prophetic writings, personal righteousness)

- Personal relationships
- Giving to the Poor: Prayer
- Fasting
- What you value (God vs wealth)
- Anxiety and God's provisions
- Judging others
- Prayer
- The Golden Rule
- The tree and its Fruit
- What foundation are you building on?

Read third paragraph. "The Sermon on the Mount is the most powerful sermon ever preached..."

Fourth paragraph: "And yet, we must not just listen to this sermon; **we must apply it.**

- How do we do that?
- How does anything we believe translate into something we are?

It seems it is easier to grab a set of rules of behavior and apply them to your external life than change what you believe and trust and alter the inner workings of your personality. We may adopt behavior for very selfish reasons:

- Talk a certain way
- Dress a certain way
- Limit activities to an accepted standard
- We can do all these things for an anticipated reward or benefit to us.
- And yet, we may not wholly agree with any of it. . .



We will never come to change our behavior to be God-like until we see God in a positive light and truly understand His character as portrayed in the Sermon on the Mount. That He is like those things.

We become like the object or person we worship and admire. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

“And eternal life means to know you, the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ, whom you sent.” John 17:3 GNT

It wasn't until fairly late in the writing of the New Testament that the statement of “God is Love” was made. (1 John 4:8)

However, the attributes of God had long previously been demonstrated from the Creation of the World to the demonstration by His Son that God is “others centered” in all His actions and principles.

- Happy, others centered, not showy, servanthood.
- 1 Corinthians 13
- Galatians 5:22 “The Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness (humility), and self control.”

These texts are just a recapitulation of what God has demonstrated to the whole universe and are the center of the themes that angels love to see and tell. (1 Peter 1:10-12)

SUNDAY

Principles and Standards

First Question: Summarize what stands out the most in your mind about what the Sermon on the Mount says to you.

- What is it like to be like God?
- Happy, others centered, no showy, servanthood.
- See 1 Corinthians 13

Read fourth paragraph: “Ellen G. White writes: “In the sermon on the Mount He sought to undo the work that had been wrought by false education, and to give His hearers a right conception of His kingdom and of His own character. . .” The Desire of Ages p.299

MONDAY

The Sermon Versus the Law

Read the first paragraph. Would this same discussion take place over the law of gravity?

- If the law of God is a law enacted, maybe.
- The law is the principle upon which the universe is constructed.
- The consequences of replacing the law of God would be. . .

Read Genesis 15:6

- How does reading the same passage in a different translation alter your perception of what is



said?

- NIV: Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.
- NASB: Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.
- GNT: Abram put his trust in the Lord, and because of this the Lord was pleased with him and accepted him.
- Be wary of your translator!
- Preconceived ideas alter how you translate something. This is true whether the original language is Spanish, Hebrew, Greek or Swahili.

This whole page appears to be in the context of a legal understanding of salvation or at least an external process that is applied to an individual.

- **Salvation is about two people: A human being and God**
- We are saved by God
- We are not saved by a substance, process or transaction.
- We are saved by a gracious being “who loved us and gave himself for us.” Galatians 2:20

TUESDAY

The Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees

At the bottom half of the page: Read Micah 6:6-8

The next paragraph: Even in the Old Testament time. . .”

- “. . .the scribes and Pharisees were definitely not a model on how a follower of the Lord should live.”
- Who is a “model” of humanity for us?
 - Only Christ! The church leaders should never be our model.
 - What then of the statement in 1 Corinthians 11:1?
 - Read 1 Corinthians 10:31- 33
 - Paul is not using his life as an example. He is encouraging them to use the same principles in their own working out of their lives.
 - Read Galatians 2:19, 20
 - Go back to the introduction of 1 Corinthians.
 - 1 Corinthians 1:12, 13 and then in 3:4 - 9



WEDNESDAY

The Principles of the Kingdom

Matthew 5:48 “You must be perfect - just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

It is all about love.

Read last paragraph on page: “The important thing. . .”

THURSDAY

Receiving the Words of the Kingdom

Read Matthew 13:44 - 52

- Parables
 - Treasure
 - Pearl
 - Fish
 - Disciple brings out new and old out of his storage room to “implied: feed when necessary”
- “The other crucial point is the great value each man placed on what he had found.
- Read the last paragraph: How does that happen?
- “Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. A noble, all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace and Christ. God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. It is formed by hard, stern battles with self. Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected. . . .

A character formed according to the divine likeness is the only treasure that we can take from this world to the next. Those who are under the instruction of Christ in this world will take every divine attainment with them to the heavenly mansions. . . .

The heavenly intelligences will work with the human agent who seeks with determined faith that perfection of character which will reach out to perfection in action. To everyone engaged in this work Christ says, I am at your right hand to help you.

As the will of man cooperates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings.

Character is power. The silent witness of a true, unselfish, godly life carries an almost irresistible influence. By revealing in our own life the character of Christ we cooperate with Him in the work of saving souls. It is only by revealing in our life His character that we can cooperate with Him. And the wider the sphere of our influence, the more good we may do. When those who profess to serve God follow Christ's example, practicing the principles of the law in their daily life; when every act bears witness that they love God supremely and their neighbor as themselves, then will the church have



power to move the world. . . .

We know not what results a day, an hour, or a moment may determine, and never should we begin the day without committing our ways to our heavenly Father. . . . When unconsciously we are in danger of exerting a wrong influence, the angels will be by our side, prompting us to a better course, choosing our words for us, and influencing our actions. Thus our influence may be a silent, unconscious, but mighty power in drawing others to Christ and the heavenly world.”

From Devotional: Our Father Cares, pp. 308, 309.

FRIDAY

Further Thoughts

Question #1: What would it be like living in a world where everyone followed the principles found in the Sermon on the Mount?

Don't worry.

We will get to find out: it is heaven!

Jesus' life was a retelling of all of the Old Testament stories



The Book of Matthew Lesson 4 2Q 2016

“Get Up and Walk!” Faith and Healing

I received this email from an online listener in Canada:

Bedtime again, and I've got the computer tuned to your "station", to the Bible study discussions. I'll turn it on, crawl into bed, and be asleep within 10 minutes. You might interpret that as an insult, as a suggestion that your discussions are boring or soporific in nature - but no. It is such a comfort to know that God is not standing by waiting to record every misdeed, every selfish thought.

I grew up imagining myself in that famous art piece: the ten commandments looming over the scene, God judging me, Jesus standing beside me - but how could he stand beside me when I'd betrayed him so many times?

Your totally sensible message that God is the Great Physician, anxious to heal me, anxious to pick me up when I fall, anxious to change my mindset so that I will turn from loving self to loving others, is such a comforting message. I need not fear the judgment day anymore than I need to fear going to an earthly physician.

Having fallen asleep within 10 minutes, I often awaken at 3 or 4 a.m. and retune the discussion, sometimes doing that several times during the night, until by morning I stay awake listening to the whole wonderfully healing and encouraging message.

Not only do the discussions encourage me, but now I read the Bible and the little red books with a totally different mindset.

So, thank you for your ministry (and thank you to those who make it possible) - and for the restful sleeps I now enjoy.

Good night and God bless!

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “If you made a list...” Have any of you struggled with the fear of death? If you have it means—you are human: Heb 2:14,15:

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.



How does the death of Christ free us who are held in the slavery of the fear of death?

Did you know that the fear of death is what triggered the entire religion of Buddhism?

- Buddha left the confines of his luxurious apartments, and encounters for the first time in his life:
 - A decrepit old man.
 - A severely ill man.
 - A corpse being carried to the funeral pyre by mourners.
- Buddha realizes his mortality and experiences fear of death.

How did Buddha deal with his fear of death?

- Buddha dealt with this fear of death by Eastern Meditation, seeking to avoid the fear by looking inward, causing an altered state of brain function of suppressed left cortex function, which allows one to enter a state of disconnect with reality. But, does such meditation actually change the condition which causes death?

Did Jesus also face the fear of death? When?

Then he [Jesus] said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” MT 26:38,39

What did Jesus do when He faced death? Did He turn inward to an emptying meditation allowing Him to avoid reality and experience a false comfort?

No—Jesus realized why humanity faced death—why? Why does humanity face death?

Because it is out of harmony with the law—protocols—upon which life is constructed. Life is built to operate upon other centered love, beneficence and giving. Sin is violation of this design, it is fear and selfishness, and breaks the circle of life, resulting in death.

Humanity is in a terminal condition—dead in trespass and sin. So, what Christ faced was something entirely different than any human being ever. Every human being before Christ had only the infection of fear and selfishness with a character warped. But Jesus had a different choice, what was Jesus’ choice?

He had three options 1. accept Satan which He would never do, but it was an option. 2. Abandon humanity to its fate—eternal death—and return to heaven, or 3. Cure the condition, fix what was wrong in the nature and character of humankind and thereby provide the remedy to all who would accept it.



But how—how would Christ be able to provide a remedy? He had to partake of the condition and destroy the death-causing infection and develop a perfect, sinless human character. The only way to accomplish this was to face death, and rather than avoid the fear of it through meditation as Buddha had done, to overcome it with love!

When did Christ face this battle to surrender in love or act to save self? His first battle was in the desert when he was tempted to act in self interest, use divine power make bread for himself (sensualism), brag or show off (egotism), or seek advancement for himself (materialism).

But the ultimate battle came where?

In Gethsemane, listen to this description from the *Desire of Ages*:

The disciples awakened at the voice of Jesus, but they hardly knew Him, His face was so changed by anguish... {DA 689.2}

Again the Son of God was seized with superhuman agony, and fainting and exhausted, He staggered back to the place of His former struggle. His suffering was even greater than before. As the agony of soul came upon Him, "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."... {DA 689.3}

... Jesus sought again His retreat, and fell prostrate, overcome by the horror of a great darkness. **The humanity of the Son of God trembled in that trying hour.** [Why is this significant? Because He was forging a new humanity, destroying the infection of fear and selfishness and restoring God's character/law of love] He prayed not now for His disciples that their faith might not fail, but for His own tempted, agonized soul. **The awful moment had come—that moment which was to decide the destiny of the world. The fate of humanity trembled in the balance.** [What was the choice that made the fate of humanity hang in the balance?] Christ might even now refuse to drink the cup apportioned to guilty man. It was not yet too late. He might wipe the bloody sweat from His brow, and leave man to perish in his iniquity. He might say, Let the transgressor receive the penalty of his sin, and I will go back to My Father. [What is the penalty of sin? Notice not the punishment of God, this is quite significant. It is the penalty that sin brings, which is transgressing God's design law. It would be like saying someone who refuses to drink receives the penalty of dehydration and eventual death] Will the Son of God drink the bitter cup of humiliation and agony? Will the innocent suffer the consequences of the curse of sin, to save the guilty? The words fall tremblingly from the pale lips of Jesus, "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done." {DA 690.2}

Three times has He uttered that prayer. **Three times has humanity shrunk from the last, crowning sacrifice.** [what is Christ experiencing? Temptation to save self. From where is the



temptation arising? From the humanity of which He partook] But now the history of the human race comes up before the world's Redeemer. **He sees that the transgressors of the law, if left to themselves, must perish.** [Why must they perish? Is it because if Jesus doesn't die God would be either unwilling or legally unable to forgive them? No! It is because if Christ doesn't complete His mission there will be no remedy to provide that will heal human beings from their terminal condition!] **He sees the helplessness of man.** [How are we helpless? We are helpless to cure ourselves!] He sees the power of sin. The woes and lamentations of a doomed world rise before Him. He beholds its impending fate, and His decision is made. He will save man at any cost to Himself. He accepts His baptism of blood, that through Him perishing millions may gain everlasting life. He has left the courts of heaven, where all is purity, happiness, and glory, to save the one lost sheep, the one world that has fallen by transgression. And He will not turn from His mission. He will become the propitiation of a race that has willed to sin. [which means what? Propitiate, means to conciliate, which means to make favorable, which means...he makes the race favorable, how, by what? By fixing what is broken, by eradicating the carnal nature (fear and selfishness) and perfecting humanity back to God's original design!] His prayer now breathes only submission: "If this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done." {DA 690.3}

Having made the decision, He fell dying to the ground from which He had partially risen. [What is happening? Why is he dying here? Has any being laid a hand on Him? He chose love! He chose to surrender and not save self! He chose to give himself thus in Christ human character is restored back to God's perfect design for life.] Where now were His disciples, to place their hands tenderly beneath the head of their fainting Master, and bathe that brow, marred indeed more than the sons of men? The Saviour trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with Him. {DA 693.1}

But God suffered with His Son. [How did God suffering with His Son? Why did the Father not step in? What is the Father's goal? What does the Father want to happen? God was in the Son reconciling the world to himself. The Father wants to see humanity cured. Thus, as horrible as it is to watch, the Father is pleased to allow this to happen for the same reason Jesus is "for the joy set before him he endured the cross." It was the only way to cure our condition.] Angels beheld the Saviour's agony. They saw their Lord enclosed by legions of satanic forces, His nature weighed down with a shuddering, mysterious dread. [From where is the dread originating? What are satanic forces doing?] There was silence in heaven. No harp was touched. Could mortals have viewed the amazement of the angelic host as in silent grief they watched the Father separating His beams of light, love, and glory from His beloved Son, they would better understand how offensive in His sight is sin...[Why was the Father separating His beams from the Son? Was it because the Father disapproved of Jesus? Was it because the Father was angry at Jesus? Was it because the Father was venting wrath and anger on Jesus? Was it because the Father was hurting Jesus? Or was it because it was the only way for Christ to complete His mission of healing humanity and providing Remedy? Could Christ complete his mission of destroying the infection of fear and selfishness (carnal nature) without dying?



Could He die as long as the Father kept His life-giving energy flowing into Jesus? No—God had to separate Himself from His Son, in order for Jesus to be able to destroy the infection of fear and selfishness. The only way to do this was for Jesus to partake of the infection, experience the temptation to save self, but choose, with His human brain to love, to surrender self, to refuse to use power to save Himself, all the way unto death. And in so doing Jesus would rid His humanity of the infection and rise again in a new humanity perfected back to God's original ideal. The only way to do this was to die—and thus God had to separate Himself from His Son and allow that process to take place. This was a terrible experience for our Infinite God, for them to experience this separation. But there was NEVER any punishment inflicted from the Father and NEVER any legal payment going on! {DA 693.2}

The worlds unfallen and the heavenly angels had watched with intense interest as **the conflict drew to its close**. [Close where? He hadn't been crucified yet, why a close? The earth has persisted for 2000 years since then, so what does it mean drew to a close? Because the decision was made by Jesus which ensures the outcome!] Satan and his confederacy of evil, the legions of apostasy, watched intently this great crisis in the work of redemption. The powers of good and evil waited to see what answer would come to Christ's thrice-repeated prayer. Angels had longed to bring relief to the divine sufferer, but this might not be. **No way of escape was found for the Son of God**. [Why? Because there is no way to change God's character, design, methods, law—how He constructed life, the only way to fix what Adam did was through this path] In this awful crisis, when everything was at stake, when the mysterious cup trembled in the hand of the sufferer, the heavens opened, a light shone forth amid the stormy darkness of the crisis hour, and the mighty angel who stands in God's presence, occupying the position from which Satan fell, came to the side of Christ. **The angel came not to take the cup from Christ's hand, but to strengthen Him to drink it, with the assurance of the Father's love. He came to give power to the divine-human suppliant**. [This did not reduce Christ's suffering, but extended it because He didn't die there, but suffered throughout the rest of the weekend. And how was Jesus strengthened? Note how—] **He pointed Him to the open heavens, telling Him of the souls that would be saved as the result of His sufferings**. [It was the power of love—showing Jesus the people who would be saved is what aroused the love in His heart and empowered Him to endure!] He assured Him that His Father is greater and more powerful than Satan, that His death would result in the utter discomfiture of Satan, and that the kingdom of this world would be given to the saints of the Most High. He told Him that He would see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, for **He would see a multitude of the human race saved, eternally saved**. {DA 693.3}

Christ's agony did not cease, but His depression and discouragement left Him. The storm had in nowise abated, but He who was its object was strengthened to meet its fury. He came forth calm and serene. A heavenly peace rested upon His bloodstained face. He had borne that which no human being could ever bear; **for He had tasted the sufferings of death for every man**. {DA 694.1} [When did Jesus taste the suffering of death for every man? In Gethsemane!]



Do we need to fear death? Why or why not?

Read last paragraph, “Despite all its...” Why has the plan of salvation not spared us from the earthly death?

The death the Bible calls sleep is a merciful limit to a life of sin. This first death experience is not the enemy—eternal death is the enemy. First death is an artificial state, permitted by God’s grace, to limit evil, limit suffering, and allow God’s healing plan to progress.

Consider what the earth would be like if humans lived only as long as the antediluvians did? What would the earth be like if humans lived 900 years today? Do you think the kind, benevolent, patient and tender would survive?

They didn’t in Noah’s day. In Noah’s day it got to the point there was only one righteous man living on the entire earth. And then when Jesus was on earth, the world could only tolerate Him for 33 years and they killed Him.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “After preaching...” I am glad the lesson said leprosy was “one of the greatest examples of just how wretched and fallen Satan’s realm had become” because it is not *the* greatest example—what are greater examples than leprosy?

- The callousness and lack of love in the hearts of people—how Christ was treated by the religious leaders for instance, how the leaders treated lepers was a greater demonstration of the wretchedness of humanity than the leprosy itself.
- Demoniacs were much more wretched than lepers

Is leprosy sin? Is selfishness and meanness to others sin? So which is more wretched, leprosy—a physical illness—or the hardness of a selfish heart?

Why was leprosy chosen as a *metaphor* for sin? Because leprosy damages the nerves which transmit pain, thus the person becomes “numb” “callous” and *all* the subsequent damage and destruction is *self-inflicted*. This is a perfect metaphor for sin, which sears the conscience, hardens the heart and results in people destroying themselves!

Read third paragraph, “The fact...” What was Jesus revealing by touching the leper? This was a powerful demonstration that when the perfection of Jesus touches the wretchedness of our sinfulness, the sinfulness is cured, the defective are perfected, the defiled is made pure.

My sister emailed me this last evening:



Jesus almost always made a point of touching the sick individual when healing. If you look at how much symbolism was used in the Old Testament and think about Christ healing on earth being symbolic for something more than just showing his power it can be pretty eye opening. He was compelled to do all this healing while here on earth because it represented what he is doing for us now in the temple of heaven. Taking on our sins, absorbing them within himself, and cleansing us by his perfection to make us whole again. Thus, the need to touch the leper and provide healing. Instead of looking at each individual story of healing if you look at all of them in their entirety and ask what was it representative of it is pretty clear. He was trying to communicate his true purpose or intervention.

What implication does this have when we consider the impact that the “blood” of the sacrifice has when it comes into contact with something? In Scripture the blood of the sacrificial animal always cleansed, always made holy, always purified, it NEVER defiled anything. This was demonstrated when Jesus touched the leper. It reveals the reality that Jesus has become human, He has been tempted in every way just as we are, yet without sin, He has partaken of our humanity and He has cured it!

Read next paragraph, “The work of Christ...” Did you notice the language used? “Thus it is with the *leprosy of sin*,—deep-rooted, deadly, and *impossible to be cleansed* by human power.”

Do you notice she doesn’t say, impossible to be forgiven, or legally pardoned, but cleansed, cured, renewed, made whole!

Sin is a condition of being that is out of harmony with God and His design for life. We need healing and restoration, and that is what God accomplishes through Christ.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “There’s a good reason...” What is the good reason Daniel spends so much time dealing with Rome?

Could it be because it would be the primary agent to infect Christianity with the false law construct that the entire world still accepts?

But regarding the Roman centurion who seeks healing for his servant, what do you think of the story?

What lessons are learned? That humans cannot change design laws, that the servant was struggling with a health problem and no legislative action from the organized government could fix it. He needed the Designer to fix what was wrong. Further Jesus is not a racist—Jesus is here to save all human beings regardless of ethnicity, nationality, religion, etc.

Read MT 8:10-12:



When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, “I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. ¹¹ I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. ¹² But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

What does it mean?

Here it is from *The Remedy*:

When Jesus heard such confidence and understanding, he was deeply moved and said to those with him: "I tell you plainly, I haven't found one person in all Israel with such unshakable confidence.¹¹ Understand this clearly: There will be many who come from other cultures around the world who will feast together in heaven with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.¹² But many others, who—because of ancestry or upbringing—considered themselves members of God's family, will be abandoned into eternal darkness, with great weeping and heartache."

What is happening? What determines who is feasting in heaven and who is left out?

- Nationality?
- Race?
- Legal adjustment of one's standing?
- Partaking of rituals?
- Day of worship?
- Membership in a particular organization?

It all comes down to: who has had selfishness replaced with love in their character—or another way to say it, who has been reborn, recreated, renewed, who is like Jesus in character, who has been healed and transformed by partaking of Jesus via the work of the Holy Spirit.

TUESDAY

MT 8:25-34 recounts Jesus calming the storm and Jesus casting the demons out of the man and into the herd of swine.

The lesson asks, “What do both of these accounts teach us about the power of God? How can we draw comfort from what we see here about His power, especially as we struggle with things so much greater than ourselves?”

What do you learn about God's power?

What kind of power was being used? What was God's power used upon? Did God use power to change hearts and minds?



Can God win what he wants to win by the use of power?

What are some of the ways people get confused today over God's power?

Consider the different types of power:

- Coercive power—where does it originate? Does God use it?
- Inducing power, bribes—where does it originate? Does God use it?
- Deceiving power—where does it originate? Does God use it?
- The power of love—where does it originate? Does God use it?
- The power of truth and love—where does it originate?
- Restraining power—what is restraining power? It is when one intelligence, who has superior understanding, intervenes in the freewill choices of another to alter outcomes. Examples: parents restraining a child running into the street; health officials quarantining a person with Ebola infection; mental health officials forcibly restraining and medicating a violent psychotic individual; God holding back evil forces or restraining them from entering a man's mind.

What are the limitations on God's power?

Are there things God cannot do?

- Can God save a person against that person's will? Why not?
- What does it mean to be saved? It means to have a change of heart where selfishness and fear are replaced by love and trust.
- Can God eradicate selfishness and fear from a person and instill love and trust by use of might and power?
- If God were to overwrite your personal choices and program you with love and trust, would you still be you? No, while He has the power to do so, such an act would 1. destroy your individuality and 2. be a violation of God's very nature, character and law of love and liberty.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about the paralytic, and Jesus speaking that his sins were forgiven before healing the man.

Read second paragraph, "How fascinating..." What are the lessons?

How much of his suffering was from unforgiven sin versus how much was from his *belief* that his physical sickness was proof that he had unforgiven sin?

Today, how many suffer with illness, and on top of that problem have the additional burden of believing it proves they are unforgiven sinners?



When was this man forgiven by God? Was God withholding forgiveness until Jesus saw the man and was moved by his pitiful state? Was God withholding forgiveness until Jesus asked Him to forgive the man?

What was the obstacle to the man being forgiven—was there an obstacle on God’s side? Was there an obstacle on the man’s side? What obstacle?

How many people today suffer in the same way, not experiencing forgiveness because of believing some lie about God or themselves, that God won’t forgive, or they are too sinful for God to forgive, or God requires some payment to forgive, or their sickness is evidence God hasn’t forgiven etc?

Read last paragraph, “A Seventh-day Adventist pastor...” Were most of the miracles of the Bible done for the strong in faith or for the weak in faith?

- Plagues of Egypt
- Thundering at Sinai
- Water from the rock
- Gideon and the fleece
- Fire at Carmel

What about the Apostles, when they were miraculously delivered from prison, was it primarily for their benefit, or so they could be a benefit to others?

THURSDAY

The lesson examines the story of a person saying he would follow Jesus after he went home to bury his father. And Jesus said, “let the dead bury the dead.”

What do you think it means “let the dead bury the dead?”

The lesson points out that one interpretation is that the man’s father wasn’t dead yet, and the person was saying to Jesus that he needed to wait until he got his inheritance in order to follow Jesus.

But, I think there is another application, one I have had to use with many patients who have struggled with grief. I have some patients who get stuck in grief, for years and years, sometimes decades and they are still grieving and can’t seem to heal. They have not reengaged in life, but have allowed themselves to sit with the dead. They have neglected their living children in order to grieve the dead child.

So, could this text also mean let the dead bury the dead, but the living need to engage with the living. The living have real work to do for the good of others?



Read Matt 9:13 “But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

What does the text mean? Why does Jesus want mercy rather than sacrifice? Because the sacrifices in the OT were symbolic of cleansing the heart and restoring love into it. Thus mercy was a fruit of a heart being cleansed. Sacrifices were merely acted out symbols, not reality.

Read bottom pink section, “Though the context is different, how does the principle apply even today, even when we substitute the idea of animal sacrifice with the sacrifice of Jesus? That is, how can we be careful that we don’t let religious beliefs or practices, no matter how right, get in the way of doing what really matters to God?”

What really matters to God?

FRIDAY

read and discuss question 2



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Request for Stories: Dr. Jennings is working on a new book on the power of love to transform lives. **He is seeking stories of how love was transformational in a person's life.** This could be by experiencing the truth about God's love and coming to understand His character of love, or by experiencing love through how someone treated you.

Please understand the following regarding submitting your story:

1. Submitting a story does not guarantee it will be included in the upcoming book (not all stories will fit with the flow of the book, the publishers and editors will have a say in what stories are included). Just because a story is not included doesn't mean the story is not valuable, only that it did not fit with the flow of this particular book.
2. Please limit the story to 1500 words
3. When you submit the story please include the following signed statement:
 - a. This story is mine to share and I authorize Timothy Jennings to use this story in any of his books in all formats without expectation of any compensation.
4. Please indicate one of the following:
 - a. I **do not** want my real name to be used. Please change the pertinent details to protect my confidentiality.
 - b. I **do** want my real name used. Please keep the pertinent details accurate to me.

If you would like to submit a story please email it to: stories@comeandreason.com

Dr. Jennings has been named a ***Champion of Health*** by True Health Broadcasting Network in association with Health Institute for Preventive Care, Access, Research and Education (HIPCARE) and True Health TV and will be presented with the ***"Legacy Champion of Health"*** award at a Gala on Saturday, April 9, 2016, at the Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC), Atlanta, Georgia.

This award is being presented to Dr. Jennings, as it states in the award letter, "because of your unselfish commitment to community health exemplified by your leadership in the community and as author of *"The God-shaped Brain"* and *"Could it be this Simple? A Biblical Model for Healing the Mind"*.

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website: http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.



May 18-20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at *The Struggle Is Real* Conference at Seacoast Church in Charleston SC, for more info and to register click this link <http://www.2016summit.net>

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The Book of Matthew Lesson 5 2Q 2016

The Seen and the Unseen War

SABBATH

What do you think of the title? What is the war? Where is it waged? What weapons are being used by both sides?

Is this a battle of might and power? How do we know this is not a physical battle?

And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. Rev 12:7

The Greek for war is: **πόλεμος** [*polemos* /**pol**-em-os/] from which we get polemic, a war of words, a war of ideas.

The Bible says Satan is the father of lies—where do lies have their power? Do lies have power over rocks, or rivers, or the sun, or air, or plants or animals? Where do lies have power? In the minds of intelligent beings. And what do lies do?

They infect the heart—they infect the self, the core person, the character and incite fear and selfishness.

What does God want to accomplish in this war?

- Destroy sin—is that all God wants?
- Could God destroy sin by destroying all beings He created in the universe? Is that what God wants a sterile universe devoid of life?
- God wants more than the eradication of sin—God wants the healing and restoration of His children.
- Can God achieve His goal, win the war, by the use of might and power? Why not?

Then what are the weapons God uses? Truth love and freedom—any Bible texts come to mind?

- Truth will set you free Jn 8:32
- 2Cor 10:3-5
- The memory verse for today

Read memory text: “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heave suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.” Jump to Sunday...



SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Scripture is the Word of God...” Do you find our memory text difficult to understand? Read first three paragraphs in **MONDAY’s** lesson: “Bible students...”

Is the memory verse difficult to understand? What is difficult to understand?

If one views the texts through imposed law lenses, and falsely concludes God’s government functions like human governments, then this text is difficult to understand—which is it, using might to forcefully advance, or being beaten down forcefully by others. It seems to be one or the other.

But when we return to God’s design law of love, then this becomes easy to understand. God’s government is the government of love, truth and freedom, at war with Satan’s government of coercion, deceit and selfishness. So, God’s government is being violently attacked by Satan, but the power of love and truth forcefully advance *as* it is being violently attacked. Nothing demonstrated this reality more powerfully than the Cross. At the Cross you have Jesus wielding the weapons of truth, love and freedom and Satan wielding the weapons of lies, coercion and selfishness. Satan violently attacked Jesus, but whose kingdom forcefully advanced at the Cross? God’s kingdom did.

You see the same when:

- Stephen was stoned, who was violently attacking, whose kingdom forcefully advanced?
- Christians martyred in arenas of Rome, who was violently attacking, whose kingdom forcefully advanced?

Do we see these two weapons wielded in other settings? What about Gandhi and the British Empire?

How does Satan’s kingdom seek to advance? By use of might and power to intimidate, coerce and eliminate opposition.

How does God’s kingdom go forward forcefully? By love, forgiveness, truth, grace, patience—and where does God’s kingdom exercise it’s power? In the hearts, minds, characters of people. God’s kingdom transforms people—when God’s weapons are used, it turns enemies into friends:

Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also. ¹⁹Our message is that God was making the whole human race his friends through Christ. God did not keep an account of their sins, and he has given us the message which tells how he makes them his friends. 2Cor 5:17-19 GNT

This is what God is fighting for—for His friends, for his children, for their healing. This type of war is fought upon design law, not imposed law. God can never win by using coercion, might, power.



Billions are deceived into thinking that it is Godly to use coercive power to achieve God's goals—this is returning to the Dark Ages when people were burned at the stake in order to “save” them and send their souls to heaven.

- Taliban and ISIS use coercion to promote their way
- Remember Christians in Rwanda
- Or Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland
- Or so-called Christians who blow up abortion clinics
- What about using government to coerce conscience?

Saul prior to Damascus road, thought it was right and proper to use coercion to evangelize. He thought it was how God worked, but then he learned God's true methods and wrote that every person is to be fully persuaded in their own minds. We never coerce.

We cannot win God's cause by using Satan's methods! Many Christians do not understand this and are being duped right now into advocating for actions that are designed to coerce conscience. But many liberals don't understand this and are advocating for the same thing, just on a different issue.

In this war Jesus said that the gates of hell would not prevail against the church. What does this mean? What type of weapons are gates? Defensive weapons.

Satan has lied, and by his lies he has infected the hearts and minds of human beings and established his beachhead, his hold on the species human. However, lies cannot hold against the truth. The truth about who God is as revealed in Christ will destroy the stronghold of lies and free people.

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to examine several Bible verses to discuss the reality of a great controversy.

Let's read Matthew 12:25-37, this is from *The Remedy*:

²⁴ The Pharisees heard the crowd's growing confidence in Jesus and sought to undermine him: saying, "This is evil sorcery. It is by power from Beelzebub—lord of devils and flies—that he drives out demons."

²⁵ Jesus knew their selfish motives and said to them: "Every kingdom that wars against itself destroys itself, and every town or home that fights against itself will collapse.²⁶ If Satan drives out Satan, then he wars against himself. How can his kingdom survive?²⁷ And if I free minds from the domination of demons by the power of Beelzebub, then by whose power do your people drive out demons? Your own practices reveal that you know better than to accuse me of using evil powers.²⁸ No! We all know it is not by Satan's power that I drive off demons; it is by the power of God's Spirit—which is evidence that God's kingdom of love has arrived.

²⁹ "Or think of it this way: How can a person enter the house of a strong man and carry away his possessions unless they first neutralize the strong man? Only then can they take what is his.



³⁰ "Whoever is not united with me—working on my team to unite humanity together in love—is against me, causing division and disunity.³¹ So let me tell you plainly: Every sin—every deviation from God's design—can be healed, except the rejection of the Spirit, for the Spirit administers the Remedy which renews the heart in love.³² Anyone who speaks against the Son can still be healed, but speaking against the Holy Spirit cannot be healed, either now or in the future, for it is the Spirit that works in the heart to administer the Remedy, and the Spirit works only in a willing heart.³³ Make a tree good and it will bring forth good fruit; make a tree bad and it will bring forth bad fruit—for a tree is recognized by its fruit.³⁴ You slither and plot like a pit of vipers. Do you really think that you, who are evil in heart, can say anything good? For the true character of one's heart is revealed by what a person says and does.³⁵ The good person speaks and does good out of the wellspring of good stored within them, and the evil person speaks and does evil out of the wellspring of evil stored within them. So, speaking against the Holy Spirit reveals that one's heart is closed to the working of the Spirit.³⁶ I tell you plainly, every word spoken will be accounted for—an accurate symptom will be tied directly to the correct diagnosis of each person's heart.³⁷ The words you speak reveal the true condition of your heart, either 'healed' or 'terminal.'"

Is there a warfare theme in this text?

What kind of war is being described by Jesus? A war for the heart, and what is the Agency of God that brings victory? The Holy Spirit, and what are the characteristics of the Holy Spirit? Truth and Love—and where do truth and love have their power? What does truth destroy? What does love destroy?

Why is this the method to be used? Because God wants to heal and save His people and if God were to simply use divine creative energy to overwrite your minds with a new perfection, then you, the person you are, would not exist. Your unique individuality can only be saved through a cooperative relationship with God, in which the truth wins you to trust Him and you personally choose to cooperate with Him, surrendering to Him, inviting the Spirit within to transform and heal.

Read Isaiah 27:1:

On that day the Lord will use his powerful and deadly sword to punish Leviathan, that wriggling, twisting dragon, and to kill the monster that lives in the sea.

What does this mean? Does it sound like God will use His power to inflict punishment? Let's add another text:

Isaiah 26:21,22 See, the LORD is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will disclose the blood shed upon her; she will conceal her slain no longer. In that day, the LORD will punish with his sword, his fierce, great and powerful sword.

What does this mean?



Those operating at level four and below, the imposed law construct, will read these verses and conclude God will use might and power to destroy. They fail to understand the reality of God's kingdom, how design law functions, and how to integrate Scripture.

Note Revelation 19:19-21:

Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. **The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse**, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

The sword is coming out of the rider's mouth, who is the Rider? The Rider is Christ. What is the sword coming out of His mouth? Is it speaking of a large piece of metal? No, what comes out of a person's mouth? Words and what kind of words does Christ always speak? Truth! Therefore, the sword is symbolic of the truth. "The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

The wicked are destroyed "because they did love the truth and thus be saved." 2 Thes 2:10.

In other words the wicked have hardened their minds in lies, solidified their characters in falsehood, warped their selves in deception and the sword of God is the truth that cuts through their lies right to their inner self.

When people sin they are convicted with guilt, this is the work of the Holy Spirit. No one likes guilt and we all want it to go away. There are only two ways to resolve appropriate guilt, God's way – repentance, restoration and reconciliation. And Satan's way, lies, denial, distortion, externalization. Adam said after his sin, "It wasn't me. It was that woman you gave me. If she had not brought me the fruit I would have never ate it. Don't blame me, blame her."

This is the hardened condition of all those who have not opened their hearts and minds to the Spirit of Truth here. What will it be like for those who have lived in the darkness of lies to come face to face with infinite truth, truth which can not be denied, truth that cannot be avoided, truth which sears through to their souls? Their minds cannot take it and they die.

Rom 16:20:

And God, our source of peace, will soon crush Satan under your feet.



The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

What does this mean? How does God crush Satan under our feet?

From *The Remedy*:

And when we open our hearts to love others completely, totally selflessly at all costs, rejecting Satan's methods of selfishness, then the God of peace crushes Satan and all his lies under our feet. May the grace of Christ be with you.

Genesis 3:14-19:

So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." ¹⁶ To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." ¹⁷ To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

How do you understand this?

Those who oppose the message we present about God, and instead prefer the dictator view of God, frequently use these passages as evidence that God does punish for sin.

What about cursing the serpent? The serpent is not a sentient being. It doesn't have a character, a moral conscience, and therefore cannot choose to sin. Thus, the actions of God in causing the serpent to crawl on its belly, is not punishment. It is not discipline to teach snakes something. Then for whose benefit was this done? For humankind, but how does this action help sinful humans? It was an action to reveal, in a perpetual object lesson, the destructive results of aligning with Satan, of choosing to deviate from God's design. Exaltation does not occur, degradation occurs. And of course real life validates this.

Further, a Messiah was promised to come and undo what Satan's infection did to this creation. To heal and to save humanity and the earth.



What about Genesis 3:16, how do you understand it? “Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” The immature think God is inflicting this upon women and wrongly conclude it is God’s desire or will for wives to be subjugated to the authoritarian rule of their husbands.

But the mature realize what naturally happens when love is replaced by selfishness in the heart—the strong dominate the weak and the weak long to be protected by the strong! Again, God is *not* using power to inflict an outcome, but *is* accurately diagnosing the condition of humanity and announcing what will now transpire as a result of their sin-infected hearts.

What about the increase in pain in childbearing? Is God using power to punish for sin? The Hebrew here in some versions is translated sorrow rather than pain. Does that make a difference, “I will greatly multiply your sorrow in childbirth.”

- Is this speaking of physical pain of labor?
- Or something else?
- God designed his universe to run on other centered love—when running in perfect accord with His design there was no pain or suffering.
 - But now sin entered, what happens when love tries to express itself on earth now, in this world of sin?
 - Does it meet opposition?
 - Is there sorrow involved in living lives of love?
 - What object lesson could powerfully represent the struggle of love to overcome sin and bring forth a new life in Christ?
 - Could it be the struggle of giving birth?
 - So, could the sorrow, struggle, and pain of labor be a therapeutic intervention to remind all of us, that because of sin, love will win, but only through trial, pain, through sorrow. Jesus was called a man of sorrows—why? In our memory text we explored how God’s kingdom advances as it is attacked. Could this be revealed in the sorrow of labor, new life comes forth only through pain in a world of sin?

What about “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.” (GEN 3:17-19)

Level one through four thinkers conclude: *God has rules. Those rules were broken, therefore God, in justice, had to inflict punishment so that justice is served.*

But level five through seven thinkers understand a larger reality. They understand that God’s laws are design parameters—the protocols upon which nature operates. And when Adam sinned nature became infected with an antagonistic principle along with an enemy that was now afoot infecting God’s creation with deviations from his design (mutations). (MT 13:28) The mature include in their understanding of Genesis what Paul wrote in Romans, that all nature groans under the weight of sin.



(8:22) Thus, design law adherents realize God is not inflicting punishment, but accurately diagnosing and announcing reality—what Adam’s actions have naturally resulted in—that nature now brings forth thorns, thistles, weeds and it will be harder to produce the desired crop. And that Adam, out of harmony with God’s design for life, disconnected from God’s full life-giving presence, will slowly deteriorate and die.

Read Ephesians 6:10-18: From *The Remedy*:

Finally, stay strong in your connection and devotion to the Lord and his mighty power.¹¹ Arm your minds with God's complete set of armor so that you can join the ranks of Christ's soldiers and stand successfully in the face of the devil's schemes.¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, with man-made weapons, but against all individuals, entities and powers that misrepresent God and darken minds, and against Satan—the originator of lies about God—and his cohorts who also misrepresent God in the heavenly realms.¹³ Therefore arm your minds with God's full set of armor so that when Satan's grand deception comes and it seems the heavens are about to fall, you are able to stand; and when you have done everything to present the truth and expose Satan's lies—don't falter; stand!¹⁴ Stand firm, with the truth of God wrapped around you like a belt, with a righteous, Christlike character developed within—like a breastplate,¹⁵ and the peace that comes from accepting the good news about God—like track shoes providing good traction and a solid foundation.¹⁶ Also, hold fast the shield of trust, which extinguishes all the burning fear and insecurity brought by the devil's temptations.¹⁷ Take with you the helmet of a healed mind—a mind protected from the assaults of Satan; and attack the lies about God with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God—the truth.¹⁸ And talk with God with an enlightened mind, intelligently, on all occasions, about all of your concerns, requests, plans, and issues. With all of this in mind, be alert and always keep praying for the God's people.

WEDNESDAY

Why the battle gets nasty? Why do you think?

The lesson points us to the life of John the Baptist and how he died at the hands of Herod. Why did Herod kill John the Baptist?

Is there a difference between how God’s government functions and how human institutions function? What’s the difference?

How do institutions function? What methods, what laws do they use? Do they use design law or imposed laws? Do they ever rise above level four?

Are institutions vulnerable to institutional protection at the expense of members? Was John a member of Israel? Did he get sacrificed to protect Herod’s power?



Jesus fared no better than John the Baptist; the leaders of God's organized church on earth said, "You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish." (Jn 11:50) Better to kill an innocent than allow damage to the institution.

And throughout church history *every* denominational church institution has sacrificed souls to protect their system. Organizational cover-up of child molestation in order to protect the institution has been well documented in the media, but at what cost? -The exploitation and injury of more innocents.

Consider the parable of the Good Samaritan, who is the person that is recognized as being right with God? It is not the priest or Levite, those who had the *right* doctrinal definitions, who participated in the *right* religious rituals, who attended the *right* worship programs, who worshipped on the *right* day. No! It was the Samaritan, who, as far as we know, never sacrificed at Temple, or kept the Sabbath, or ate a kosher diet. So what did the Samaritan have right? He had love in his heart—he loved others more than self!

The Samaritan gave of his time, energy, and resources to help another, with no expectation of return. This is love! This is God's goal. This is what Jesus taught, "As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (Jn 13:34,35) We are only truly followers of Christ if we have hearts that love—nothing else will suffice, no ritual, no doctrinal definition, no legal adjustment, no organizational membership—love is the life blood of God's universe and only those who have such love are genuine members of God's family!

If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. (1Jn 4:20)

Oswald Chambers recognized this problem:

Reconciliation means the restoring of the relationship between the entire human race and God, **putting it back to what God designed it to be. This is what Jesus Christ did in redemption. The church ceases to be spiritual when it becomes self-seeking, only interested in the development of its own organization.** The reconciliation of the human race according to His plan means realizing Him not only in our lives individually, but also in our lives collectively. Jesus Christ sent apostles and teachers for this very purpose— that the corporate Person of Christ and His church, made up of many members, might be brought into being and made known. **We are not here to develop a spiritual life of our own, or to enjoy a quiet spiritual retreat. We are here to have the full realization of Jesus Christ, for the purpose of building His body.** ¹(emphasis mine)

¹ <http://utmost.org/the-spiritually-self-seeking-church/>



We can only fulfill God's purpose of living in love, being conduits of God's love to help heal others, by returning to design law.

Does this mean organizations are bad? Not at all, organizations are quite useful as they help us pool resources to achieve mission: schools, hospitals, worship centers, shelters, helping the homeless, provide concerts, weddings, teaching, outreach etc. etc.

Organizations are quite useful—but we must remember their purpose—their purpose is to help reach souls for God's kingdom. When the organization operates loses its vision of saving souls and instead becomes self-promoting, then organizations can fail to promote healing and actually obstruct it.

Another point, when John sent his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the one, how did Jesus respond?

What did Jesus provide to John? What did Jesus not do? Jesus provided evidence—Jesus did not respond with a declaration—“Yes it is I, the Messiah, believe!”

What does this tell us about what God wants from us? What method does He use?

THURSDAY

A lost cause—what is a lost cause? Satan's position and all who side with him, why is it a lost cause?

Was there ever a pathway to win for Satan? Why not? If Satan actually succeeded in defeating Christ on earth, what happens? Does God die? If God dies (which He would not and cannot) but if God dies what happens to the rest of the universe? It ceases to exist—so Satan and all who follow him die.

If Christ would have been defeated on earth, what would have happened to God? He would have grieved because He would have lost humans, this special creation would have died, along with Satan and all who align with him, but God would not have died. Satan's win was still a loss for Satan and all who align with him—why? Because Satan's idea of a win is total separation from God, who is the source of life. Satan is delusional—his entire government is based on a lie, that God's government is imposed, and that Satan can have life on his own separate from God—delusional.

It would be like an astronaut, on an umbilical cutting the umbilical to be free from the ship and thinking he could continue to live.

Read last paragraph, “Just as Satan lost...” Why is our only protection to be on Christ's side?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

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The Book of Matthew Lesson 6 2Q 2016

Resting In Christ

SABBATH

Read memory verse: “Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.” (MT 11:28 NIV)

What kind of rest? Rest from what? Work? What type of work?

Would it not be rest from trying to save self, rest from trying to earn love, rest from trying to justify one’s significance, rest from trying to prove self—the rest of being loved for who you are, for being understood, and rest from trying to fix your own character?

Read first paragraph, “Christ was a living...” What does this mean a living representative of the law?

What kind of law would this be? Does it reveal something about how God’s law functions? How does it function?

Can God’s law be understood written on stone? Why or why not?

It cannot—because God’s law is the law of life, and stone is not alive. Stone cannot accurately reveal a living law.

Then why did God write the 10 Commandments on stone?

First—because God’s law of love was no longer written as the operating system upon the hearts of humans.

Second—because we needed it, because we needed a diagnostic instrument to reveal our terminal condition and lead us to our Designer for healing.

Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring would come to whom the promise had been made; and it was ordained through angels by a mediator. (Gal 3:19)

I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments... “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24). In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law. {ISM 233, 234}



What about the question Jesus asked, who can convict him of sin?

What is sin? transgression of the law—which law? The law of love, can Jesus be convicted of transgressing the law of love?

But, what about imposed rules—did Jesus violate any imposed rules?

- Did He heal on Sabbath?
- Did He instruct people to carry loads on Sabbath?
- Did He endorse His disciples pulling heads of grain on Sabbath?
- Did He speak with women, prostitutes, tax collectors, Samaritans?
- Did He drive out the moneychangers?
- Did He stop participating in the annual feasts—what about the Lord's supper, did He simply participate in the Passover Festival, or did He replace it, which means He stopped participating in the Passover?

What does this tell us about the traditions that enter into religion?

What is it that ultimately matters? The condition of the heart!

Read the second paragraph, "Jesus' life fully reflected the meaning..." He was the law of God lived out—no doubt—what command did Jesus give them?

To love each other—this is the command, and all law hangs upon love for God and each other.

Do we get more love when we focus on the 10 Commandments? What happens when we focus on the 10 Commandments? Typically, we get more restrictions, more guilt, more behavior focus and less love.

We get more love when we focus on Jesus, thus the Bible says, "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb 12:2)

Can love be commanded? Then why the 10 Commandments?

How does God get love? Can God get love from people by the use of might and power?

We must put the 10 Commandments back into their proper place—and they were added because fallen human beings needed them—for what? To diagnose and bring us to Christ—but then we are to shift our focus AWAY from the law and place our focus upon Christ! It is only in experiencing in our relationship with Christ, His love, His presence, that we can actually be changed. When we stay focused on the 10 Commandments, which many do, we actually obstruct God's healing plan!



SUNDAY

When you think of a yoke, what comes to mind? What is the purpose of a yoke? What does it do? It is not a bridle; it is not a bit.

A yoke is an instrument that allows one to engages in service, and which shares the load—thus it is an instrument of love!

"Take My yoke upon you," Jesus says. **The yoke is an instrument of service.** Cattle are yoked for labor, and the yoke is essential that they may labor effectually. By this illustration Christ teaches us that we are called to service as long as life shall last. We are to take upon us His yoke, that we may be co-workers with Him. {DA 329.2}

The yoke that binds to service is the law of God. The great law of love revealed in Eden, proclaimed upon Sinai, and in the new covenant written in the heart, is that which binds the human worker to the will of God. If we were left to follow our own inclinations, to go just where our will would lead us, we should fall into Satan's ranks and become possessors of his attributes. Therefore **God confines us to His will, which is high, and noble, and elevating.** He desires that we shall patiently and wisely take up the duties of service. The yoke of service Christ Himself has borne in humanity. He said, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." John 6:38. **Love for God, zeal for His glory, and love for fallen humanity, brought Jesus to earth to suffer and to die. This was the controlling power of His life. This principle He bids us adopt.** {DA 329.3}

What is yoke? The yoke of love—and from your own experience, when you are doing something from love, does it make the burden easier?

Read last paragraph, "What else does Jesus mean..." Resting in Jesus means moving one's life into harmony with God's design (i.e. law) and the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. We actually get healthier, more energetic, feel better, have less disabilities when we live in harmony with God's design—laws:

- Exercise regularly (law of exertion), and while you are using energy and there many be muscle burn while exercising, regular exercise results in greater energy, less fatigue, less pain, better sleep, better mental & physical health.
- Altruism (law of love)—those who volunteer live longer, have less disability, less mental health problems, less dementia and stay out of nursing homes longer than those who don't volunteer
- Law of worship—by beholding we become changed, worship a God of love become more loving, worship a dictator, become more abusive. theatrical.



- Law of liberty—violate liberty in relationships and conflict arises, love is damaged, rebellion is incited, which cause inflammatory cascades which undermine health, promote liberty and love grows!

Living in harmony with God’s design brings rest, brings peace, brings health! This is not magic, it is not a supreme being keeping score and handing out rewards or punishments. It is the way God constructed life to work.

MONDAY

Read top paragraph, “If, as so much...” Because he was dealing with Jews who had burdened their system with inordinate number of restrictions?

How much time did He spend in Samaria talking about the Sabbath?

Read second paragraph, “Knowing that one of the reasons...” Is this the problem? It came down to them failing to avoid work on Sabbath?

No, this was not the issue—read Amos 8:5-6:

“When will the New Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?”— skimping the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales, ⁶ buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat.”

Notice they were keeping the Sabbath, they were avoiding work, but they didn’t love the Sabbath, it wasn’t a delight to them and they were watching the clock so they could get out as soon as the sun set in order to cheat people.

This issue was not the Sabbath, the issue was the selfishness in their hearts and characters.

The Sabbath was a sign that God makes them holy and they were not holy people:

Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the Lord made them holy.

“ ‘Yet the people of Israel rebelled against me in the desert. They did not follow my decrees but rejected my laws—although the man who obeys them will live by them—and they utterly desecrated my Sabbaths. (Eze 20:12,12)

How did they desecrate the Sabbaths? By doing work? No! The problem was they were observing the Sabbath with selfish, hardened, evil hearts! In other words, they obeyed the Sabbath law without love,



without renewal of the inner man. They kept the Sabbath like the Pharisees did, who killed the Lord of the Sabbath.

What about today? How many SDAs religiously keep the Sabbath, but they find no joy in it. It is not a delight. They watch the clock waiting for sundown so they can go about their business? Then they are also desecrating the Sabbath.

So, what do we learn from Israel's captivity? Why did they go into captivity? Because they were plowing fields on Sabbath? No, because they rejected God and would not allow Him to heal their hearts!

This is an accurate illustration of what happens in reality when we won't let God heal our hearts, we become slaves of sin!

Can parents coerce, pressure, threaten their children to eat broccoli, or spinach, or kale? Yes, but can parents make their children enjoy it?

God can use threats to get behavioral conformity. He can never get love by using threats.

A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897 par. 11}

How many churches have taught their children a god who imposes rules, keeps track of any breaking of the rules and threatens to punish—and then seen their children rebel and leave the church? Or, if they don't leave stay and become rigid legal religionists.

Read the last four paragraphs, "If a hen lays an egg..." Do you read this and get inspired? Does it draw you closer to God? If God did require this what would it say about God?

Do we have any such elements in our worship practices today?

At the GC in San Antonio there were signs in restaurant windows, "Get your Sabbath Vouchers here." What witness were we giving to the non-believers in San Antonio? It is okay to eat in their facility, buy their food, have them wait on us, just as long as we use a voucher, not cash?

What is a voucher? A piece of paper with a proscribed amount of valuable that can be exchanged for goods and services. What is cash?

What picture of God do we present with such behaviors?



How can we present the Sabbath that is reasonable, inspiring, sensible?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “This was the climate...” How do you view the Sabbath? Through which law lens—a rule imposed to test our obedience or a design for our health, for us to participate in and benefit from?

What of this idea that the Sabbath is a day of worship and fellowship “that we cannot do during the workweek”? Can persons worship God and fellowship together on Sunday? In what ways can they not do this on Sunday?

This is stated many times by SDA theologians—but whenever I have asked church leaders, what can be experiences on Sabbath that cannot be experience on Sunday I never get answers? Why? Because they view it through imposed law. Through design law something is different, but what?

Does this question sound similar to the question the woman at the well asked Jesus?

“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet.”²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

And what was Jesus’ answer?

²¹ Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.”²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.” (JN 4:19-24)

What about the Sabbath, if she would have asked Him, you Jews worship on Sabbath, we worship on Friday, or Sunday, what might Jesus have said? Would He likely have said, “The Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience. If you don’t observe it you cannot be saved and God will, in justice, punish you?”

Or would have has said something similar?

"Believe me, dear woman, the day on which one worships God is not what ultimately matters; it is the condition of the heart of the worshiper that matters. Very soon, you will see those who worship on Sabbath want me off the cross in order to observe that day. You Samaritans worship a confusing tradition of rituals that does not enlighten the mind and has no ability to



heal the worshiper; we worship the Creator God, and our minds are enlightened and healed by him because all he asks of us is sensible and reasonable. The time has come that all true worshipers will worship the Father with an intelligent, reasonable understanding of who he is—loving, admiring, and respecting the truth about his nature, character, and methods. These understanding worshipers are the kind the Father seeks. God is intelligent and reasonable, and his worshipers must worship him intelligently and reasonably, appreciating and valuing the truth of God's methods and principles. The Sabbath is a sign made for human kind, but the Sabbath is not the reality—the Lord of the Sabbath is the reality.

Did I just say anything to diminish the value and sanctity of the Bible Sabbath? If you think I did, then please reevaluate what I said, because I did not.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “It is very interesting...” thoughts? Do you find the arguments most persuasive?

One reason is because regardless of the day of worship, what kind of hearts did they manifest by how they treated each other on Sabbath?

Do you think if they were doing all of this behavior on Sunday, Jesus would have said, your problem is you are missing the right day, please deny healthcare to people in need on Sabbath rather than Sunday and all will be well?

It wasn't about the Sabbath—it has NEVER been about the Sabbath. It has always been about the kind of person God is and the hearts, minds, characters of His people!

The Sabbath cannot be kept holy by people with unholy hearts!

The Sabbath is a gift, a tool, an evidence, a sign—created by God for a need in universal history, what need? To demonstrate God's character in the context of war when great might and power was being wielded.

What is the danger in wielding might and power? That people may stop thinking and obey out of fear. Is this what God wants?

So when Jesus was performing miracles and the masses were growing because of this, He stopped. Why?

On the road to Emmaus, did He perform miracles to convince them? Why not?

Whenever God did use might and power in the past did He get what He wanted?



- Flood—Babel
- Plagues upon Egypt—golden calf
- Fire at Carmel—more rebellion

God wants only the obedience of understanding friends, only intelligent cooperation, trust and love. This can only come when we freely evaluate the issues and come to agreement.

Thus, when Jesus needed to demonstrate His equality with the Father and He created earth, there was the danger of beings bowing out of fear, out of intimidation. So, after six days of expending immeasurable amounts of power, God the Son said, “I rest my case.” God the Son suspended the use of power, He rested and left His intelligences free to think, evaluate, come to their own conclusion.

The Sabbath is a sign, an evidence, a proof, that God is love, that God presents truth in love and leaves us free. That God does NOT coerce. Thus, true Sabbath observers are those who have seen the evidence of God’s character, been won to trust, open the heart and are transformed to be like Him!

Thus the Sabbath is a sign for all those who value God’s methods and practice them!

Why does the lesson spend so much time on the Sabbath—and if you look over our past quarterlies this subject comes up over and over again, why?

THURSDAY

Read MT 12:12 “Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” Why is it lawful? What law?

The lesson point us to Isaiah 58:7-13

Repair the breach, what does this mean? What is the breach in God’s law? The acceptance of the imposed law construct, the replacing of God’s design law of love, with the imposed law of man.

The Sabbath is the sign, pointing us to creation—because creation operates upon design law. Sunday is the mark of arbitrary, legislated, imposed rules that require policing and inflicted punishments.

Thus those who teach the seventh day Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience and that if we don’t keep it God will punish, have accepted the lie of Satan. The breach in the law remains.

The only way to repair the breach is to restore the law of love, the design law back into our understanding and operations.

The spiritual restoration of which the work carried forward in Nehemiah's day was a symbol, is outlined in the words of Isaiah: "They shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities." "They that shall be of thee shall build the



old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." Isaiah 61:4; 58:12. {PK 677.2}

The prophet here describes a people who, in a time of general departure from truth and righteousness, **are seeking to restore the principles that are the foundation of the kingdom of God.** [what are the principles that are the foundation of the kingdom of God? It is the law of love, truth, liberty, design protocols.] They are repairers of a breach that has been made in God's law--the wall that He has placed around His chosen ones for their protection, and obedience to whose precepts of justice, truth, and purity is to be their perpetual safeguard. {PK 677.3}

In words of unmistakable meaning the prophet points out the specific work of this remnant people who build the wall. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 58:13, 14. {PK 678.1}

In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. **The breach made in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired.** [The breach made in the law AT THE TIME the Sabbath was changed. The change of the Sabbath was not the breach in the law, it was the evidence of the breach in the law. The true breach in the law was the change in the idea of how God's law functions—from design law to imposed rules. When does a church committee vote to change the laws of gravity or respiration? Why not? Because they cant, so what does it mean that the church did vote to change the Sabbath law? It means that they no longer see God's law as design law, but imposed rules. This led to the infection of a punishing God, in need of legal payment in order to be saved. The legal theory of atonement is the fruit of this change in the law and as long as we continue to teach the legal theory of atonement we have NOT repaired the breach in God's law.] **God's remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform** and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as a memorial of creation, a constant reminder of the power of God. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. **Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to co-operate with Him in building up the waste places.** They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in. See verse 12. {PK 678.2}

FRIDAY

Read top paragraph, "With our without..." Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

May 18-20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at *The Struggle Is Real* Conference at Seacoast Church in Charleston SC, for more info and to register click this link <http://www.2016summit.net>

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Cape Town, South Africa



The Book of Matthew Lesson 7 2Q 2016

Lord of Jews and Gentiles

SABBATH

What do you think of the title? Why do we even have such a title? Why isn't the title, Lord of Humanity?

What was one of the most common titles Jesus gave Himself? Wasn't it "son of man"? Which means, human being, He didn't call himself, "son of Judah."

Why didn't Jesus refer to Himself as son of Abraham, or son of Jacob?

Where does this division of Jew and Gentile come from?

God's calling of Abraham and promising to make a great nation from his descendants.

So, for what was Abraham called?

He was called for a mission—what mission? To be the avenue through which the Savior, Messiah, Redeemer, Remedy for the entire human race would come—and in that mission to develop a group who were to be prepared to meet the Messiah and assist in saving the entire world.

So understanding that calling—who would be considered descendants of Abraham? Anyone who trusts God and thereby assists God in accomplishing God's purpose in saving all humanity.

Any Bible texts support this position?

Rahab and Ruth—did were they descendants of Jacob? Did they become part of the Jewish nation? Were they even in the ancestry of Jesus? Who then is a Jew?

Romans 4:16,17:

¹⁶ Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. ¹⁷ As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. Rom 4:16,17 NIV

What do you hear?



- What does “of the law” mean? What law? This is a reference to the Law of Moses, or the Levitical law and is referring to those who were part of the acting troupe known as Israel and Judah—those responsible for acting out the play in the theater known at the Jewish Temple
- What does “of the faith” mean? Those who trusted God, like Abraham, but who were not actors in the Jewish theater, just as Abraham never acted in the Jewish theater.
- What does it mean “gives life to the dead”? Who is this referring to? Those who are in the terminal condition of sinfulness, deviant from God’s design i.e. dead in trespass and sin—the entire human race after Adam’s sin.
- What does it mean, “calls things that are not as though they were”? Calls those that were not part of the acting troupe, not part of the genetic descendants of Abraham, as though they were because while they didn’t take part in the symbolic acting out of the plan of salvation, they did partake of the genuine Remedy—Jesus Christ!

So, Romans 4:16,17 from *The Remedy*:

¹⁶Therefore the restoration to a perfect state of being and the inheritance of eternal life on a renewed earth come by trusting the One who made the promise to do it. This transformation is accomplished by God's graciousness and is guaranteed to all the children of Abraham—not only his genetic descendants, who were given the written diagnostic code, but also to his spiritual descendants who, just like him, trust God. Abraham is the father of all who trust God.¹⁷As it is written: "I have made you the father of many different ethnic groups." The God in whom Abraham trusted—the Creator God who is the source of all life and who calls things into existence from nothingness—considers all of us who trust him to be descendants of Abraham.

Read memory text: “I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles.” (Isa 42:6)

What is the meaning of this text? To whom is it referring? It is referring to Jesus who is the Savior of all humanity, not just the Jews.

SUNDAY

The lesson is about feeding of the five thousand, which counted only the men, so the mass of people was much larger than five thousand.

Just before the feeding of the five thousand John the Baptist was beheaded, Jesus hears the news, and retreats to a desolate area, and the crowds follow him there.

Read third paragraph, “There is, however,...” What do you think of the idea that this was more than meeting immediate physical needs, but also a fulfillment of sending manna from heaven?

How did Jesus further develop this idea?



I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. ⁵⁰ But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” John 6:47-51

How did the Jews interpret Jesus’ words? They took them literally—and what reaction did they have?

What does it mean to eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus? How do we partake of the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus today?

Is it in communion service? Or, is the communion service only symbolic of the reality?

Do we risk similar problems that the Jews had of getting stuck in metaphor and failing to experience the reality to which the metaphor points?

What is the reality? What is the real bread and wine the real flesh and blood?

Do you feel confident in drawing your own conclusion that Jesus is the Word of God—the Word made *flesh*, and that we ingest the flesh/bread when we study God’s word. The truth that Jesus brought/revealed becomes to us the meat, the substance, the building blocks of our thoughts, our ideas, our beliefs, which for our attitudes and help shape our characters.

Christ, the truth of God, is the source of all truth and thus feasting on Christ, is partaking truth, which dispels lies, falsehood, distortion, misunderstanding, confusion. The truth changes our thinking, our ideas, our conception of reality, and thus the truth that Christ reveals and brings is the data, the actual particles of information that our concepts, ideas, and beliefs are built out of. So, just like nutrients for the body, the truth from Jesus is real food for the mind!

Can we feel comfortable with this and realize that there is no healing power, no saving effect from eating physical bread and wine? These are only symbols to remind us to *THINK!*

The Word of God contains our life insurance policy. **To eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God means to study the Word and to carry that Word into the life in obedience to all its precepts.** Those who thus partake of the Son of God **become partakers of the divine nature, one with Christ.** They breathe a holy atmosphere, in which only the soul can truly live. They carry in their lives an assurance of the holy principles received from the Word—their lives are worked by the power of the Holy Spirit, and they have an earnest of the immortality that will be theirs through the death and resurrection of Christ. Should the earthly body decay, the principles of their faith sustain them, for they are partakers of the divine



nature. Because Christ was raised from the dead, they grasp the pledge of their resurrection, and eternal life is their reward. {Hvn 54.2}

As I understand it, bread and flesh symbolize the truth, the Word of God, and the blood/wine, symbolize the perfect life/character of Christ that we receive, AFTER we have comprehended enough truth about God that we trust Him enough to open our hearts and allow in the Holy Spirit, who takes the character of Christ and reproduces it in us. So it “is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me.”

The Comforter is called "the Spirit of truth." His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. {DA 671.1}

So, after Jesus feeds the crowd, what begins to happen in the crowd?

The crowd begins to foment the idea of proclaiming Jesus King and forcing Him onto the throne.

How did Jesus respond? He told the disciples to get in the boat and head to the other shore while he dismissed the crowd.

Why? What does God want from us? What is God's goal? What is He trying to achieve?

He wants our love, our trust, our devotion, our confidence in Him and His ways, our loyalty. Can God get this by displays of might and power? What do displays of might and power do? They shut down thinking, they inspire a sense of being overwhelmed so one surrenders to power, to intimidation, but what is the problem with such surrender? Any supernatural being can cause such a reaction—but only God possesses truth, only God is worthy of our trust.

What can God not create? God can create sinless intelligent beings, but can God create, by use of power and might, love, devotion, loyalty?

God can create programmed robots, that would be reliable, but can robots love? Can robots choose to be loyal? Can robots adore? Can robots be devoted?

God cannot create mature, loyal, devoted, trustworthy beings capable of genuine love—because character cannot be created, character must be formed by the exercise of the free will choices of the intelligent beings.



So Jesus, when He saw they were following Him for the miracles, stopped for a while.

On the road to Emmaus He did the same thing:

He maintained His disguise till He had interpreted the Scriptures, and had led them to an intelligent faith in His life, His character, His mission to earth, and His death and resurrection. He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, not because it was supported by His personal testimony, but because the typical law, and the prophets of the Old Testament, agreeing with the facts of His life and death, presented unquestionable evidence of that truth. When the object of His labors with the two disciples was gained, He revealed Himself to them, that their joy might be full, and then vanished from their sight (ST Oct. 6, 1909). {5BC 1125.12}

God uses the methods He does because it is the only way to achieve our full restoration to beings in His image!

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, **man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself.** True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, **the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit,** and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}

MONDAY

The lesson focuses on the events after Jesus dismissed the crowd. The disciples were on the water and Jesus walks out to them. Peter walks on the water, but turns back and loses sight of Jesus, begins to sink, cries out and is saved. Once in the boat Jesus calms the storm and they are amazed.

What do we learn from this story? How did the disciples first respond when they saw Jesus walking on the water?

They were afraid—why?

Was Jesus doing something threatening? Was Jesus a danger to them? Then why were they afraid? Because Jesus doing something outside their scope of understanding; He was Jesus doing something unexpected. Was Jesus presenting Himself in a way they did not anticipate and thus they failed to recognize Him?



Does this ever happen to us? Do we ever fail to recognize God, or God's movements, because God is moving in a way that is outside our expectations, comfort zone, understanding and thus we become afraid of what we are seeing—even though it is the movements of God?

What about those who are afraid new ideas, a perspective of God they have not heard before, perhaps a God who doesn't use power to threaten and kill? Now, isn't it interesting that those who hold the view of God that He tortures and kills His enemies, are afraid when a God of love who doesn't torture and kill is presented. Why are they afraid?

Is it because their minds have settled into a certain view that new ideas are seen as threatening? Do people ever restrict God to conform with their limited understanding?

As I was preparing this lesson I came across a quote I had read before, but realized it was applicable to this discussion and demonstrates this has been a problem throughout human history. This is from one of the founders of our church:

There is no excuse for any one in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all **our expositions of Scripture** are without an error. The fact that **certain doctrines** have been held as truth for many years **by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible**. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. **No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation...** **There are those who oppose everything that is not in accordance with their own ideas**, and by so doing they endanger their eternal interest as verily as did the Jewish nation in their rejection of Christ. **The Lord designs** that our opinions shall be put to the test, that we may see the necessity of closely examining the **living oracles** [what are living oracles? Does it suggest anything about the kind of law involved? Would it not be a living law, the law of life, the law of love, the protocols reality actually operate upon?] to see whether or not we are **in the faith...** [in the faith, what does this mean? If their opinions are not in harmony with the *living* oracles then does that mean they are not in the faith?] {RH, December 20, 1892 par. 1}

From the description of the Laodiceans, it is evident that many were deceived in their estimate of their spiritual condition. They regarded themselves as rich, as possessing all the knowledge and grace that was needed; **but yet they lacked the gold of faith and love, the white raiment of Christ's righteousness**. [what is the gold? Trust and love! and what is the white clothing? a Christlike character] They were destitute and poverty-stricken, walking in sparks of their own kindling, and preparing to lie down in sorrow... [Why were they destitute? Because they didn't have trust and love and Christ's character reproduced within—what would they cling to instead? What could be held to instead? Could it be a legal pardon? A legal payment? A legal claim that has no power to transform the inner person? what does sparks of their own kindling mean?] {RH, December 20, 1892 par. 2}



In unmistakable language our position is presented before us. Apart from Christ we have no merit, no righteousness. Our sinfulness, our weakness, our human imperfections make it impossible that we should appear before God, **unless we are clothed in Christ's spotless righteousness.** We are to be found in him, not having our own righteousness, but the righteousness which is through Christ. [What does this mean? We have a terminal condition that we cannot heal. Jesus provides a real remedy that cures our terminal condition. DA 762] {RH, December 20, 1892 par. 3}

But there is hope for every one; for "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." **If the love of God is not appreciated, and does not become an abiding principle in the hard heart to soften and subdue the soul, we are utterly lost.**[actual transformation, not legal representation and payment] **The Lord has no reserve power with which to influence man.** He can give no greater manifestation of his love than that which he has given. **Heaven's richest gift has been freely offered for your acceptance.** [How do you hear this? The richest gift was paid to God to get God to accept you, or the richest gift was given to get you to accept the truth about God and trust Him? Well notice the next sentence] **If the exhibition of the love of Jesus does not melt and subdue your heart, by what means can you be reached?** Has the love of Christ failed to bring forth an earnest response of love and gratitude? Then let it not remain in this condition of hardness another day. **Open your heart, and receive Christ, the best gift of heaven.** Let not cruel unbelief lead you to refuse the heaven-sent gift. Let not Christ say of you, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." {RH, December 20, 1892 par. 4}

TUESDAY

Read the top dark section, "Therefore, the Lord said..." What is it the Lord wants? He wants transformation of the hearts of people—what were the people doing? They were being religious—they were saying the right words, attending the right ceremonies, observing the right day, eating the right food, paying the right tithe, speaking the right words, but what were they not doing? They were not partaking of the remedy, they were not being transformed in heart to be like Jesus.

How much of Christianity is stuck in the same process? Why? Because at the root, the problem is a false diagnosis that sin is a legal problem that requires a legal solution. So people focus on behavior, on bad deeds, and on teaching ideas that focus on getting our legal punishment taken by someone else so we can be legally pardoned.

But such a religion doesn't change the heart!

Matthew 15-1-20 focuses on ritual and how the Jews thought ritual actually mattered—they thought it really mattered what one ate, whether one washed their hands or not before they ate etc.



Do we struggle with any of these issues today? Do we ever feel that we have sinned if we eat the wrong food?

Food cannot change the character—but food can undermine the ability to form a healthy character—how? Unhealthy diet can undermine health, and the sicker we are the more self-focused we become. The sicker we are the more difficult it is to be able to minister to other, to actually operate as a giver, in harmony with God’s design. It is not impossible to minister to others when sick, only that sickness makes it more difficult, thus unhealthy diet undermines our health, makes our brains less efficient so harder to learn, and makes our bodies less healthy which puts obstacles in our way of living lives in harmony with God’s plan, which can undermine character development.

Does that mean every morsel of food has moral value, is a moral decision of good or evil? Absolutely not! It is about the general trend of the life! The attitude of the heart, not the molecules of food in any given moment.

Read bottom pink section, “We all hate hypocrisy...” What ideas tend to increase hypocrisy?

What ideas decrease hypocrisy?

Anything that makes us more selfish will increase hypocrisy, anything that makes us more loving with concern for the welfare of others will decrease hypocrisy.

Operating on survival motives increase hypocrisy, operating on love decreases it.

Rule keeping increases hypocrisy, principle based living decrease hypocrisy.

Theologies that focus on rules, law, imposed law, incite fear and lead to more hypocrisy.

Theologies that focus on design, love, God’s character and methods enhance love, diminish fear and lead to genuine living.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about the story found in Matthew 15:21-28 of the woman who asks Jesus for help, but he initially rebuffs her.

Read paragraphs 3-5 “What if you...” What do you imagine Jesus’ tone was when He said this? Do you think He sounded harsh or was there something in His voice that suggested He was not closing the door on her?

Could His tone have been such that it sounded like He was reciting what others thought, but He Himself didn’t think this?



What do you think of the idea that Jesus was placing Israel in a priority position in the plan of salvation and others in a dependent status?

Did Israel have a priority position? A priority is something that is more important than others? Was Israel more important to God than other human beings?

Consider Isaiah 19:18-25:

¹⁸ In that day five cities in Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the Lord Almighty. One of them will be called the City of Destruction.

¹⁹ In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the heart of Egypt, and a monument to the Lord at its border. ²⁰ It will be a sign and witness to the Lord Almighty in the land of Egypt. When they cry out to the Lord because of their oppressors, he will send them a savior and defender, and he will rescue them. ²¹ So the Lord will make himself known to the Egyptians, and in that day they will acknowledge the Lord. They will worship with sacrifices and grain offerings; they will make vows to the Lord and keep them. ²² The Lord will strike Egypt with a plague; he will strike them and heal them. They will turn to the Lord, and he will respond to their pleas and heal them.

²³ In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. ²⁴ In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth. ²⁵ The Lord Almighty will bless them, saying, “Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance.”

From the SDA Bible Commentary on this passage: “The Israelites had come to look upon themselves as being the Lord’s people exclusively. They forgot that He was the God of all the earth and that He desired all nations to be saved. Isaiah here points out to the people of Israel their opportunities and responsibilities. The time was to come when heathen Assyria, as well as Egypt, would know God.” ¹

What was the priority for God? Saving all humanity, which means keeping open an avenue for the Messiah to be incarnate and fulfill His mission of revealing the truth about God, refuting the lies of Satan, exposing Satan, destroying the carnal nature, destroying death, and developing a perfect human character, thus becoming the Remedy to sin, i.e. fixing what Adam’s sin did to humanity so that every human being has access to God’s healing and can be saved.

¹ Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1977). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 4, p. 185). Review and Herald Publishing Association.



THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, “Yet, this was always...” Yes, God has always been the God of all humanity and interested in saving all humanity. Israel was chosen to be the conduit through which Jesus would come to provide Remedy—Jesus has done that. Israel now has no further special place as a genetic group—they stand on equal footing with all humanity. God loves all human beings and wants all human beings to be saved!

The lesson asks us to read Romans 4:1-12: From *The Remedy*:

¹What about our father Abraham: what did he understand about this issue?² If Abraham was somehow healed by his own efforts at keeping a set of rules or performing certain rituals, then he would have his own healing formula to promote, and would not need trust in God.³ But what does the Scripture say? "Abraham trusted God, and his trust was recognized as righteousness because the distrust caused through Satan's lies had been removed, and through trust he was endowed with a new heart, right motives and Christlike principles."

⁴Now, when a person works, their wages are earned and are not a gift or an endowment.⁵ But the person who doesn't try to earn God's Remedy by working for it, but instead comes to know and trust God—that person's trust is recognized as righteousness because the distrust caused by Satan's lies has been removed, and through trust they receive from God transformation of heart and experience God's own righteous character created within.⁶ David says the exact same thing when he describes the blessedness of the person to whom God bestows his perfect cure without them working to earn it:

⁷"Happy are they whose wicked minds are restored to perfect purity, whose selfishness is eradicated.

⁸"Happy is the person whose infected heart the Lord transforms to perfection."

⁹Is this gracious re-creation of mind only for the small number of humans who have been physically circumcised, or is this for all humanity? We have been saying all along that Abraham trusted God—and his trust was recognized as righteousness because trust in God replaced mistrust of God—and through trust he was endowed with a new heart, right motives, and Christlike principles.¹⁰ And when did God accept his trust as righteousness? Was it before he was circumcised or after? It was before!¹¹ Circumcision was the sign—a seal in his body—of the new heart and mind he had already received when he was still uncircumcised. Therefore Abraham is the father of all who trust in God (whether they are circumcised or not circumcised), those who are endowed with a new heart, right motives and Christlike principles—just like Abraham was.¹² Don't be confused; he is also the father of those who are not only circumcised physically, but who have also trusted God and have been endowed with new minds and Christlike principles, just like Abraham had before he was circumcised.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 1



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

May 18-20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at *The Struggle Is Real* Conference at Seacoast Church in Charleston SC, for more info and to register click this link <http://www.2016summit.net>

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Cape Town, South Africa



The Book of Matthew Lesson 8 2Q 2016

Peter and the Rock

SABBATH

Read second paragraph, “The New Testament...”

a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, Titus 1:2

But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, ⁹ who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 2Tim 1:8-10

Is this a reference to before God created anything, or before God created this earth?

Notice how the author of the book Education uses the phrase “before time began”?

Then will be opened before him the course of the great conflict that had its birth before time began, and that ends only when time shall cease. The history of the inception of sin; of fatal falsehood in its crooked working; of truth that, swerving not from its own straight lines, has met and conquered error--all will be made manifest. The veil that interposes between the visible and the invisible world will be drawn aside, and wonderful things will be revealed. {Ed 304.3}

Is this author referring to a time before God created anything, or before God created the earth? Could the Bible writers be referring to the same time?

The King James Version translates 2Tim 1:9 as:

Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus **before the world began**

The SDA Bible commentary on this passage states:

“before times eternal,” that is, before the long ages of this earth’s history. In His foreknowledge God was prepared to meet the tragedy and crisis of sin before it entered our world (see Rom. 16:25, 26; see on Matt. 25:34; 1 Cor. 2:7). Because of God’s omniscience, past, present, and



future are alike known to Him; no earthly event can surprise Him. Knowing that sin would be a personal attack by created beings against His authority, and thus against His character, God was always prepared to demonstrate His love and fairness, not only to a sinless universe, but also before those who had despised divine love. See on John 1:14; 3:16; Rom. 5:5–10.¹

We are not told how linear existence works on other worlds, one event following another event in the flow of time. However, inspiration does tell us that when earth was created there is not only linear time, one event follows another, but there were measurements of time created—the Sun, Moon and Sabbath were created to measure time.

Is anyone aware of any inspired reference to the measurement of time that is not related to Earth's Sun, Moon or Sabbath?

The point is that before time began on earth God had already conceived of a plan to save humanity—What was the plan that was conceived within the mind of God before time began?

How would you describe that plan?

The next paragraph states, “That’s why Jesus didn’t...” Do we agree that Jesus had to die, that he *must* die in order to save humanity? Yes we do agree, there was no other way to save us. But what about the last sentence in that paragraph, “His death was the only way that humanity could be saved from the penalty of transgression.”

How is this statement absolutely true, and how can it be misunderstood such that the statement becomes false?

What is the penalty of transgression? Death “the wages of sin is death” Rom 6:23

From where does that penalty arise or come? From sin itself—unremedied, unremoved sin destroys the sinner. “sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.” James 1:15 “The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction” Gal 6:8

So, it is absolutely true, Jesus’ death was required to save us from sinfulness, which if unremedied results in death—why? What is sin? Sin is lawlessness. 1Jn 3:4, which means being out of harmony with God’s law. And God’s law is the design protocol upon which life is built, so it makes perfect sense that if one is out of harmony with the protocols of life then life will not continue and death occurs. If one steps out of harmony with the law of respiration and refuses to breathe—what happens—death. This is the truth of God’s Word.

So Christ’s death was needed to accomplish what?

¹ Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1980). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 7, pp. 329–330). Review and Herald Publishing Association.



- Reveal truth to dispel lies and restore us to trust
- Destroy the infection of fear and selfishness (carnal nature) and develop a perfect character restoring God's law of love into humanity. This is how he destroys death, by destroying the infection of lies, fear and selfishness that breakdown trust and violate the law of life (love) and in so doing restore God's design to humanity (1John 3:8)

How can the statement above be misconstrued to teach a falsehood? When it is presented through imposed law rather than design law. Then the problem with sin is breaking the rules and getting into trouble with the ruling authority, who must use external power to inflict the death penalty. Thus, in this false law model Jesus' death is presented as the means of paying legal penalties and propitiating a wrathful deity; the penalty of transgression is taught as coming out from God not from sin. Thus God is presented as the problem that needs fixing, this undermines trust in God, doctrines are created to protect and hide us from God which obstructs the healing of heart and mind that God longs to provide us.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Imagine what it must..." What questions would you like to have asked Jesus?

- Why did you use a serpent as an image in the wilderness to represent you?
 - Because we are dead in trespass and sin, infected with the lies of the serpent and our primary drive is fear and selfishness, which originate in the serpent. In other words, we are infected with the poison of the serpent.
 - Only Jesus, who takes up our serpent infected condition can cure it and become our Remedy
 - And Israel needed to realize that only by trust in Jesus could they be saved—that there is no legal solution, there is in objective healing of the condition of the being—which is accomplished by Jesus.
 - From EGW: **"The lifting up of the brazen serpent was to teach Israel an important lesson. They could not save themselves from the fatal effect of the poison in their wounds. God alone was able to heal them. Yet they were required to show their faith in the provision which He had made. They must look in order to live. It was their faith that was acceptable with God, and by looking upon the serpent their faith was shown. They knew that there was no virtue in the serpent itself, but it was a symbol of Christ; and the necessity of faith in His merits was thus presented to their minds. Heretofore many had brought their offerings to God, and had felt that in so doing they made ample atonement for their sins. They did not rely upon the Redeemer to come, of whom these offerings were only a type. The Lord would now teach them that their sacrifices, in themselves, had no more power or virtue than the serpent of brass, but were, like that, to lead their minds to Christ, the great sin offering. {PP 430.3}**
- Can we come to heaven now?
- What can we do to accelerate your plan to eliminate sin?



- Others?

Do you think the disciples asked any questions like this?

“Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.” John 21:25

When the Seven Thunders spoke, I started to write it all down, but a voice out of Heaven stopped me, saying, “Seal with silence the Seven Thunders; don’t write a word.” Rev 10:4

Do you think some answers may have been given to individuals in the past but have not been revealed generally?

Does that mean that some of us today could get answers to questions we have had...is it possible?

So, the question for the lesson—Who was Jesus? Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” You are the Messiah, the Savior, the Deliverer, the Anointed One... which means what?

Who is Jesus?

- God
- Creator
- The Go-Between connecting infinity (Infinite God) with finite creation
- Originator and Conclusion (or Beginning and End)
- Template upon which life is constructed
- Source of all energy, space, time, matter, life, truth
- Savior, Deliverer, Restorer
- God, who merged Himself with humanity and now lives in a human body

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read Matthew 16:17-20. I am going to read it from the NIV and from *The Remedy* and I want you to consider which is more accurate and what evidence supports the accuracy of each?

Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.”¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”²⁰ Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

Jesus smiled and said: "Well done, Simon, son of Jonah. You did not gain this truth from humans, but from my Father in heaven."¹⁸ And though you are Peter—your name meaning small



stone—it is on the solid Rock of the Son of Man that I will build my church, and hell's barricade of selfishness and lies will not stop it.¹⁹ I will give you the Spirit empowering you with truth and love, which are the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind to truth and love on earth will be bound to truth and love in heaven, and whatever you loose from fear and selfishness on earth will be loosed from fear and selfishness in heaven."²⁰ Then Jesus instructed his disciples not to tell people that he was the Messiah, because it was not yet time.

How do we know whether Jesus was referring to Peter or Himself when He said “on this rock I will build my church”?

Who does Peter refer to as the rock upon whom the church is built?

Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, answered them, “Leaders of the people and elders: ⁹if we are being questioned today about the good deed done to the lame man and how he was healed, ¹⁰then you should all know, and all the people of Israel should know, that this man stands here before you completely well through the power of the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth—whom you crucified and whom God raised from death. Jesus is the one of whom the scripture says: ‘The stone that you the builders despised turned out to be the most important of all.’ Acts 4:8-10

Come to the Lord, the living stone rejected by people as worthless but chosen by God as valuable. ⁵Come as living stones, and let yourselves be used in building the spiritual temple, where you will serve as holy priests to offer spiritual and acceptable sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ. For the scripture says:

“I chose a valuable stone,
which I am placing as the cornerstone in Zion;
and whoever believes in him will never be disappointed.”
This stone is of great value for you that believe; but for those who do not believe:
“The stone which the builders rejected as worthless
turned out to be the most important of all.”
And another scripture says:
“This is the stone that will make people stumble,
the rock that will make them fall.”
They stumbled because they did not believe in the word; such was God’s will for them.
1Pet 2:4-8 GNT

Here is 1Pet 2:4-8 from *The Remedy*:

⁴And as you come to Christ, who was rejected by people but was chosen by God and is precious to God because he is the living Foundation Stone of God's true temple ⁵realize that you also are living stones—the conscious, breathing, sentient building blocks—whom God is using to



construct his eternal temple. You are a holy priesthood bringing intelligent, reasonable and loving self-sacrifice—that is in harmony with God’s character of love—through your union with Jesus Christ. ⁶This is exactly what the Scripture is talking about:

"See, I will put a Stone in the Land of Promise: an especially chosen, perfect foundation Stone; and whoever trusts in him and is set in harmony with him will never be put to shame."

⁷For you, who know and trust God, this Stone is life's one true treasure; but to those who don't know or trust God, "This Stone was thought to be worthless, and rejected; but it is actually the one upon whom all life is built."

⁸"A Stone of pure love that trips up selfish human beings, and a Rock of holiness, humility and truth, over whom the sinful, proud and deceitful fall." They trip and fall because they prefer selfishness to love, and unhealed selfishness is a terminal condition—exactly as God diagnosed.

What is the basis for the idea the Peter is the stone upon which the church is built? This same passage, which denies what Peter taught himself, but also because people think concretely rather than abstractly. If people understood design law, and that what God is building is being constructed out of living beings, then one realizes that it cannot be built on the template of a sinful human being, but only on the template of God’s perfect Son.

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Eph 2:19-22

TUESDAY

Read Mt 16:21-23:

From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.”

The lesson asks why is Jesus so tough on Peter? The lesson suggests Peter wasn’t trying to save Jesus but steer Jesus, thoughts?

Do you think Satan was speaking through Peter like Satan did through the serpent in Eden?

So what did Jesus mean by saying get behind him Satan? Was Jesus speaking to Peter or Satan or both?



How was Satan speaking at that moment? Was Peter aware he was speaking Satan's thoughts?

How could Satan get Peter to speak such ideas? Does it mean Satan was in Peter's mind manipulating Peter's thoughts?

No, it doesn't mean this. All selfishness is from Satan, thus, when someone has selfishness in their own heart, and from their heart their mouth speaks selfish words, they are speaking Satan's language, the language, ideas, principles that have their origin in Satan—but that doesn't mean that person is being mind controlled by Satan or demon possessed.

Read Mt 16:24-27:

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

What does this text mean? What two principles are contrasted in this text?

What is the law of life and what is the law of sin and death? The law of life is the law of love—which functions how? Selfless giving!

The law of sin and death is survival of the fittest—which functions how? By taking for self.

So, what does it mean he who seeks to save his life will lose it, but he who loses his life for Christ will find it?

What is necessary to be able to do this? Love and trust, which require we come back to a true knowledge of God, Jn 17:3...

Is the text speaking of willingness to die for one's beliefs or one's cause?

What is it speaking of?

The grain of wheat that preserves its own life can produce no fruit. It abides alone. Christ could, if He chose, save Himself from death. But should He do this, He must abide alone. He could bring no sons and daughters to God. Only by yielding up His life could He impart life to humanity. Only by falling into the ground to die could He become the seed of that vast harvest, -the great multitude that out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, are redeemed to God. {DA 623.4}



With this truth Christ connects the lesson of self-sacrifice that all should learn: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." **All who would bring forth fruit as workers together with Christ must first fall into the ground and die. The life must be cast into the furrow of the world's need. Self-love, self-interest, must perish. And the law of self-sacrifice is the law of self-preservation.** The husbandman preserves his grain by casting it away. So in human life. **To give is to live.** The life that will be preserved is the life that is freely given in service to God and man. Those who for Christ's sake sacrifice their life in this world will keep it unto life eternal. {DA 623.5}

The life spent on self is like the grain that is eaten. It disappears, but there is no increase. A man may gather all he can for self; he may live and think and plan for self; but his life passes away, and he has nothing. **The law of self-serving is the law of self-destruction.** {DA 624.1}

What type of law is being described in this passage? Is this the law of God that was violated by Satan? Does this passage teach that the law of self-serving is the law of God-destruction? No! But that is what almost all the world believes, that if you sin God will destroy you, and they claim it is only just. All such teachings are an infection, showing the serpents venom of lies about God still cloud the mind!

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about the transfiguration when Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus, read second paragraph, "How fascinating..." What does it mean they spoke about His decease?

What do you think they discussed?

Don't you think they were discussing the completion of Jesus' mission to planet earth, which was to culminate in His death that weekend in Jerusalem?

Why do you think of all the beings God could have sent to encourage Jesus, Moses and Elijah were chosen?

- They are both human, and would remind Jesus of His victory, what it would achieve
- Symbolically, Moses represents the humans that are saved in the resurrection and Elijah those who are translated without seeing death
- But, Moses and Elijah also remind Jesus, by their presence, that He wins. They are only there in heaven because Jesus wins—if Jesus would have failed they would not have been in heaven. So, they are reminders of the fact that no matter how bad it gets, Jesus will win.
- But why not Enoch, rather than Elijah? What else was specifically helpful that Moses and Elijah could share with Jesus—from their experience on earth?
 - Did both Moses and Elijah have confrontations with Satan's forces?
 - Did both Moses and Elijah stand up to Satan's forces for the benefit of the people enslaved by sin?



- And did both Moses and Elijah, at some point, get overwhelmed with human emotion and slip up?
- So, could they also share from their experience that no matter how bad the emotions get, don't let the emotions take control, trust the Father!
- Was such a testimony something that angels could share?
- Could Moses and Elijah also share incredible thankfulness and love for their salvation, for being forgiven, for the healing they had received because of what Jesus was doing? Would this be encouraging to Jesus?

THURSDAY

This is the story of the religious leaders asking Peter whether Jesus paid the temple tax. Peter answered poorly and said yes, which validated the wrong conception the religious leaders were trying to teach about Jesus.

Read second paragraph, "Ellen G. White writes..." How did Jesus handle Peter's misrepresentation?

Read next paragraph, "We can learn much..." In this case, once Peter made his statement what options were available?

Would the truth of who Jesus was had been better served to start a dispute over paying the temple tax, or would that question have diverted people's attention away from what really mattered?

Do we ever get caught up into arguing over theological points that are nothing but distractions from what really matters?

What do you think really matters? The truth about God—it is always about the truth about God—His character, methods of truth, love and freedom!

The temple tax would have distracted from that truth, so Jesus took the action of paying it, in a way that demonstrated He was no mere human, which allowed the issue to fade away. If He didn't pay it after Peter said He would then allegations and arguments over who pays the tax etc. would arise diverting attention, having paid it as He did would diminish His enemies (Satan primarily) from wanting to draw attention to it as the miracle would cause many to think more deeply about who Jesus is. Thus, Jesus handled it to let it fade away and not be a distraction to His real mission.

And the very next verses of Scripture, after Jesus deals with the temple tax are:

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

² He called a little child and had him stand among them. ³ And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴



Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
MT 18:1-4 NIV

What quality about the little child Jesus is emphasizing? Humbleness, which functionally means what? Do small children, typically have teachable minds, minds that don't trust themselves, but want to learn? When a child colors in a book, or draws a picture, or does almost anything what do they want to do? They want to show mommy or daddy or both? Why? Because the child doesn't know whether it is good or not until someone tells them. A child born into the world doesn't know left from right, up or down, that the sky is blue and the grass is green. They must be told everything, thus all children look outside themselves for answers. They are not arrogant thinking they know everything, but ignorant and humble willing to allow that others know more and thus are teachable.

What is the Bible word for a humble willingness to listen and learn?

Obedience—the Greek [*hupakoe* /hoop·ak·o·ay/] *hypo*, under, *akoe*, from which we get acoustical or acoustic, means to listen, so Bible obedience is a humble willingness to listen, to learn, to be teachable by truth and evidence, like children who are eager to learn!

Bible obedience is not primarily about performance, but a willingness to learn, improve and develop based on advancing truth.

This is why the wicked who are lost perish “because they did not love the truth and thus be saved.”
1Thes 2:10

Is this how you understand greatness? Do we teach in Christianity that the great in heaven are those with minds that are capable of learning, and are eager to understand and follow the truth?

Do we see why Jesus didn't pick any theologians to be members of the 12 Apostles? They viewed themselves the teachers and experts and were no longer open to be taught—they were disobedient. But Jesus did choose a physician—along with fishermen, and a tax collector. Why? All of them could be taught.

Even today there is a big difference in the educational philosophy of theologians and physicians. Physicians are educated that truth is unfolding and that our conclusions need to be based upon evidence and thus we are taught to give up beliefs that prove false and move forward with new beliefs as evidence is revealed.

Many religionists however are indoctrinated into a belief system that obstructs learning—how? Because God never changes, they merge that reality with the idea that their ideas about God and theology should never change, thus too often people get stuck in their theological constructs believing that changing their ideas would somehow deny their faith in God.



FRIDAY

In the middle of the lesson it states, “Why didn’t Jesus simply hand Peter the money and tell him to pay it rather than perform such an amazing feat in order to solve what was a relatively small problem? The text doesn’t say. However, as the lesson said, it does show us the incredible power of God, which should not be surprising to us. After all, we see evidence of his incredible power all the time. our mere existence, much less than that of the visible cosmos, is an amazing manifestation of the power of our God.”

What is the emphasis? God’s power—what level of moral development needs to be reassured God is powerful?

This is level one thinking—the most basic level. This is where God started with the slaves of Egypt—by 10 plagues to show who was more powerful.

But, in heaven did Satan ever allege God had no power or that Satan had more power than God?

Power was never the question—it was the character of the One who wields the power that has been questioned.

Further, can God get what He wants by using power? Why not?

Because power incites fear, and fear incites selfishness and undermines love and trust.

The only way to overcome fear and selfishness is with love and truth, that is why Jesus stopped using power to perform miracles when the crowds grew.

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase–FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

May 18-20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at *The Struggle Is Real* Conference at Seacoast Church in Charleston SC, for more info and to register click this link <http://www.2016summit.net>

Thursday, June 9 at 1:30 PM Eastern Time Dr. Jennings will appear on the *Lifestyle Magazine* show, “Healing The Mind” that he recorded previously. It is scheduled to air on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN). Keep in mind that TBN can preempt the show at their discretion.

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Cape Town, South Africa.



2016 Q2 The Book of Matthew – Lesson 9

Idols of the Soul (and Other Lessons From Jesus)

Memory Text: “At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’” (Matthew 18:1 NIV)

SABBATH

1. Idols
 - a. What is your idol?
 - b. The photo illustration for this weeks lesson:
 - i. Stereotypical depictions
 - (1) Boat
 - (2) Football game
 - (3) Credit Card
 - ii. Favorite possession
 - iii. Sports
 - iv. Wealth
 - v. A person’s appearance in a mirror
 - vi. How fast a person can complete a running race
 - vii. A number on the bathroom scale
 - viii. Ideas, thoughts, concepts, position, or attitudes
 - (1) That separate us from God
 - (2) That prevent us from becoming servants for those we were meant to serve.
 - c. It is not important what your idol is, anything that beckons you to loosen you hold on God, or distracts you, or occupies your time or controls your thoughts: is dangerous for you.
2. Read the first paragraph: “As human beings, we are products of our environment, of our culture.” . . .
3. Read the second paragraph. It ends with: “It’s just so hard for us to see because we are so immersed in our culture and environment.”
 - a. John 3:3 “unless you be born again, cannot see the kingdom of God.”
4. If love is serving others, then who ever serves more is the greatest in love and the kingdom of heaven. **God** is the servant of all (that is an almost unbelievable thought). All of God’s



attributes and being are used for the holding together of the universe and giving of himself for his children throughout the universe.

SUNDAY:

The Greatness of Humility

5. Read the second paragraph: “The problem, however, comes in defining “greatness.” . . .”
6. Ecclesiastes 9:10 (NASB) “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.”
7. Is trying hard (“all your might”) really greatness?
 - a. We have become a society that arbitrarily rewards participation and effort.
 - b. Children receive trophies for being on a team
 - c. Workers are rewarded for just being on a team
8. Matthew 18:1-4 “ At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, “Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, “Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven”
9. Read the first sentence of paragraph #3: “To define true greatness, Jesus called a child to stand before Him . . .”
 - a. Christ lived in a particular time and era.
 - i. People may act differently then than now. Those of older years can think back when they were growing up. Behavior is different now than even then.
 - ii. What are the characteristics of children now?
 - b. Would you do that now?
 - c. Is there a better metaphor now?
 - d. “Becomes like **this** child”
 - e. The devil is a master at portraying God as having attributes of character like Satan himself.
 - f. Currently, we need to be careful of our metaphors for God
 - g. Ask for divine guidance to mold our thoughts, ideas, and ideals to those of who God truly is.
 - h. Our concept of who God is and what He is like determines the kind of people we become



- i. Mother Teresa
- ii. Mohamed Atta (who flew a plane into World Trade Center towers)
- iii. (I almost did not use this person's name / description due to our thoughts molding us into what we contemplate and think about).
- iv. Philippians 4:8 (NASB) "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things."

MONDAY

The Greatness of Forgiveness

- 10. Read the first paragraph
- 11. Read Matthew 18:15 - 35
 - a. The story of reconciliation to a offending brother/sister in the faith.
- 12. Matthew 18:21 - 35 Admonition on Forgiveness
- 13. How is reconciliation in the first portion of the text (verses 15 - 20) related to the issue in the last 15 verses (forgiveness)?
 - a. We need to forgive someone of their wrongs against us **before** we try to make a reconciliation with them.
 - b. We should be trying to restore the individual for their best interest, not for ours.
- 14. The myths of forgiveness:
 - i. In his book, "Could It Be This Simple"
 - ii. 7 myths of forgiveness
 - (1) Forgiveness comes after people say they are sorry.
 - (2) God's forgiveness equals salvation
 - (3) Forgiving someone means that what that person did was OK.
 - (4) Forgiveness leads to greater vulnerability.
 - (5) Forgiveness means restored trust.
 - (6) Forgiveness means forgetting.
 - (7) Forgiveness means that the guilty person gets away with it.
- 15. Read the first sentence of the second paragraph: "Let's face it: it's easier to go behind someone's back to complain about him or her than to go directly to the person and deal with the issue."
 - a. Why?
 - i. We have not forgiven them
 - ii. Selfishness for our own pride, position, ideas



- iii. Fear of rejection, consequences, outcomes
 - iv. We are fallen and haven't been restore to godliness
16. Read paragraphs 3 & 4: "Where two or three are gathered. . ."
- a. Jesus, the Holy Spirit and God the Father are all in the reconciliation business.
 - b. Romans 8
 - i. 8:26 - the Spirit intercedes for us
 - ii. 8:28 - God is working everything for our behalf
 - iii. 8:32 - God the Father is for us
 - iv. 8:34 - Christ gave all of himself for us
 - v. The Holy Spirit is closest when we are actively acting as reconciliation agents for the kingdom.
 - (1) Is He present in small gatherings of believers? Yes
 - (2) Is He present when we are worship with only a few present? Yes
 - (3) Is He present in dungeon or solitary cells of isolation? Yes
 - (4) But He is not only present, but actively working when the "work" of reconciliation is actively being promoted because that is the kind of being He really is!
17. In the last paragraph before colored section at the bottom of the page: "but if we don't forgive others the way we have been forgiven by God, we can face dire consequences."
- a. Why?
 - b. What level of moral development is implied in this statement.
18. Forgiveness is not only something we do, but who we are. It is a characteristic of a loving individual.
- a. 1 Corinthians 13:5 NASB "does not take into account a wrong suffered"
 - b. 1 Corinthians 13:5 GNT "love does not keep a record of wrongs;"
 - i. (Think about that in relationship to God and the final judgment of sin and sinners)
19. Forgiveness is for your own good.
- a. In forgiving others we ourselves are healed.

TUESDAY

Idols of the Soul

20. Matthew 19:16 - 20 The story of the rich, young, ruler.
21. Read Revelation 19:7 - 8
- a. "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has



- come and His bride has made herself ready.” It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”
22. Read Isaiah 64:6
- a. For all of us have become like one who is unclean,
And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment;
And all of us wither like a leaf,
And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
23. What are the correct outward works called in the Bible?
- a. Righteousness
 - b. Why is some righteousness correct and other righteousness is “filthy rags”?
24. Christ’s Object Lessons page 311 “By the wedding garment in the parable is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ’s true followers will possess. To the church it is given “that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white,” “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” Revelation 19:8; Ephesians 5:27. The fine linen, says the Scripture, “is the righteousness of saints.” Revelation 19:8. It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour. {COL 310.3}

The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden. They lived in perfect conformity to the will of God. All the strength of their affections was given to their heavenly Father. A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair. This robe of light was a symbol of their spiritual garments of heavenly innocence. Had they remained true to God it would ever have continued to enshroud them. But when sin entered, they severed their connection with God, and the light that had encircled them departed. Naked and ashamed, they tried to supply the place of the heavenly garments by sewing together fig leaves for a covering. {COL 310.4}

This is what the transgressors of God’s law have done ever since the day of Adam and Eve’s disobedience. They have sewed together fig leaves to cover the nakedness caused by transgression. They have worn the garments of their own devising, by works of their own they have tried to cover their sins, and make themselves acceptable with God. {COL 311.1}

But this they can never do. Nothing can man devise to supply the place of his lost robe of innocence. No fig-leaf garment, no worldly citizen dress, can be worn by those who sit down with Christ and angels at the marriage supper of the Lamb. {COL 311.2}

Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God’s presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. “I counsel thee,” He says, “to buy of Me ... white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.” Revelation 3:18. {COL 311.3}

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His



humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

The guests at the marriage feast were inspected by the king. Only those were accepted who had obeyed his requirements and put on the wedding garment. So it is with the guests at the gospel feast. All must pass the scrutiny of the great King, and only those are received who have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness. {COL 312.1}

Righteousness is right doing, and it is by their deeds that all will be judged. Our characters are revealed by what we do. The works show whether the faith is genuine. {COL 312.2}

It is not enough for us to believe that Jesus is not an impostor, and that the religion of the Bible is no cunningly devised fable. We may believe that the name of Jesus is the only name under heaven whereby man may be saved, and yet we may not through faith make Him our personal Saviour. It is not enough to believe the theory of truth. It is not enough to make a profession of faith in Christ and have our names registered on the church roll. "He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." "Hereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments." 1 John 3:24; 1 John 2:3. This is the genuine evidence of conversion. Whatever our profession, it amounts to nothing unless Christ is revealed in works of righteousness. {COL 312.3}

The truth is to be planted in the heart. It is to control the mind and regulate the affections. The whole character must be stamped with the divine utterances. Every jot and tittle of the word of God is to be brought into the daily practice. {COL 314.1}

He who becomes a partaker of the divine nature will be in harmony with God's great standard of righteousness, His holy law. This is the rule by which God measures the actions of men. This will be the test of character in the judgment. {COL 314.2}

25. As an observer can you tell which acts are righteousness and which are not?
- a. Maybe
 - b. Not for sure.
 - c. We do not have the divine gift of discernment.



26. The last paragraph above the colored section:
- a. “The gospel needs to penetrate the heart, to go right to the idols of the soul, and whatever we are holding on to that’s an impediment to our relationship to God needs to be gone.”

WEDNESDAY

What’s in It for Us?

27. Peter’s question: Matthew 19:27
- a. Then Peter said to Him, “Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?”
 - b. Jesus’ Response
 - i. 19:28 - 30 direct response
 - (1) assurance of position and future rewards for those men who were following him
 - ii. 20:1 - 16 : Parable of laborers in the vineyard
 - (1) A different economy
 - (2) God’s character is that of love and He gives us out of his graciousness not our obligations
 - (3) “Fairness”
 - (a) God is the one most “Fair”
 - (b) He is truly lovely
28. Bottom colored section: “If someone were to ask you, “What will I get by serving Jesus?” what would you answer?
- a. Any scriptures that come to mind?
 - b. John 14:27 (NLT) “I am leaving you with a gift - peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.”
29. Why do we want heaven?
30. 1 Corinthians 12:31 (KJV) “Covet the best gifts.”
- a. Is the introduction to discussion of true love (1 Corinthians 13)
 - b. What is our motive for wanting heaven
 - c. We may start out wanting heaven for selfish reasons
 - i. We may need to grow in grace (God’s attributes)
 - ii. We are changed to God-like-ness as we behold Him
 - (1) 2 Corinthians 3:18 (GNT)
 - (a) “All of us, then, reflect the glory of the Lord with uncovered faces; and that same glory, coming from the Lord, who is the Spirit, transforms us into his likeness in an ever greater degree of glory.”



THURSDAY

“We Are Able”

31. Read Matthew 20:20 - 27 - story of James and John and their mother’s request for preeminence.
32. Read Luke 9:51-56 Asking to call down fire upon prejudiced village.
33. Where were they?
 - a. What kingdom was this taking place in: Judah or Israel?
 - b. What were the current locations and populace of these two areas?
 - i. Judah - pure bred
 - ii. Samaria - half or mixed breeds
 - (1) attempted to thwart rebuilding of Jerusalem’s wall and temple
 - (2) Wouldn’t worship at Jerusalem’s temple
 - (a) Remember the question of the woman at the well. John 4:20
 - (3) They were located in Samaria and were traveling from village to village on their way to Jerusalem.
34. Read 2 Kings 1 & 2 (especially 1:12 - “Elijah replied to them, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty.” Then the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.”)
 - a. Read Luke 9:54 - 56
 - i. Who is more “a man of God” than Christ?
 - (1) This is right after Luke 9:18 - 20
 - (a) “You are the Christ of God”
 - (b) These were the same “heathens” not respecting the Lord’s anointed.
 - b. What was wrong with their idea of fire from heaven?
 - c. See Desire of Ages Pg 483 paragraph 3

FRIDAY

Natural Law

35. The final sentence: “. . . we need to study God’s Word and from it derive the morals, values, and principles that should govern our lives. Nothing else, of itself, is reliable.”
 - a. How do you interpret what you read.
 - i. evidence-based integrative approach to Bible study
 - ii. Evidence-Based approach of understanding scripture. This method harmonizes scripture, science, and experience.
 - (1) Bible by itself



- (2) Science by itself
- (3) Experience by itself
- iii. This is not a static process.
 - (1) 2 Peter 3:18 “But continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory, now and forever! Amen”



The Book of Matthew Lesson 10 2Q 2016

Jesus in Jerusalem

I received this email from Gary in Canada:

As you know last month C&R Canada grew by 9 people with the formation of the C&R branch in Yarmouth Nova Scotia. Well so far this month we have had one man ask to be baptized because of the Sure Word Bible Study program that C&R Canada Kentville branch puts on at a local non denominational outreach center known as Open Arms. But that's not all, the man's wife would like to do Bible studies and get baptized with her husband. She comes from a Jehovah's Witness background and because she did not follow the teachings of that organization in her youth, she and her family are shunned by some of the people from that organization. But she likes the changes she sees in her husband and she is now willing to do the studies. But wait there's more, one of the other men that comes to the class is looking at joining, or at least going to the local SDA church, but that's not all, yes there's more, his wife has been watching the C&R DVDs and is starting to get interested in the God is love teachings. But wait, there's more. I volunteer at Open Arms and work with men that are on their way to recovery from—well you name it. Anyway, one of the guys is working doing construction work with the first guy I mentioned, and he also would like to start doing Bible studies. Hold on just like the commercial there's more. We have a seasonal worker here from Jamaica, that likes the God of love not wrath approach to teaching and he would like to have C&R come to Jamaica this Dec and help set up a C&R branch there. His dream is to do full time evangelism. So if C&R Canada can work out some details I will go to Jamaica this Dec. Did you notice the time of year WINTER? Yes it's a hard job working with C&R but some one has to do it. God is good. But wait there's more, one of the professors at our local University, known as Acadia University is passing out your books to students that have shown a strong interest in the God of love. The best part of this last bit of news is some of the students are from other countries and other faiths and will be taking the books home with them this summer. Last but to me most important part is my thanks to the C&R class there in Tennessee and online and to all the supports of Come and Reason Ministries. Without you, all of the people just mentioned would have never heard this message at this time. And I believe God's timing is never wrong. Tell a friend share the News. This message changes lives and puts light where darkness once dwelled.

*Thank you for all your time and effort. God Bless you.
Gary.*

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “In Matthew 20:27, 28, Jesus said...” How do we understand the idea of ransom?



This is a metaphor and one used to teach something about the atonement. And there are many theories about the atonement out there, and it is one of the issues that theologians get very animated about.

Let's review the reason Christ had to die, the idea of atonement through the seven levels of moral development and note how the various theories commonly taught in Christianity fit in:

1. **Reward and punishment:** Because God said don't do something, they disobeyed and did what God said not to do. This dishonored God. God was offended and in his justice responded with angry vengeance to execute the disobedient to satisfy his outrage. But Jesus stepped in and became humanity's substitute and God killed him in our place and is satisfied that his honor and justice are preserved. This is the Satisfaction Theory of Atonement.
2. **Marketplace exchange:** Because earth and humanity was now the legal property of Satan and under his control, the devil claimed legal rights to this earth and the lives of the sons of Adam and daughters of Eve. Therefore, God struck a bargain with the devil to exchange the life of Christ for the lives of the rest of humanity. This is the Ransom Theory of Atonement.
3. **Social conformity:** Because everyone must be convinced of the fairness of God in punishing sin. Somebody had to pay so that God can be seen as fair in how he deals with sin and sinners; and Jesus is the one who pays that price. This is the Governmental Theory of the Atonement.
4. **Law and order:** In this view, Jesus dies to pay the legal penalty the law demanded and the heavenly judge imposed. The law must be kept. Man broke the law and justice requires the imposition of the proper punishment. Someone had to be executed to pay the legal penalty. Jesus became our substitute, was executed in our place (by the Father as the righteous judge) to pay that penalty. The integrity of the law is maintained and sinners can be pardoned if they claim the legal payment made by Jesus. This is Penal Substitution Theory of Atonement.
5. **Love for others:** Because sin separated us from God and corrupted our hearts so that we no longer trusted God. But God loved us too much to let us go and Christ's death was the means to reach us with his love and restore us to trust in him. This is Moral Influence Theory of Atonement.
6. **Principle based living:** In this view, Christ's life, death and resurrection is understood to be the only means to fix what sin had done to God's creation. When mankind sinned the condition of humankind was changed to be out of harmony with God and his design for life. Humankind was now held in bondage by their own condition of sinfulness (carnal nature), their terminal state (death) and the lies about God told by Satan. Christ came to break these powers and fix what sin did do this creation. Thus "he who knew no sin became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God." 2Cor 5:21. This is the Recapitulation *and* Christus Victor Theories of Atonement.
7. **Understanding Friend of God:** At this level the plan of salvation is understood to have a deeper and broader intent than just the redemption of the human species.

Level seven includes level five understanding that humanity was held captive by lies about God that undermines our ability to trust him. And that God loved us too much to let us go



therefore, so he sent Jesus who, as part of his mission, revealed truth to destroy Satan's lies in order to win us back to trust (morally influence). (Jn 8:32, Heb 2:14).

Level seven also includes all the elements of level six understanding, that human kind was not only held in bondage by the lies of Satan, but by our own carnal (selfish) natures. And that God through Christ not only destroyed the lies of Satan thereby destroying the devil's power (Heb 2:14), he also destroyed the carnal nature thereby destroying death, and perfectly restored God's law of love—God's character—back into the species human, thereby perfecting the species and bringing life and immortality to light. (2Tim 1:9,10, 1Jn 3:8, Heb 5:8,9) As the early church fathers would have said, Jesus picked up humankind broken off in Adam and carried it to completion.

But level seven also understands that God has a larger purpose than just saving humanity. God has also been working to secure the unfallen intelligences in their confidence, trust, and loyalty to him—to protect them from disaffection and keep them eternally safe. “All things *in heaven and in earth are reconciled to Christ at the cross.*” (Col 1:20 emphasis mine)

Atonement at level seven is understood in its true Biblical meaning of at-one-ment—complete unity with God—a universe without any deviation anywhere from God and his design of love. As Jesus himself prayed just before his crucifixion: “I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, *that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.* (Jn 17:20,21 emphasis mine)

This unity is the mystery of God. His secret plan to heal all who trust him, while eliminating all deviations from his design (sin and unrepentant sinners) in such a way that all the saved along with the unfallen intelligences will be solidified in the unshakable unity of love and trust. This is only possible through the accomplishments of Jesus Christ:

And he made known to us the *mystery* of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to *bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.* (Eph 1:9,10 emphasis mine)

This is the Healing Plan of Atonement.

Now when Christ used the metaphor of ransom for many, was He speaking of the level two concepts we just reviewed? No, what happens is that people operating at level two hear the ransom metaphor and apply to level two understanding. But Christ's metaphors are understandable through level 7 understanding.

So ransom through level seven—what does a ransom do? It is the price necessary to free someone held in bondage. What holds sinners in bondage?



The lies about God that we believe that keep us from trusting Him, AND our own carnal natures. What then is the price necessary to free us? The truth that will destroy the lies and free our minds to trust, and a new perfect nature/character, and Jesus provides both and both could only be achieved by His sinless life, selfless death and resurrection!

To whom was such a price paid? To us! We are the ones who needed the truth and we are the ones who needed a new nature, and thus ransom rightly understood confirms level seven, God's Healing Plan.

SUNDAY

The lesson focuses on the time the Jews returned from 70 years captivity and rebuilt the temple. The elders who had seen Solomon's temple cried in distress because the new temple was so small, but God had His prophets prophecy that the second temple would be more glorious than the first temple—how? How was the second temple more glorious?

Because Jesus walked there? But didn't God's presence come physically to the first temple when it was dedicated? So God's presence blessed both temples, why is the second more glorious?

Because God's glory is not power—it is character! And Jesus revealed God's selfless character of love more perfectly at the second temple than the first.

So, then what would it mean when the first angel of the three angels of Revelation 14 says to "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water." Rev 14:7

Would it have something to do with character? How do we glorify God?

²² "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, **but for the sake of my holy name**, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. ²³ **I will show the holiness of my great name**, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. **Then the nations will know that I am the Lord**, declares the Sovereign Lord, **when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.**

²⁴ " 'For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶ **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.** ²⁷ **And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.** (Eze 36:22-27)



In the Bible, what is the name representative of? Character, so God is saying His character has been misrepresented by the people who claim to represent Him. Did the Jews misrepresent God? Have Christians misrepresented God? And what is it that God does to reveal His true name/character? He transforms the character/hearts of the people to be like Him!

This is in harmony with the message of the 3 angels, that God is waiting for people who come to know Him and trust Him and He will transform them to be like Him in character—to love like He loves!

The bottom paragraph is commenting on Christ's entry into Jerusalem riding upon a donkey, and states, "The multitude were convinced that the hour of their emancipation was at hand. In imagination they saw the Roman armies driven from Jerusalem, and Israel once more an independent nation."

Was their emancipation at hand? Yes, but from what? Was Christ about to accomplish what was necessary to free humanity from the bondage of sin? Absolutely, so their emancipation was at hand, this was true—but what was the problem with Israel? They misunderstood their situation. They had the wrong diagnosis. They thought their problem was bondage to Rome, when their problem was bondage to sin. Thus, they were looking for an earthly deliverance, rather than deliverance from sin.

What about Christianity today? Do many have the same problem? Do many accept a false diagnosis and thus a false solution? What would be the common false diagnosis? That sin is a legal problem and thus people are seeking delivery from a legal punishment, rather than realizing we are sinful in heart and mind and need delivering from sin, NOT delivering from God's punishment for sin.

In the bottom pink section it states, "Again and again, we see how Scripture was fulfilled, and yet at the time, the people didn't understand it. What lessons might we take away for ourselves about how preconceived notions could distort truth?"

thoughts? Do we as Christians struggle with the same problem, being duped in believing in the wrong type of delivery?

The Jews 2000 years ago were looking for delivery from a human government—are Christians today? Are Christians today teaching a theology that is promoting delivery from a human law construct? The idea of imposed law that requires punishment by the ruling authority?

MONDAY

The first paragraph states, "From the earliest days of fallen humanity, animal sacrifices were God's chosen means to teach the world the plan of salvation, salvation by grace through faith in the coming Messiah... Thus when God called Israel as His chosen people, 'a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Exod. 19:6 NKJV). he also established the sanctuary service as a fuller and more complete explanation of salvation."



What was the purpose of the animal sacrifices and what did they teach?

On a Christian radio program before Easter a person called in and asked why the animal sacrifices in the OT and this was the explanation given by one of the guest theologians:

The reason in Leviticus 17 for...that there has to be punishment with death for sin, and so in Leviticus 17 when the animal sacrificial system is being established it says this, Leviticus 17:10 “Any Israelite or any alien living among them who eats any blood—I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from his people. For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.” See blood represents life and there has to be the punishment of death for sin, so therefore an animal had to take the punishment and give its life—it’s blood—so that the offerer could live. That was the substitution. What my former professor here at Moody used to call, the exchange of life.

What are the problems with this explanation?

- It is based on imposed law and the requirement of payment to expiate sin
- It argues for a means of salvation without Christ, that in some way an animal was sufficient to deal with sin
- It makes the problem legal rather than a condition of being
- It denies much of the Old Testament evidence of people being saved without animal sacrifices

Notice the Biblical evidence:

- “The multitude of your sacrifices— what are they to me?” says the Lord. “I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats... wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.” (Isa 1:11,16,17)
- With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Mic 6:6-8)
- the gifts and sacrifices being offered were *not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper*. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order... But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because *it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins*. (Heb 9:9,10; 10:3,4 emphasis mine)

But perhaps Hosea puts what God wants, what he has always wanted and been working to achieve, most succinctly:



- “I want your constant love, not your animal sacrifices. I would rather have my people know me than burn offerings to me.” (Hos 6:6 GNT)

Do we have examples of people being saved in OT who did not participate in animal sacrifices?

- Naaman
- Nebuchadnezzar
- Melchizedek
- Daniel and his three friends
- Esther and Mordecai
- Jethro
- The widow and resurrected son who housed Elijah

So what was the purpose of the animal sacrifices? Animal sacrifices were merely teaching tools, lessons, designed to teach what?

What do you think was the primary purpose of such sacrifice?

Take a moment and imagine you had to personally take a lamb, so cute, gentle, cuddly, and because of your sin look into its trusting eyes and cut its throat and watch it die, while it looked at you—what would that teach you? Would it make you sick? Would it cause a revulsion inside of you so that you would never want to sin again? Would it cause a hatred of sin? Could this be the first, foremost, and primary point of the animal sacrifices? Could all the other theological lessons be secondary?

What are the lessons we are to learn from animal sacrifices?

- Sin kills not God
- God provides the sacrifice necessary to remedy the sin problem
- Sin severs the circulation (the circle of love) the law of life and results in death
- Without a substitute to cure our condition all humanity will die of this terminal state
- The Savior would be as gentle and non-threatening to us as a lamb
- They ate the meat of the sacrificial animal, indicating that we must internalize what the life of Jesus—the Lamb of God in order to be restored to unity with God

TUESDAY

The lesson focuses on Jesus cleansing the temple, read second paragraph, “But the cleansing...” When the authors merge “judgment” with “reap the results of their doleful choices” what is the likely conclusion?



Is it suggesting the results of poor choices, sin, are those of a judicial system? Are they suggesting the results that come to sinners is like the results that come to those who speed and get ticketed? In other words, are they suggesting the results are those of an imposed law construct?

What if they used diagnosis and debridement instead? When a wound is filled with gravel or dirt in order to heal the wound the dirt needs to be cleaned out—this is called debridement. Was Jesus debriding the sanctuary, removing infecting elements in order for healing to occur? Does it make a difference to see Jesus acting as an enforcer inflicting punishment, or as a Savior debriding and healing?

Read third paragraph, “Jesus cursed the fig tree...” Is a fig tree a free moral agent capable of love, loyalty or selfishness and rebellion? Then, could the fig tree sin? Then could the fig tree be punished for sin? Then what was happening? Jesus was providing an object lesson, what was the lesson?

What would be the wrong lesson to draw from the enactment? The wrong lesson is that God uses His power to inflict death upon sinners.

The right lesson is that God pronounces or diagnosis the condition of each person accurately, the tree was used as an object lesson to reveal this.

WEDNESDAY

Read top sentence, “If you had a few days left to live, what would you do with them?”

The lesson asks us to read MT 21:33-46, this is from *The Remedy*:

³³ "Consider another parable: A developer planted a vineyard on his property. He put a security fence around it, built a watchtower, and constructed a winepress. Then he leased the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a trip.³⁴ When the harvest was due, he sent a servant to collect his portion of the fruit.³⁵ The farmers attacked the servants: they beat one, murdered another, and stoned a third.³⁶ The owner sent more servants, but they were all abused and despised in the same way.³⁷ Finally, he sent his only son, thinking, 'They will honor my son.'³⁸ But when the farmers saw the son, they greedily said to each other, 'This is the heir to this property. Come on, let's kill him and claim the inheritance for ourselves!'³⁹ So they grabbed the son, dragged him out of the vineyard, abused, and then killed him.⁴⁰ Now, what do you think the owner will do to these farmers when he comes to his vineyard?"

⁴¹ They answered, "He'll destroy those scoundrels and lease the vineyard to others, who will give him his portion of the harvest."

⁴² Jesus looked straight at them and said, "Exactly! But somehow, you fail to understand what you read in the Scriptures where it says, 'The stone rejected by those in charge of building has become the foundation stone; God has made sure it would be this way and it is incredible to us.'"



⁴³ "So let me make this plain to you: God's kingdom of love and truth will be taken away from you who cling to lies and selfishness, and given to those who will bring forth fruit of righteousness.⁴⁴ Whoever falls down on this stone will be broken in pieces of humility, but the weight of truth from this stone will crush whomever it falls upon."

⁴⁵ When the church leaders, lawyers and theologians heard Jesus' parables, they understood very clearly that he was talking about them.⁴⁶ They schemed for ways to arrest him, but were afraid to take action because the crowds were huge, and the majority of people thought Jesus was a spokesman of God.

The lessons asks us to identify the various characters:

- The Landowner—God
- Farmers—Jews
- Servants—God's spokespersons/prophets
- Son—Jesus
- New Tenants—Christians

Read bottom pink section, "Two different ways..." Jesus is the rock, if we fall upon Him in humility our selfish hearts are broken and we are rebuilt by God into His image. But, if instead the weight of truth that is embodied in Jesus falls upon the heart and mind of an unrepentant person—what happens? They cry out for the mountains to fall on them—they are crushed by it.

THURSDAY

What do you think of the title—The Cost of Grace? What is the cost of grace? Read third paragraph, "When we look at the Cross..."

Did it cost God a lot to deal with the sin problem? Absolutely—does that mean the price is a legal price?

What do you make of the idea of bearing God's wrath against sin—what is God's wrath against sin?

What law model do you view it through? If imposed law, then there is nothing inherently wrong with sin and if God doesn't act then no bad happens, so God must act and inflict pain and suffering and death. Thus, in this penal legal model God becomes the source of pain, suffering and death and Christians create doctrines designed to hide and protect us from God rather than reconcile us to Him.

In the design law model, sin is deviation from God's law upon which life is constructed, and results in pain suffering and death. If God doesn't act death ensues. Therefore, God acted through Jesus to provide remedy to our terminal condition. In this view God's wrath is His cessation of interventions to hold at bay what unremedied sin brings—i.e. God letting go to reap what one chooses.

Which view is more Biblical?



Romans 1:18-34—God’s wrath is revealed... he gave them up, three times Paul says this, indicating what God actually does.

And what did God do to Jesus on the Cross—He gave Jesus up to reap what Jesus freely chose—God did not intervene to stop it, thus Jesus experienced God’s wrath on the Cross.

And Paul ties it all together in Romans 4:25 when referring to Jesus on the Cross, he uses the exact same Greek as in Romans 1:24,26, 28 where he says “God gave them up.” However, most translators disguise the exact language by expressing it differently, such as “delivered over” rather than “given up.”

The lesson is about the parable of the wedding feast found in Matthew 22, and a person without a wedding garment is cast out, what does this teach?

Read last paragraph, “The garment represents...”

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Remedy—Is Now Available in Print Version in the US. We have printed 10,000 to give away and will reassess demand for them after those are gone. We are shipping a small number to Canada and Australia. **How to get copies:** In the US email orders@comeandreason.com with a valid US postal address; In Canada email canada@comeandreason.com and in Australia/New Zealand email Australia@comeandreason.com and request the number you want and we will ship them to you. If you are giving them away please give them only to people who want them. In other words, don't put one at every seat in the church, or place setting at a potluck, or car in a parking lot. Such distribution methods result in vast numbers being thrown away. Let people know they are free and allow them to take one if they want too works best.

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website: http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

Thursday, June 9 at 1:30 PM Eastern Time Dr. Jennings will appear on the ***Lifestyle Magazine*** show, "Healing The Mind" that he recorded previously. It is scheduled to air on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN). Keep in mind that TBN can preempt the show at their discretion.

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Cape Town, South Africa



The Book of Matthew Lesson 11 2Q 2016

Last Day Events

I received this email this week:

I have been listening to your broadcasts via You-Tube or MP3 for about a year. The ideas make me want to run in all directions at once like a cartoon cat. I've tried to share with my children and husband, but they feel angry and threatened that ideas about God they have held so long are apparently set at naught. As a person caught in spiritism and other superstitions until the age of 16, the Advent message coming to me in my 16th year--that Heaven is real and that God would only burn you for a little while--seemed bright light.

I clung to Jesus, avoiding His mean Father, and thought it maturity when I finally came to be "OK" with the Father. Still, I always believed in my secret heart that God was just looking for a way to kill me. What a revelation to find that He really doesn't want to kill me. It has taken me months to let that notion seep through every nook and cranny of the way I think and live. Still, from time to time I become fearful that letting go of all the rules and simply accepting a God of love is dangerous to my eternal salvation--what if it really isn't so easy?! What if this is a deception or strong lie? Then, I will have lost immortality. What if feeling free in my chest, with no tension when I think about God is actually the lie? There must be something I'm missing. Those notions come to me again and again. It's like the painful life that floods into my hands after I've slept on them and stopped my circulation. The circulating blood is life to my hands, but it still hurts to get the blood flow going again. I fight off the notion that God is dangerous with prayer and with reasoning, thinking, reading, listening to your broadcast, talking with friends who brought me to understand Design Law in the first place.

The 'How-To' part of loving is my next task. I am 'nice' and never thought that I was selfish and unloving. I am. Yet, I am no longer resigned to staying that way. My husband and children were raised in Adventism and will have none of my off-beat notions that God is safe, loving, Lord of the Sabbath and is not trying to kill anybody. My youngest son, a late adolescent, actually believes that God kills people despite all our flowery language attempts to hide that fact. He says he loves God, and understands that "God has to do what God has to do, but let's not lie to each other about it, Mom--He kills people." My hope and prayer is that my sons will someday 'hear' this message--maybe when their souls are as hungry and desolate as was mine--though I am seeking ways to make it sooner rather than later. My husband is simply angry that the Adventism he learned at his beloved mother's knee is being impugned on some level, though he can't say how. He will come around because he loves me. I will love, and pray, and wait, and set out literature, and talk Design Law at every chance. I could go on, except that all you really wanted to know was my address so that I can receive three Remedy hard-copies I requested. I will give one to my youngest to take to college with him, one to my eldest son who is dutiful and will read if I ask, and keep the other for myself and my husband. Thank you for



your ministry. Please let me know what books I can purchase in quantity to 'seed' the reading table at the front of my church. People are desperate for something to read on Sabbath as the sermons do not always scratch where they itch.

SABBATH

What does the title bring to mind? What do you consider last day events to be? Are we in the “last days”?

What is God waiting for?

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 2Pet 3:9

What does this mean? Why do people perish? What is the cause—the reason?

So, what is necessary for people not to perish?

What is repentance?

What does God want from us? He wants our love, trust, loyalty—which means He wants us to experience a change of heart—which is repentance.

Why will people perish if they don't have love, trust, and loyalty to God?

What is the basis of life? From where does life originate? Upon what is life constructed to function?

What happens to people who are out of harmony with love and truth in the presence of God? Why?

So, what is God waiting for? What prevents people from coming to love, trust and loyalty to God? Would it be misunderstanding, preconceived ideas, lies, falsehoods about God?

When you think of last day events, does Daniel 12:4 come to mind:

O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, *even* to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. (KJV)

What does this mean? Have you ever seen presentations which show advancement in science, transportation, engineering as fulfillment of this text? Is it?



I don't think so—the Bible isn't a book about science primarily, it is a book about God and His character—so what might this text be referring to?

Consider the NRSV:

But you, Daniel, keep the words secret and the book sealed until the time of the end. Many shall be running back and forth, and evil shall increase.”

They have interpreted knowledge to be the knowledge of evil—what do you think?

Again, I don't think so, the Bible is primarily a book about God's character which has been misrepresented by Satan and which Christ came to perfectly reveal.

Could John 17:3 have any bearing?

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

Is the knowledge of God what is to increase at the end of time?

“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. **At this time** a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. **His character is to be made known.** Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth...**The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.**” Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

Could the knowledge that is to increase at the end of time be the true knowledge of God? That knowledge which will work to cleanse the temple from the lies about God and prepare a people to meet Jesus?

This is the message of the three angels—

Then I saw another messenger flying in midair, and he had the eternal good news about God's character of love to proclaim to everyone living on earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and people—which represents a movement of people who arise to proclaim the truth about God's character of love throughout the world.⁷ He said in a clear, resounding voice, "Be in awe of God, and glorify him by living his methods of love, because the hour has come for everyone to make a judgment about God, and worship the Designer, Creator and Builder who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and springs of water— all of which operate upon his law of love." Rev 14:6.7 The Remedy



What are some of the other signs that Jesus disclosed? Let's read Matthew 24:4-8:

⁴ Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains.

What do you think of these signs? What lessons do they teach us? Have these signs occurred?

What lesson from the analogy of birth pains? How do birth pains progress? And what do they lead to?

Will things get better or worse on earth before Christ returns? Why? Why do things get worse?

Is God using His power to inflict punishment?

Revelation states angels with the vials of God's wrath are poured out upon the inhabitants of the earth—what does this mean?

Through what law lens do you view such texts? What level of moral development?

Levels 1-4 of moral development, those the Bible describe as still on milk and not acquainted with righteousness view such texts through imposed law and conclude God is using power to inflict punishment for disobedience.

Levels-5-7 of moral development—those the Bible describe as the mature, view such texts through design law and understand God is the source of life, and a time comes in human history when people will be let go, or set free by God to reap their choice to be separated from Him.

And what term does the Bible use to describe God's action of letting go and ceasing interventions to protect? God's wrath! Romans 1:18-32, makes clear God's wrath is letting go—so what is happening in Revelation?

God letting go—of what? Who is it that controls nature? God, and what happens if God let's go His control, what will nature do? Why?

Why would God let go? What would cause God to do such a thing? Where is the dwelling place for the Holy Spirit on earth? The hearts and minds of people. Does the Holy Spirit force His way into hearts? So what happens if people permanently harden their hearts to God? The Holy Spirit is slowly withdrawn—why? Who makes the choice to close out the Holy Spirit from earth?



Here is a quote from one of the founders of the SDA church describing the final plagues on earth:

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

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

"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of." Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

SUNDAY

The title is Blind Guides—what do you make of this title? To what are they blind?

The lesson encourages us to read Matthew 23, let's start in verse 13 (from *The Remedy*) and see if we can discover to what the leaders were blind. But as we do, we must remember that Jesus is God and God is love, so what tone do you think Jesus had in His voice as He spoke? I would encourage you to think as if you were speaking to the person you love the most, your spouse, your child and they were in the role of these religious leaders.

¹³ "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! Your false teachings obstruct people from being healed and entering God's kingdom of love. You certainly are not healed and do not enter into salvation, but worse still, you actively work to prevent others, who want to be saved, from being healed.¹⁴ Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You con widows from their homes, yet you make public displays of praying long prayers. Unhealed you choose to remain! Your suffering will be most severe.

¹⁵ "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You go around the world trying to convert one person, and when you do, you indoctrinate them so deeply into your false penal system that they become twice the child of lies and selfishness as you are...

²³ "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You keep rules, such as proudly paying a pre-tax tithe and even giving a tenth of the herbs in



your garden, but you fail to do what actually matters—to live in harmony with God’s Law, which is his design for life. You fail to ‘do what is right because it is right.’ You are not merciful but judgmental and critical, and you cannot be trusted to protect those struggling with sin. You should have lived lives of love for others, without neglecting the simple instructions of God.²⁴ You are truly irrational and unthinking teachers! You are so focused on keeping the rules—such as dietary laws—that you fail to understand that their purpose is to promote health. You’re so confused that you actually think it would be a virtue to die of starvation rather than eat something not on the ‘approved’ list.

²⁵ "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You work so hard to make yourselves look good on the outside, but the inside—the heart—is full of selfishness, arrogance, and greed.²⁶ You truly don’t understand anything about God’s kingdom! The mind, the character, the heart—they all must be cleansed first, and then the outside will also be clean.

²⁷ "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You are like highly polished burial vaults: they look beautiful on the outside but inside are nothing but the bones of the dead, and everything that defiles.²⁸ You are just like that. On the outside you appear to people as good and righteous, but on the inside you are full of lies, selfishness, and evil. You are great counterfeits!

²⁹ "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You go to great lengths to give praise and honor to God’s spokespersons and church leaders of the past.³⁰ You say, ‘If we would have lived back then, we would never have rejected God’s spokespersons or joined those who killed them.’³¹ By such claims you condemn yourselves, because you acknowledge such actions are wrong, yet by your actions today you reveal you are the true descendants of those who murdered God’s spokespersons. You’re just like them³² and your sins pile on top of the sins of your forefathers!

³³ "You slippery serpents! You brood of venomous vipers! You think you can cure yourselves with your own snake oil?³⁴ It’s because of your false remedy—your penal legal trickery—that I am sending my spokespersons, instructors and Bible scholars, some of whom you will attack, kill, and crucify; others you will beat—some physically, some verbally—right in church, running them out of town with beatings and the most vicious gossip.³⁵ The pure and holy lives that have been sacrificed through history—from Abel all the way through to Zechariah the son of Berekiah, who was murdered right in church, at the altar—testify the truth to you.³⁶ But the sad truth is that this generation will reject all this evidence.

³⁷ "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you sick and hard-hearted people who have rejected the Remedy, killed God’s spokespersons, and stoned those sent to you with the cure! How my heart has longed to pull you to safety, like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not let me.³⁸ Look around: I leave your house to you abandoned without Remedy, and infected



without cure.³⁹ For I tell you plainly, when you see me next, you will say: 'He is the One sent by God to reveal God's true character and provide the Remedy.'"

To what are they blind? They are blind to the truth about God; they don't understand His methods; they don't realize His law is the basis upon which life is constructed and instead think God's law and government operate like human governments. They are people who lead others into false beliefs, lies, distortions of reality that harden hearts and obstruct healing.

Any examples of blind guides today?

All the theology based on imposed law which represents God as:

- The source of inflicted punishment, suffering and death
- The One who needs to be paid, appeased, or propitiated
- The One who we need to be hidden from or protected from

Can you recall teachings that present ideas that function to protect us from God?

Such examples would be evidence of blind guides. Remember David prayed, "search me and see the wicked way in me" "create in me a clean heart O God and renew your right spirit within me."

- God is for us
- Jesus said if you have seen me you have seen the Father
- The Father was in the Son...
- God so loved the world...

God is our Creator, Redeemer and Friend! This is to be our prayer—"find every defect in me and heal me." But this only happens when we come back to the truth about God as Jesus revealed. Thus, those of us at the end of time are given this warning:

Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus. Rev 12:17

What are the commandments of God?

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Jn 13:34,35

What is the testimony of Jesus? —would it not be the truth about God that Jesus revealed—if you have seen me you have seen the Father? How many today are holding to Jesus' testimony about His Father and how many today have rejected Jesus' testimony and are presenting another version of God?



In Sunday's lesson it points out that the Jewish nation was chosen by God to be a kingdom of priests and it was prophesied they would be a great nation and many blessings etc. would come to them. However, this didn't happen and Jesus said their house is left to them desolate—how do we understand the prophecies of the OT that never came to pass?

Is it possible, God through His prophets, at certain times in history, will lay out before His people two paths, two futures... if you choose this then this is what you will experience, but if you choose that, then your future will be something entirely different?

Do we ever do this today even without the advantage of foreknowledge: if you choose to continue using drugs your life will be ongoing conflict, problems—relationships broken, brain damaged, health ruined—but if you choose recovery then healing, wellness, and salvation will be found?

Can we do similar things today? Was God doing this in OT times, laying out before them two paths—and when they chose the one path the other closed for them?

Do we have such options before us as individuals? What about before the organized church? Could the institutional church get so lost in its institutional goals it fails to fulfill its purpose for Jesus?

2000 years ago this happened, but from the nation of Israel (i.e. the membership of that organization) came individuals who did fulfill God's purpose. Could such a thing happen today—could individual members from institutional churches come together around the final message of mercy and take that message to the world while the institutions focus on institutional matters?

TUESDAY

What is the abomination that causes desolation? This is where we can see a dual application to Christ's words—He was warning the people in His day about fleeing Jerusalem before its destruction.

Now, did Jesus have a prophetic vision in which he actually saw the future events—or did He so understand God's methods and principles, and also the character and nature of Satan, that He could make this prediction?

For instance:

- If I let go this pen what happens? Can you predict such a future event, even before it happens? How can you?
- If a person has a pattern of drunk driving and continues to drink and drive can you predict what will eventually happen? How can you predict this?
- If a woman is married to a man who has beaten her severely for years, and she leaves him. Then he asks her to return and states that he will never do it again, but he gets no treatment to help with his anger issues. He makes no repentance before God, can you predict what will eventually happen if she returns? How can you predict this?



- If you knew God was using divine power to hold back the scorpions and snakes in the desert around ancient Israel, could you predict what would happen if God stopped using His power to do this? What? Snakes and scorpions would infest and people would get bitten. Why would this happen? Does it take prophetic gift to predict this?
- What happened to Israel at the time of Daniel when God removed His protective hand? The nation of Babylon came and conquered them—why did Babylon do this? Was such action on the part of Babylon predictable?
- Could Christ predict, knowing that the Jewish nation had just rejected Him and would therefore be set free to reap their choice to be without God’s protection, that Satan would inspire the worldly powers to come and destroy the nation of Israel, and especially the Temple—the object lesson designed by God to teach His plan to heal and restore? Was such a future predictable to all who understand God’s nature, character, how God’s law works, the choice of Israel, and the nature and character of Satan and selfish humanity?

When we understand Design Law, and understand the nature of things, some things are predictable without having special revelation—remember the story of the scorpion and the frog—the scorpion asks the frog for a ride across the lake. The frog says “no if I let you on my back you’ll sting me and I’ll die.” The scorpion responds, “If I stung you we would both drown and die. I wouldn’t do that.” The frog says, “Okay hop on.” Half way across the lake the scorpion stings the frog, as the poison is making its way through the frog the frog says, “Why did you do that, now we are both going to drown.” The scorpion said—“it’s my nature.”

Scorpions sting, snakes bite, Satan destroys—God heals and saves—always! This is always predictable.

Now, does anything I have said mean that God does not give special revelation to His prophets? Does anything I have said mean Jesus didn’t have special revelation when He spoke? No, it doesn’t mean that. It isn’t either one or the other. Both are true. Those who are friends of God will understand His character, methods, laws, and the nature of Satan and the world and thus can predict certain outcomes from this. But God will also, when God sees fit, provide special revelation revealing future events to some of His spokespersons.

What I am trying to lead people to understand is that we can have much greater maturity in our thinking. Life can become less mysterious and more predictable as we come ever closer to God and understand His design and the nature of things.

WEDNESDAY

The Second Coming—what do we expect to happen before this day?



ISIS believes in a second coming. They are “Adventists.” They have an apocalyptic vision for the future. They believe they have a role to play and they are committed to their role. They believe they are to incite a world war which will usher in their messiah to come and kill all their enemies.

Do we have a vision and understanding of how the future is to go and do we have a role to play?

Revelation chapter 7 describes these events—an angel telling the four angels to hold back the winds of strife until God’s spokespersons are sealed, and then they let loose, calamities happen, but from the witness of the spokespersons a great multitude from all over the world is saved.

What role do we have to play?

First we must become so settled into the truth in understanding and character that nothing can shake us from it. We must be sealed of God, transformed in heart to love like He loves.

In this process we are to be honing our ability to share the truth about God with others, speaking, sharing, loving others—revealing God’s true character.

And we are to choose—to commit ourselves to a cause—are we as committed to Goodness, Truth, Love, Freedom, Kindness, Integrity, Gentleness and true Godliness as ISIS is committed to their cause?

Then we share in every way possible the truth about God’s kingdom, His methods of love and we expose as graciously as possible the distortions that obstruct God’s healing plan.

Can we predict what will happen to us if we are effective in presenting the truth about God? God will bless our efforts, we will gain more skill and success in presenting the truth, and Satan and Satan’s agents will attack us and seek to undermine what we are doing. Is this predictable?

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, “Jesus is clear...” Do we expect Jesus to return?

Is the idea of coming when not expected for all people or only the unfaithful? Do the faithful remain expectant? Remember the parable of the unfaithful servant? Luke 12:42-48 (from *The Remedy*)

⁴²Jesus gave this answer. "Who then is an intelligent and wise manager—one qualified to share the Remedy effectively in order to nurture the master's staff? ⁴³It will be the most awesome experience for that aide when the master returns to find them reliably doing so. ⁴⁴Truly, that aide will be trusted with all the master possesses. ⁴⁵But what if the master's aide is self-centered and says to himself, 'The master has been gone a long time, and who knows when he will return?' and rather than nurturing the staff, they berate, abuse and mislead them, and then



go and use the master's resources to party with gluttons and drunkards? ⁴⁶That aide will be totally surprised, caught completely unaware, on the day their master returns. The master will let that wicked servant go, cutting their relationship and casting them out with all the other counterfeits and frauds who have peddled false remedies.

⁴⁷"The aide who understands the Master—his design, the problem being addressed, and how to apply the Remedy—and either doesn't heed his instructions or applies a false remedy will suffer many blows: a guilty conscience, warped character, damaged reason, broken relationships and ultimately, a destroyed soul. ⁴⁸But the one who doesn't know about the Remedy or how to apply it and therefore doesn't share it, or applies a false remedy will suffer few blows—regret, disappointment, and grief. The more you are given, the more you possess to share with others; the greater your abilities, the more gifts you have to give away.

What about the parable of the 10 virgins, all were asleep, but 5 were still ready and had oil in their lamps, what does this mean?

The oil of grace gives to men the courage, and **supplies to them the motives**, [heart change] for doing every day the work that God appoints to them. **The five foolish virgins had lamps (this means a knowledge of Scripture truth), but they had not the grace of Christ.** Day by day they went through a round of ceremonies and external duties, but their service was lifeless, devoid of the righteousness of Christ. **The Sun of Righteousness did not shine in their hearts** and minds, and they had not the love of the truth which conforms to the life and character, the image and superscription, of Christ. **The oil of grace was not mingled with their endeavors.** Their religion was a dry husk without the true kernel. **They held fast to forms of doctrines**, but they were deceived in their Christian life, full of self-righteousness, and failing to learn lessons in the school of Christ, which, if practiced, would have made them wise unto salvation.-- Review and Herald, March 27, 1894.

In the parable of the virgins, five are represented as wise and five as foolish. The name "**foolish virgins**" **represents the character** of those who have not the genuine heart-work wrought by the Spirit of God. The coming of Christ does not change the foolish virgins into wise ones. When Christ comes, **the balances of Heaven will weigh the character, and decide whether it is pure, sanctified, and holy, or whether it is unclean, and unfit for the kingdom of heaven. Those who have despised the divine grace that is at their command, that would have qualified them to be the inhabitants of heaven,** will be the foolish virgins. They had all the light, all the knowledge, but they failed to obtain the oil of grace; they did not receive the truth in its sanctifying power. {RH, August 19, 1890 par. 8}

Notice the judgment is about the accurate diagnosis of the heart of each person, who has actually partaken the Remedy provided by Christ and been changed to be like Christ in character, and who has only put on an external profession of being a follower of God but never actually partaken of the Remedy.



MONDAY

Signs of the End is the title for the day—what are signs of the end?

- The knowledge of God's true character is increasing yet at the same time many millions are rejecting God
- Time prophecies have been fulfilled
- Wickedness abounds
- Natural disasters and calamities
- The earth is warming?
- World economies are increasingly enmeshed
- Islamic terrorism is rising—is this a sign of the end?
- others?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase**—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Remedy—Is Now Available in Print Version in the US. We have printed 10,000 to give away and will reassess demand for them after those are gone. We are shipping a small number to Canada and Australia. **How to get copies:** In the US email orders@comeandreason.com with a valid US postal address; In Canada email canada@comeandreason.com and in Australia/New Zealand email Australia@comeandreason.com and request the number you want and we will ship them to you. If you are giving them away please give them only to people who want them. In other words, don’t put one at every seat in the church, or place setting at a potluck, or car in a parking lot. Such distribution methods result in vast numbers being thrown away. Let people know they are free and allow them to take one if they want too works best.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

Thursday, June 9 at 1:30 PM Eastern Time Dr. Jennings will appear on the *Lifestyle Magazine* show, “Healing The Mind” that he recorded previously. It is scheduled to air on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN). Keep in mind that TBN can preempt the show at their discretion.

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Cape Town, South Africa



The Book of Matthew Lesson 13 2Q 2016 Crucified and Risen

I received this email this week from a gentleman in Michigan:

Dear Come and Reason Class,

I have been listening to your studies for almost four years now. I was brought up in a different faith and have been petrified my whole life of God. I studied about God up until about 12 years of age and believed that I would burn in hell for eternity. For the next 45 years, I pursued the things of this world, but the Spirit was always calling me as I knew there was a God through nature. I could see the vast sea of stars in the universe and knew there was something bigger out there.

A friend and I were always interested in Daniel and Revelation, trying to figure out the end times. Five years ago, I came to the Adventist church through the Revelation seminar. From that day to today, I have been blessed to learn about God's character and government. I have come under some extreme pressure within our conference when I brought up Come and Reason, but I rarely take other's opinions as fact. One time a sister sent me an article from the internet titled "What's wrong with Tim Jennings?" and the next Sabbath, I asked "What she thought of it?" and she said "I don't know, I didn't read it" I noticed that within our conference there is organizational protection and a fear to trust one's own ability to reason. I have always wanted to find out for myself, whether it be economics, science, politics or the truth about God. So I stayed with the Design Law construct and have been liberated to understand the big picture. Once we consider Design Law, all other Bible stories and prophecies seem to fit perfectly.

This has been a slow, almost four year, journey, but there are a few that are starting to understand Design law. It is truly beautiful to see these people grasping how God operates this Universe of Love and the liberation it has provided in their lives. It blows my mind to see how consistent Design law is with what our founders believed. I hear statements like "This makes so much sense".

To make a long story short, I sent you the attached request for three copies of the Remedy yesterday, but when I went to church my brother said he was interested in one copy. Then I said "would you like two copies?" He said "yes". Then I had to ask "If he wanted three copies? He said "yes" to that as well. So within a few seconds, I gave away all three copies I requested earlier in the day. Could you please send me a case so I can get to work and quit bugging you.

Blessings to you and the entire Come and Reason Family,



And I received this last night from Dennis Kremenetsky (he attended with his fiancé Alina Heinanen):

I love everything about how Tim Jennings teaches, how he makes you want to learn for yourself. He makes you eager to learn more and not afraid to question. Not afraid to reason things out, and figure out the meaning of God's word. I lived in the Collegedale community for 18 years, and I just couldn't find my way to God. I felt pushed away by the church, more then pulled in. I gave up for a long time, but then I started coming to Come and Reason and things changed. There was some hope, something pulling me in, pushing me to question and learn. Pushing me to not be afraid and just question, so I could really see God's Love. I have just moved to Finland, and I would really love to be able to spread the word here of Come and Reason to my family and friends, and to anyone else who will listen. I just wanted to say thank you to Tim Jennings and the community of Come and Reason, I had given up and you have pulled me back into Christ. Tomorrow I will be baptized for the first time, and its all thanks to God spreading his word through Tim Jennings. Thank you all and wish you the best.

To Dennis: We celebrate today as, having come to the knowledge of God, you are baptized into the family of God! Welcome to the Family!

SABBATH

Read memory text: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." Mt 28:18

What does the text mean?

Is it Jesus stating that He was now reassuming the power and authority He had prior to His incarnation and for which He had limited His use during His life on earth?

Does authority connote more than power?

Doesn't authority connote the rightful use of power? Had Christ ever been in a position where He did not have the right of rulership?

Then why the need to state that authority had been given Him? Could it be that a question about Christ's legitimate place in God's universe was raised? Could it be that humans didn't realize Christ as truly equal with the Father? Do some people today still struggle with this truth and assert that Christ is a lesser being than the Father?

In the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*, we read about such questions being raised in heaven:

Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. He worked with mysterious secrecy, and for a time



concealed his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God. He began to insinuate doubts concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that though laws might be necessary for the inhabitants of the worlds, angels, being more exalted, needed no such restraint, for their own wisdom was a sufficient guide. They were not beings that could bring dishonor to God; all their thoughts were holy; it was no more possible for them than for God Himself to err. **The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father was represented as an injustice to Lucifer**, who, it was claimed, was also entitled to reverence and honor. If this prince of angels could but attain to his true, exalted position, great good would accrue to the entire host of heaven; for it was his object to secure freedom for all. But now even the liberty which they had hitherto enjoyed was at an end; **for an absolute Ruler had been appointed them, and to His authority all must pay homage**. Such were the subtle deceptions that through the wiles of Lucifer were fast obtaining in the heavenly courts. {PP 37.1}

There had been no change in the position or authority of Christ. Lucifer's envy and misrepresentation and his claims to equality with Christ had made necessary a statement of the true position of the Son of God; but this had been the same from the beginning. Many of the angels were, however, blinded by Lucifer's deceptions. {PP 38.1}

So, Satan raised questions that undermined in the minds of intelligent beings the rightfulness of Christ's authority and rulership—but after the Cross all such questions have been answered, “worthy worthy worthy is the Lamb who was slain...” He is worthy to have all power because He has demonstrated He is trustworthy with all power!

But the lesson title is about the crucifixion and resurrection and I received a letter in the mail this week with the following question:

A few Sabbaths back you mentioned in SS class that you do not believe that Christ died the second death. I would very much like to hear more about this. I have listened to that lesson 3 times, however, I still have questions.

I understand of course, that Christ is alive today—so obviously did not die forever, but I thought that was because he conquered death—that because He Himself had never sinned, that death could not hold Him. Also, I have understood that Christ's psychological experience at the time was like what it will be for those who do die the second death. He experience all of our sin upon Himself while fully comprehending how far from—well I guess I would at this point say, from Design Law, those sins took Him. They were so far from design protocol that the natural consequence would be death. Isn't this what those dying the second death will experience—the natural result of not being willing to have God change/heal us?

I would love for you to have an article upon the website addressing this issue specifically. Thank you again for all you are doing to dispel the lies that Satan has woven around God's character.



There is an article in the blog section of our website entitled, “Did Christ Die the Second Death?”

If you go to our website and use the search feature at the top and type in “second death” you will find it.

But, what do you think of her question? How would you answer it?

Might it be helpful to define what we mean by the term second death?

Where would you turn to define this term? What does the Bible say about it?

The Bible uses the actual term “second death” only in the book of Revelation in 2:11, 20:6, 20:14 and 21:8.

The first two times the term is used the Bible tells us that the second death has no power over the righteous, those who arise in the first resurrection.

It is in the last two uses that the Bible gives us some definition of what the second death actually is:

- Rev 20:14 "The lake of fire is the second death"
- Rev 21:8 "their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

According to Revelation the second death occurs in the lake of fire or that dying in the lake of fire is the second death. Did Christ die in the lake of fire?

When Jesus died do we have any inspired evidence that Jesus died with fire reigning down upon Him? Or does the inspired record reveal just the opposite that darkness covered Him and He pled, “my God, my God why have you forsaken me” (Matt 27:45, 46)?

So, first point—is Christ’s death like the wicked, dying in the lake of fire, or opposite dying in darkness?

What do we understand the fire to be in which the wicked die? Heb 12:29 “Our God is a consuming fire.” EGW says that “to sin wherever it is found our God is a consuming fire.” DA 107

Where does Revelation say the fire occurs?

Then another angel, a third, followed them, crying with a loud voice, “Those who worship the beast and its image, and receive a mark on their foreheads or on their hands, they will also drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and **they will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of**



the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image and for anyone who receives the mark of its name.” Rev 14:9-11 NRSV

Where is this fire? In God’s presence—here is a description of this in the book *The Great Controversy*:

At last the order to advance is given, and the countless host moves on--an army such as was never summoned by earthly conquerors, such as the combined forces of all ages since war began on earth could never equal. Satan, the mightiest of warriors, leads the van, and his angels unite their forces for this final struggle. Kings and warriors are in his train, and the multitudes follow in vast companies, each under its appointed leader. With military precision the serried ranks advance over the earth's broken and uneven surface to the City of God. By command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed, and the armies of Satan surround the city and make ready for the onset. {GC 664.3}

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

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

Had He appeared with the glory that was His with the Father before the world was, we could not have endured the light of His presence. That we might behold it and not be destroyed, the manifestation of His glory was shrouded. His divinity was veiled with humanity,--the invisible glory in the visible human form. {DA 23.1}

Did Christ die a death in the unveiled splendor and glory of God? Or again, did Christ die when God’s presence was hidden from Him?

And remember just before His crucifixion Jesus was transfigured—Jesus was bathed in the unveiled glory of God and what happened? No harm to Jesus! But, the wicked in that same fiery glory are consumed and it is described as the lake of fire or the second death.



Some Bible commentators add further clarification between the first and second death noting that the first death is the death from which a resurrection occurs but the second death is the death from which there is no resurrection. There is sound Biblical evidence for this conclusion (1Cor 15:12-21, 42-49, 1Thes 4:16, Rev 2:11, 20:5,6,14, 21:8). If we accept this additional demarcation then we must ask, Did Christ die a death from which there was no resurrection or did Christ rise again? "If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith" (1Cor 15:13). On two counts the Biblical evidence suggests Christ did not die the second death. Is there more evidence?

While the Bible doesn't use "second death" language in any other place, Jesus actually described the two deaths (first and second) in Matthew 10:28 when He said:

"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

Christ makes a distinction between two types of death. The first in which only the body is destroyed and the second in which the body and soul is destroyed.

The Greek word translated "soul" is "psyche" which means "mind, identity, individuality." So, when Jesus died on the cross, did He have His mind, identity, individuality destroyed or did He rise again as the "same Jesus" (Acts 1:11) who died?

If we use the Bible as our guide we have three demarcating features of the second death:

- lake of fire
- death without resurrection
- death which destroys both body and soul (psyche, individuality, mind)

When Jesus died were any of these identifiers met? No! The Bible seems to be making a strong case that Jesus did not "die" the second death. If He didn't die the second death then what was the significance of His death?

Jesus death was the means of actually destroying death!

Christ confronted the second death and conquered it, He did not "pay" the legal death penalty so many falsely believe was necessary.

2 Timothy 1:10 states, Christ "destroyed death and brought life and immortality to life." Christ destroyed the elements of Satan's government that bring death "by his death he destroyed him who holds the power of death that is the devil" Hebrews 2:14. The law of God is the law of love (Deuteronomy 6:5, Psalms 19:7, Matthew 22:37, Romans 13:10, 1 Cor 13, Galatians 5:14, James 2:8), which is the law that all life is created to operate upon. Sin is lawlessness (1John 3:4), which is trying to live outside the law of love. In other words, sin is violating the very principle that life is created to



operate upon. **Death results where selfishness rules and death is destroyed where love reigns supreme!**

Christ died when love overcame selfishness, when He gave His life freely, when He chose to lay down His life voluntarily. In Christ the law of love, the law of life, was fully lived out when Christ refused to use His power to save self, but rather gave His life freely in love. **In Christ, giving destroyed taking, love destroyed selfishness, life destroyed death!** Thus Christ's death destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light! Christ's experience on the cross stands in sharp contrast to that of those who die in the lake of fire where they are overcome by selfishness.

The differences between Christ's death and that of those who die the second death are stark:

- Christ died trusting the Father – Luke 23:46
The wicked die distrusting the Father – Revelation 6:16
- Christ died longing to see the Father – Mark 15:34
The wicked die hiding from the Father – Revelation 6:16
- Christ died when the Father's presence was hidden – Mark 15:34
The wicked die when the Father is fully revealed – 2 Thes 2:8
- Christ died less than 72 hours – Luke 24:1-8
The wicked die eternally – Malachi 4:1-3, Romans 6:23, James 1:15, 2Pet 3:10-12
- Christ died when love overcame selfishness – John 3:16, 10:17,18, 1John 3:16
The wicked die overcome by selfishness – Revelation 21:8

If the Scriptures so plainly teaches that Christ did not die the second death, but rather destroyed death, then why do so many insist that He did? Because many have accepted the imposed law construct and therefore misdiagnosed the problem of sin. Rather than realizing sin destroys the sinner, that we are in a terminal state of sinfulness, that without Christ's victory we would die, many have innocently, but wrongly, concluded that our problem is actually God Himself. Many believe that God, in order to be just and uphold the imposed law, must kill, must inflict eternal death.

Therefore it is believed that in order to avoid God killing us that God needs to be appeased or our legal penalty needs to be paid. The natural conclusion of this misdiagnosis is to believe that Christ must have died the second death lest our penalty remain unpaid. But when we return to design law we realize that Christ didn't die the second death, He destroyed death, He destroyed the infection of selfishness, He destroyed the deviation from God's law, He destroyed the lies about God and established a new humanity in perfect harmony with God's law.

Ephesians 2:14-18 from the NIV and then from *The Remedy*:

NIV:

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making



peace,¹⁶ and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

The Remedy:

For Christ himself is the Remedy that heals the species and brings peace. He has removed fear and selfishness that cause division, mistrust, prejudice, and hostility.¹⁵ He did this by partaking of our human condition, and—via the exercise of his human brain—he loved perfectly, thereby destroying in his flesh (in the humanity he partook) the selfish survival-of-the-fittest drive along with the lies of Satan. In this way, he destroyed the need for the law (with all its regulations) to expose Satan’s lies and methods. His purpose was to be the template of a new humanity born out of the unification of the two—our selfish, infected condition merged with his sinless state—thereby purging selfishness from the human heart, and transforming, healing, renewing, regenerating and recreating humanity back to God’s original ideal;¹⁶ and in this new being, to reconcile the human race—regardless of ethnic background—into loving unity with God and each other through the revelation of truth at the cross, by which he destroyed the lies of Satan, reestablished trust, and removed fear, selfishness, and hostility.¹⁷ He came and demonstrated the truth of God’s character and the offer of peace available to all humanity—to those far away in darkness and those blessed with the truth of God’s word.¹⁸ For Jesus reveals the truth about God to all, and—through what Jesus has done—all have access to the Father by one Spirit.

What about the Father’s activity or actions toward Jesus on the Cross and the wicked in the end? Does the Father act differently to either? Or does God the Father surrender both to reap what they choose? The wicked choose to be eternally separated from the Father, Christ chose to go through the Cross to complete His mission of eliminating the infection of fear and selfishness and restoring God’s law of love into the species human. In both places, God sets free, God stops intervening, stops interceding, and surrenders them to reap what they have chosen. But Christ chose something completely different than the wicked. Christ chose to trust His Father, Christ chose to love perfectly, the wicked choose to reject the Father and cling to selfishness!

MONDAY

This is when Christ cried, “my God, my God, why have you forsaken me.” read first paragraph, “Matthew records what...”

What is God’s wrath according to Scripture? It is when God lets go, and at the Cross God let go of Jesus and allowed Jesus to reap what Jesus chose, which was to be our Remedy!

This is like a parent who lets go of their healthy child who is donating a kidney to save their child in renal failure—they know the healthy child is going to suffer through a painful ordeal, but they are pleased to allow it because it will result in saving the other child. This is why God was pleased that



Christ be bruised as it says in Isaiah, because it was through this process that Christ could provide the cure to sinfulness and save us.

Jesus Christ “destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light” 2 Timothy 1:9,10.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph:

“It was Barabbas the murderer who was supposed to be crucified on the middle cross. The criminals on either side were possibly his associates. Barabbas was not a first name but a last one. Bar means ‘son of,’ just as Simon bar Jonah meant ‘son of Jonah’ or Bartholomew meant ‘son of Tolomeo.’ Barabbas means ‘son of abbas’—meaning ‘son of the father.’ Many early manuscripts record Barabbas’s first name as Yeshua (Jesus). Yeshua was a common name at the time, meaning ‘Yahweh saves.’ So, Barabbas’s name was along the lines of ‘Yahweh saves, son of the father.’

Is it surprising Satan had a counterfeit for Jesus?

Do you see in history that Satan frequently counterfeits what God is doing?

- Sacrifices to teach God’s selfless love and how sin severs the circle of love—counterfeited into an appeasement myth
- Elijah the true prophet of God—counterfeited by false prophets (and many more in the OT times)
- Galatians Paul speaks of a counterfeit gospel focused on legalities and rituals and behavior
- Jesus said many false Messiah’s would come
- In the 19th century during the Great Awakening, there was a counterfeit awakening of spiritualism
- And the greatest counterfeit of all? Why Christ had to die—the purpose of the Cross! The penal legal appeasement of God which teaches God is the source of inflicted death and puts God in the role of killing Jesus.

Last paragraph states, “Unless under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, people will inevitably make the wrong spiritual choice, as did the mob here.” thoughts?

Can people be under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and still make the wrong spiritual choice?

I think it could be more accurately stated, “unless *following* the conviction of the Holy Spirit...” thoughts?

There are many quotations of people who have also seen it this way, here is one from the book, *The Desire of Ages*



At this council Christ's enemies had been deeply convicted. The Holy Spirit had impressed their minds. But Satan strove to gain control of them. He urged upon their notice the grievances they had suffered on account of Christ. How little He had honored their righteousness. He presented a righteousness far greater, which all who would be children of God must possess. Taking no notice of their forms and ceremonies, He had encouraged sinners to go directly to God as a merciful Father, and make known their wants. Thus, in their opinion, He had set aside the priesthood. He had refused to acknowledge the theology of the rabbinical schools. He had exposed the evil practices of the priests, and had irreparably hurt their influence. He had injured the effect of their maxims and traditions, declaring that though they strictly enforced the ritual law, they made void the law of God. **All this Satan now brought to their minds.** {DA 540.3}

Satan told them that in order to maintain their authority, they must put Jesus to death. This counsel they followed. The fact that they might lose the power they then exercised, was, they thought, sufficient reason for coming to some decision. With the exception of a few who dared not speak their minds, the Sanhedrin received the words of Caiaphas as the words of God. Relief came to the council; the discord ceased. They resolved to put Christ to death at the first favorable opportunity. **In rejecting the proof of the divinity of Jesus, these priests and rulers had locked themselves in impenetrable darkness.** They had come wholly under the sway of Satan, to be hurried by him over the brink of eternal ruin. **Yet such was their deception that they were well pleased with themselves. They regarded themselves as patriots, who were seeking the nation's salvation.** {DA 541.1}

TUESDAY

The Torn Veil—what is being represented here? What does it mean? What did the veil in the temple functionally do, and symbolically what did that represent?

What law lens do you view the symbols through? What do you believe is happening in the little theater drama?

Is this a system of appeasement and legal payment, or is this a model of healing and restoration?

If a model of healing and restoration, what would need to be eliminated to heal and restore? In other words, what is the barrier that prevents us from being reconciled to God? What would God need to destroy in order to open a way back into unity with Himself?

Would God need to destroy Jesus? Is Jesus the barrier that keeps us from being reconciled to God? Absolutely not! But that is what it means if we say the curtain represents Jesus or Jesus' body and that is what most Christians teach—that Jesus was struck down by His Father to pay the legal price and that the obstruction to coming to the Father was the law.



Maybe it would help to decode the surrounding symbols:

Who was able to see the veil between the Holy and Most Holy place? The High Priest and the priests in white robes—who do the priests in white robes represent? The saved—then who do the rest of the tribes of Israel represent? The people of the world who need to hear the gospel. They don't see the veil, they don't understand the issues in the plan of salvation.

What does the Holy Place represent? The church—with the lamp—the living and written Word of God which is a lamp unto our feet, the showbread and wine, which represents the truth about God revealed by Jesus and the perfect character of Christ that believers internalize and are strengthened and nurtured spiritually.

Each Sabbath the priests would enter the Holy Place and eat the bread with the High Priest, symbolically the believers in God join together on Sabbath with Jesus their High Priest to worship God, partake of the truth and assimilate the character of Christ.

The golden altar represents the hearts of the believers, where Christ works via the Holy Spirit to transform and from which true praise and prayers ascend before God like sweet incense.

The daily priests long to see God more fully, and they look toward the Most Holy Place, but something obstructs their view. A veil and what is sewn on the veil? Angels—now, in this controversy between good and evil has there ever been any angels working to obstruct our view of God? Is this really that hard to understand?

This veil must be destroyed so no barrier obstructs our reconciliation with God. And this veil was destroyed. The veil was the only element of that symbolic system that God destroyed when Christ died upon the Cross.

What does the Bible say was destroyed by Christ's death?

- “by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death that is the devil.” (Heb 2:14)
- Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel 1Tim 1:10

What does this mean? What was destroyed by Christ's death?

- The lies of Satan which separate us from God
- Our own carnal nature which separate us from God, which is the infection of fear and selfishness which is the cause of death—which Jesus took upon Himself at His incarnation and overcame with love

By destroying the lies of Satan, and the carnal nature we inherit from Adam's fall, Christ opens a new and living way through the veil.



“We have, then, my brothers and sisters, complete freedom to go into the Most Holy Place by means of the death of Jesus. He opened for us a new way, a living way, through the curtain—that is, through his own body.” (Heb 10,19,20)

“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (2 Cor 2:3,4)

Christ’s death destroys that veil and now the light of the glory of God again shines into our hearts!

WEDNESDAY

The Risen Christ—why is this so important? Read fourth paragraph, “Yet, without this belief...” His resurrection is the evidence, the proof that His Remedy works; His cure works; He has conquered death. He has restored God’s law of love, the design for life back into humanity!

Is it reasonable to believe in the resurrection of the dead?

Do we understand the tripartite nature of humanity?

- Body—soma—hardware
- Soul—psyche—software
- Spirit-pneuma—energy source

With a computer, if it runs out of power what state does it go into? It sleeps—what language does the Bible use to describe those who die? They sleep.

If your computer is in sleep mode, is it dead?

What happens if you back your computer up on a cloud and someone destroys your computer? Is it gone forever, or can it be restored to you? How?

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Mt 10:28

Don’t be afraid of one who can destroy your hardware, be afraid of the one who can destroy both hardware and software, your backup on the cloud.

But if someone destroys your hardware, and you get new hardware and download the backup from the cloud what have you just done? You have just resurrected your computer!

Notice the Bible description:



¹³ Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. ¹⁴ We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe **that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.** ¹⁵ According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and **the dead in Christ will rise first.** ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage each other with these words. 1Thes 4:13-18

THURSDAY

The Great Commission—what is the Great Commission? What is the message that is to be taken to the world? How would you state it?

Has that message gone to the world?

What can we do to present it more effectively?

Do we have a purpose in God's plan? What is it?

FRIDAY

Discuss the questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase**—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Remedy—Is Now Available in Print Version in the US. We have printed 10,000 to give away and will reassess demand for them after those are gone. We are shipping a small number to Canada and Australia. **How to get copies:** In the US email orders@comeandreason.com with a valid US postal address; In Canada email canada@comeandreason.com and in Australia/New Zealand email Australia@comeandreason.com and request the number you want and we will ship them to you. If you are giving them away please give them only to people who want them. In other words, don’t put one at every seat in the church, or place setting at a potluck, or car in a parking lot. Such distribution methods result in vast numbers being thrown away. Let people know they are free and allow them to take one if they want too works best.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

Thursday, June 9 at 1:30 PM Eastern Time Dr. Jennings will appear on the *Lifestyle Magazine* show, “Healing The Mind” that he recorded previously. It is scheduled to air on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN). Keep in mind that TBN can preempt the show at their discretion.

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Cape Town, South Africa



The Role of the Church in the Community Lesson 1 Q3 2016

The Restoration of All Things

I received this email from Malawi:

Hi, your quarterly commentary has done quite a lot to my life and how I look at the bible and all the stories that are written in there. I have to download the mp3's plus the PDFs because it is quite an interesting class you have going on up there and hearing views from different people from there and how these lessons are treated I have learned a lot of things that always went over my head and every week am looking forward to listening knowing there is always something about God that I get to know and I have been an Adventist since childhood but I have used this website for a year and it feels like I have learned more in a year than what I did the past 22 years without the commentary. My heart is more calm now and I sleep very well knowing God is not an angry God like I learned all the past years. I hope a lot of people get to read these and see this beautiful perspective of God.....sending this from Malawi ...have a good day .

I received this email from Dianna LaMarr, an online listener:

I received The Remedy this week and have started reading it! I am so happy to have this New Testament paraphrased bible THANK YOU!!! (I also got one for a friend) I wrote a poem back in 09 and wanted to share it with you! Hope you are blessed! Thank you for all you do Tim in sharing the "truth" about our heavenly Father! This message changed my understanding of God's character years ago when I first started listening to tapes by Maxwell and going to his SS class!

The Remedy
By Dianna LaMarr

*In earthly hearts there resides
A disease that God alone must heal.
Infection took place in the Garden of Eden
By a foe with cunning and skill.*

*A Plan was conceived in heavenly realms
To restore the hearts of man.
With no thought to punish
God revealed, to all, His purpose and plan.*

*With great sacrifice a Healer was sent
To treat the disease that devours.*



*Only He held the cure at His command,
His mission, "truth" spoken with power.*

*So the Healer came with servant hands
And dispensed the Remedy,
He Restored to health infected hearts,
He imposed no penalty.*

*Sin punishes and devours the sin-sick soul,
But the Remedy is available to all,
As we look to Jesus who laid down His life
Without fear, on Him we may call.*

Read third paragraph of the lesson introduction, "What is the *whole* gospel?..."

Read Luke 4:16-21, from *The Remedy*:

He went to his home town of Nazareth, and as he always did on the Sabbath day, he went to the worship service. He stood up and read¹⁷ from the book of God's spokesman Isaiah, which was handed to him. He unrolled the scroll and read from the place where it is written:

¹⁸"God's Spirit is on me because I am his anointed One to bring the Remedy to the afflicted. He has sent me to bring freedom to those held in the bondage of fear and selfishness, and a clear understanding to those blinded by Satan's lies, to exterminate oppression, to remove human brokenness,¹⁹ and to make God's pleasure known this year."

²⁰He then rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the minister, and sat down. Everyone in the sanctuary watched him closely,²¹ and he told them plainly, "Today, right here, within the sound of my voice, this Scripture is fulfilled."

What is the gospel? Is it more than concepts? Is it functional? Is it operational? How does it function? What is its method of operation?

It is love, giving, beneficence, outward regard, caring for others—what kind of law is this? Is it a rule? Or is it a design protocol?

What then would biblical justice be? Can someone describe it?

Doing what is right or just, which is what? Delivering the oppressed, not punishing the oppressor. It is healing, restoring, recreating, renewing, rebuilding, it is not destroying, tearing down, inflicting harm.



SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “All one has to do...” What is wrong? If our diagnosis is wrong, then our treatment is wrong, so yes, something is wrong—but what?

The lesson states, “It’s called the Fall. It’s called sin. It’s called rebellion, and it’s called the great controversy.”

Does that tell us what is wrong, or does that give labels to what is wrong?

What is actually wrong? The lesson hints to a certain worldview when it states “It’s called rebellion.” What worldview does this lead toward?

Does it lead to an imperial, imposed law, worldview? Is that the actual problem?

Were Adam and Eve rebels, or were they victims of a deceiver? And once they were deceived what was the problem?

Eve believed the words of Satan, and the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors, and it was only by repentance toward God and faith in the promised Messiah that they could hope ever to regain the lost image of God. {RH, January 5, 1886 par. 8}

Can a change in one’s beliefs really change a person?

Yes! What we think, believe, changes which brain circuits we fire, causes a cascade of chemical and other events eventually even changing how our DNA is expressed.

Remember the example of believing a lie that your spouse is having an affair...would such a belief change you? Absolutely, and we can measure many of those changes, changes in heart rate, blood pressure, stress hormones, brain circuitry activation, and of course behavior. If the truth doesn’t remove the lie, then many more false beliefs follow, and those false beliefs will further damage you and transform your character to a more fear based, selfish individual.

So, what happened to Adam and Eve? What is the problem that sin caused that the plan of salvation is designed to fix?

- Did Adam and Eve’s sin change God?
- Did Adam and Eve’s sin change God’s law—
 - how do you understand God’s law?



- Is God's law rules that the Divine Governor must enforce, or protocols upon which life is construct?
 - If protocols, what happens to the individual who violates them?
- So, if God and His law did not get changed when Adam and Eve sinned (deviated from God's law—design), what did get changed? —Adam and Eve—how? What changed in them?
- They were infected with fear and selfishness, love was displaced, they began operating upon Satan's principle of survival of the fittest, which kills others to protect self—Immediately, Adam blames/sacrifices Eve to protect self.

Read the first paragraph in **TUESDAY's** lesson—"The word enmity..." What is happening when God puts enmity between humankind and Satan?

Consider this description from EGW:

The Lord says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." **The enmity does not exist as a natural fact.** As soon as Adam sinned, he was in harmony with the first great apostate, and at war with God; and **if God had not interfered in man's behalf, Satan and man would have formed a confederacy against heaven**, and carried on united opposition against the God of hosts. **There is no natural enmity between evil angels and evil men**; both are evil through transgression of the law of God, and evil will always league against good. Fallen men and fallen angels enter into a desperate companionship. {ST, July 11, 1895 par. 5}

What is another way to describe "interfered in man's behalf"? Intercession, God intercedes, intervenes to disrupt the inevitable union with Satan and destruction of humanity. God intercedes, interferes, intervenes in three places:

- The hearts of human beings by convicting of sin, drawing, giving a desire for something better, enlightening with truth etc.
- With the powers of darkness and evil (Army's around Elisha, holding back four winds of strife)
- And, through Jesus, in the course of what sin would do to the human species, in Jesus the terminal trajectory toward death was altered, when Jesus destroyed death and restored life into humanity!

What is it called when God stops all intercession? God's wrath—God's wrath is not the infliction of something from God, it is the surrendering of sinners to the ultimate results of what unrestrained and uninterfered with sin causes!

So, if the condition of humankind was changed at the fall, what would be necessary to save humanity?

Wouldn't it be something that actually fixes what is wrong in us?



So, if you were Satan, and your goal to stop people from being saved what would you do? Would you make counterfeit treatments?

Such as?

How about:

- a legal solution in which people believe the problem is not their actual condition, but the problem is a God who is offended and who needs to be satisfied or appeased
- Or, God's law must be enforced and God's law demands proper punishment and someone has to pay for the crime?

Do you see how such approaches will give people a sense of dealing with their sin problem, by claiming legal payment, but without actually treating the real problem, so people remain terminal!

So, what is the true solution to the sin problem? Actual healing of the heart and character of humankind—could any human after Adam sinned do that? Could an angel do that? This is why no angel could be our Savior. No, thus Christ came to achieve what we could not achieve, removing the infection of fear, selfishness and false ideas about God, and restoring truth and love into the species. Jesus did what we could not.

Consider this quote:

All sin is selfishness. Satan's first sin was a manifestation of selfishness. He sought to grasp power, to exalt self. A species of insanity led him to seek to supersede God. And the temptation that led Adam to sin was Satan's declaration that it was possible for man to attain to something more than he already enjoyed, possible for him to be as God Himself. **The sowing of seeds of selfishness in the human heart was the first result of the entrance of sin into the world.** God desires every one to understand the evil of selfishness, and to co operate with Him in guarding the human family against its terrible, deceptive powers. The design of the gospel is to confront this evil by means of remedial missionary work, and to destroy its destructive power by establishing **enterprises of benevolence.** {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 3} (The Worker's Bulletin)

As a remedy for the terrible consequences into which selfishness led the human race, God gave His only begotten Son to die for mankind. [what was the reason God gave Jesus? not as a legal payment, as a remedy to the consequences, the situation, the condition] How could He have given more? In this gift He gave Himself. "I and My Father are one," said Christ. **By the gift of His Son, God has made it possible for man to be redeemed and restored to oneness with Him.** "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." **Love is the great principle that actuates unfallen beings.** With amazement the angels behold the indifference that those who have light and knowledge manifest toward a world unsaved. The heavenly host are filled with



an intense desire to work through human agencies to restore in man the image of God. They are ready and waiting to do this work. **The combined power of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost is pledged to uplift man from his fallen state. Every attribute, every power of divinity has been placed at the command of those who unite with the Saviour in winning men to God.** [wow—how much power is that? What kind of power? What is the power that does this? It is the power of truth and love, coercive power is found only under Satan's government! But the power of truth and love is the power of life itself, it is the power that heals, that restores, that cleanses, that creates, that upholds worlds, that sustains stars, than all reality is built upon! Notice her next words.] O, that all would appreciate **the truth** as it is in Jesus. O, that all would **love God** in return for the **love wherewith He has loved them.** [truth and love is the power] {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 4}

Sin has extinguished the love that God placed in man's heart. The work of the church is to rekindle this love. The church is to co-operate with God by uprooting selfishness from the human heart, placing in its stead the benevolence that was in man's heart in his original state of perfection. [The lesson is **The Role of the Church in the Community—what is the church to do? Restore love into the hearts of people by leading them to love others in action and deed—this is the power!**] {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 5}

What is the mission of the church? To cooperate with God for the actual healing and transformation of people to be like Jesus in character. But instead the church has been infected with a false gospel that teaches them to seek legal solutions and protection from God, rather than reconciliation to God.

If you think this is not the case, read the last two paragraphs in **TUESDAY** lesson, “Theologians sometimes use...” What questions come to your mind?

Does God's government have laws? Yes, absolutely—what kind of laws? How do they function? Are God's laws, functionally, like human laws, rules imposed and enforced by imposed punishments? What does it say about God if He functions no different than sinful human beings?

The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man. **The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. The laws that govern the heart's action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds.** Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action. For all the objects of His creation the condition is the same--**a life sustained by receiving the life of God, a life exercised in harmony with the Creator's will.** To transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place one's self out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin. {Ed 99.2}

Tell me what you hear being described in this quotation:

One of the divine plans for growth is impartation. The Christian is to gain strength by strengthening others. “He that watereth shall be watered also himself.” This is not merely a



promise; **it is a divine law, a law by which God designs** that the streams of benevolence, like the waters of the great deep, shall be kept in constant circulation, continually flowing back to their source. In the fulfilling of this **law** is the secret of spiritual growth. {ST June 12, 1901, par. 4}

What kind of law is described here? Is it an imposed rule or a design protocol? And how would you describe it? This particular description has several laws beautifully harmonized, like Ezekiel's vision of chapter 10, rotating wheel inside a rotating wheel, the operations of God's laws work together—all things work together for good, for life, for healing—this is God's law—design. The laws in this quote:

- The law of love—giving
- The law of exertion—strength comes by exercise
- The law of worship—by beholding we are changed, the spiritual growth of beholding and participating in the action of loving service
- The law of truth—the truth heals and sets free, the truth of God's design law frees from imposed rules

Here is another quote:

It is a divine law that blessings come at some cost to the receiver. Those who would become wise in the sciences must study, and those who would become wise in regard to Bible truth, that they may impart that knowledge to others, must be diligent students of God's Holy Word. **There is no other way;** they must search the Scriptures diligently, interestedly, prayerfully. . . . And after all their research, there is beyond an infinity of wisdom, love, and power. {TMK 194.4}

What law is being described here?

- The law of exertion
- The law of liberty—one must freely choose to participate
- Can a person become a great musician by listening to the stereo 8 hours per day?
- Can a person become a great thinker by listening to sermons 8 hours per day?—Heb 5:14, “the mature are those who have **developed by practice** the ability to discern the right from the wrong.” This is why every person must be fully persuaded in their own mind—why people must think for themselves, because it is only in harmony with God's laws/designs, the law of love, freed, truth, exertion that we can be healed.
- This is also why false religions always lead people to indoctrination, to believe without thinking because it violates God's law and enfeebles the mind obstructing the healing God wants for His children.

What about this quote?

- God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. **Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles**



are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power. {DA 759.1}

What is being described? Why is rebellion not to be overcome by force? Can it be overcome by force? What kind of law requires compelling, coercive enforcement? Why does God not need to act in such ways? What are principles? If God's principles are not compelling, no coercive, what does this mean for how God deals with the wicked in the end?

How do you understand God's law? God is Creator, His laws are the protocols reality function upon, including the laws of love and liberty. Violate God's laws and only pain, suffering and death occur. But Satan has deceived the world into thinking God functions like we do and the evil one paints God as the source of inflicted suffering and death. Thus, the atonement is perverted to teach Jesus paying legal penalties, rather than Jesus healing and restoring and uniting humanity back with God!

Atonement—its original meaning meant to unite, to take two people at odds and bring them back to at-one-ment. It was pronounced atone, rather than at-one because of the old English pronunciation, like when we are all by ourselves we are alone, not all-one.

But, this word changed meanings over the centuries, and has come to connote legal appeasement that was never in its original use. Just like the word gay has come to mean something it never originally meant. Unfortunately, many people have read in the false meaning, why? Because it fits with their false law concept, the idea that God's law works like our law does.

This is level four and below thinking, this is the immaturity that the writer of Hebrews describes, focusing on repentance from acts that lead to death and such a focus is not acquainted with righteousness. Why not? Because righteousness is about the actual transformation of heart/character, i.e. writing the law on the heart and mind. But legal solutions focus on adjustment of legal standing in books of heaven—thus they don't even know what righteousness really is.

Did you notice that the legal language of the imposed law, human law in our lesson states, "justice demands a penalty to pay for that wrong."

However, this is exactly the opposite of Scripture and what Biblical justice demands—what does the law of God demand or require?

Here are a few historic quotes from one of the founders of the SDA church:

- **"The condemning power of Satan would lead him to institute a theory of justice inconsistent with mercy. He claims to be officiating as the voice and power of God, claims that his decisions are justice,** are pure and without fault. Thus he takes his position on the **judgment seat** and declares that his counsels are infallible. **Here his**



merciless justice comes in, a counterfeit of justice, abhorrent to God." Christ Triumphant (CTr) p. 11 and - Letter 16a, 1892

What do you think Satan's counterfeit system of justice looks like, the system that is abhorrent to God?

- **"Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;" (DA 761)**

Satan's system is an imposed law system, a system like human governments a system in which justice is the judgment seat, infliction of punishment. This is abhorrent to God. It is counterfeit justice.

What does God's law actually require? Consider these quotes:

- **But the law requires that the soul itself be pure and the mind holy, that the thoughts and feelings may be in accordance with the standard of love and righteousness.--RH, Apr 5, 1898. (2SM 211.) {2MCP 564.1}**
- **The divine law requires us to love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves. Without the exercise of this love, the highest profession of faith is mere hypocrisy. . . . {A New Life NL 32.1}**
- **That which God required of Adam before his fall was perfect obedience to His law. God requires now what He required of Adam, perfect obedience, righteousness without a flaw, without shortcoming in His sight. God help us to render to Him all His law requires. We cannot do this without that faith that brings Christ's righteousness into daily practice. {2SM 380.4}**
- **God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God's free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires. But the Pharisees rejected Christ; "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness" (Romans 10:3), they would not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God. {MB 54.2}**
- **His law requires your heart's supreme affection for your Maker. It requires you to do unto others as you would have them do to you. {BEcho, February 15, 1889 par. 8}**
- **This is the voice of God to you, my brethren and sisters who profess to keep the law of God. That law requires that you love your neighbor as yourself. Are you doing it? {RH, March 11, 1884 par. 10}**



- **The law requires us to present to God a holy character. It demands of men today just what it demanded of Adam in Eden,—perfect obedience, perfect harmony with all its precepts in all relations of life, under all circumstances and conditions.** {ST, May 30, 1895 par. 2}
- **The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character;** and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. **But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. **God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."** Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Why does God's law require all of this? For the same reason the law of respiration require we breathe—it is how life is constructed, it is how the universe works, it is how God Himself is, God IS love!

SUNDAY

Humankind was created in God's image—what do you understand that to mean?

Read fourth paragraph, "The nature of God's..." What is the differences between these natures?

This is not a comprehensive list, but merely to get the mind thinking down these lines, and what would you add to it?

Physical—bodies, ability to interact with the physical world, to move, to touch, to smell, to see, to be beings of real substance—Is God a being of real substance that can interact with the physical universe? We are like Him in this way!

Mental—the ability to think, reason, comprehend, imagine, consider, contemplate, appreciate, investigate, create, understand and much more, can God do all of this? We are like Him in this way!

Relational and Creational—the ability to connect with people, and lower life forms. The ability to pro-create beings in our image. The ability to form networks, families, communities, can God do all of this? We are like Him in this way!

Spiritual—the ability to love, to sacrifice self for the good of others, to give to bless others, to appreciate and value genuine goodness, righteousness, purposes and principles that are more valuable than self—Does God do all of this? We are like Him in way!



Rulership—the ability to govern, to have dominion, to use power to protect, to build up, to organize, to facilitate development etc. Can God do this? We are like Him in this way!

We are like God in all of these ways—but can each of these be perverted and subverted?

Physical—disease, substance abuse, physical torture and injury to others

Mental—believing lies, deceiving, mental illnesses, cults, indoctrination to close minds to truth

Relational and Creational—using relationships to manipulate people for one's ends, sex for perverse (pornography, sex trafficking, prostitution etc.)

Spiritual—false religions and beliefs that transform people into the very opposite of Jesus, yet claiming the name of God

Rulership—coercive and repressive regimes throughout human history, corrupt governments all based on coercive power

And what is the result of the perversion of these attributes that make us in God's image? The damage to the image of God in man, effacing and erasing that image and placing Satan's image where God's should be.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "The Bible does not say..." I have my own theory—and there is NO inspired evidence that my theory is right, so until we get to heaven and ask, I am sticking with this—that they sinned in less than a few months—why?

God told them to be fruitful and multiply—they were perfect—healthy normal sexuality and attraction and they had no infertility problems, and no child was born sinless, which would have been the case had they had children before they sinned. Thus, I hypothesize that they sinned very quickly, before Eve could become pregnant.

Also, this fits with other statements from EGW about how Adam and Eve were in a different position than Lucifer in heaven:

But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. **But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. The**



height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God. {DA 761.5}

This indicates to me that they were still fairly new in their existence and experience with God that they hadn't had a lot of time to really get to know the truth about God.

WEDNESDAY

read second paragraph, "In the beginning..." What do you hear being described as the problem and the solution?

Do you recognize an actual change in the condition of the human species occurred and the plan of salvation was to fix that change? Do you see this is based on design law not imposed law?

Read Galatians 4:19, "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you."

What is Paul saying? What is his focus? Is this a legal issue for Paul or is Paul concerned with the actual transformation and healing of the minds and hearts of people?

THURSDAY

The lesson is about the role the church has to play in God's plan—what is that role? How would you describe it?

We read a statement earlier that the role of the church is to lead people back to God's love and purge selfishness from their hearts. What interferes with that role?

Oswald Chambers wrote the following:

Reconciliation means the restoring of the relationship between the entire human race and God, **putting it back to what God designed it to be. This is what Jesus Christ did in redemption. The church ceases to be spiritual when it becomes self-seeking, only interested in the development of its own organization.** The reconciliation of the human race according to His plan means realizing Him not only in our lives individually, but also in our lives collectively. Jesus Christ sent apostles and teachers for this very purpose—that the corporate Person of Christ and His church, made up of many members, might be brought into being and made known. **We are not here to develop a spiritual life of our own, or to enjoy a quiet spiritual retreat. We are here to have the full realization of Jesus Christ, for the purpose of building His body.**¹

¹ <http://utmost.org/the-spiritually-self-seeking-church/>



What interferes with the church completing its mission? When the church focuses on protecting the institution and institutional assets OVER saving and healing people—examples:

- cover-up of child molestation and protecting of the clergy involved to avoid embarrassment for the organization
- firing people from church employment who “sin” rather than seeking healing and restoration
- disfellowshipping people who violate ordinances and church rules, but who do not violate the principles of love for fellow humans
- Pursuing governmental policies to enforce church beliefs and imposing one’s beliefs upon others

FRIDAY

discuss question 3



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase**—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Remedy—Is Now Available in Print Version in the US. We have printed 10,000 to give away and will reassess demand for them after those are gone. We are shipping a small number to Canada and Australia. **How to get copies:** Go to our website’s e-Store and select *The Remedy NT* (book) from this listings and click the appropriate red order button. If you are giving them away, please give them only to people who want them. In other words, don’t put one at every seat in the church, or place setting at a potluck, or car in a parking lot. Such distribution methods result in vast numbers being thrown away. Letting people know they are free and allowing them to take one if they want too works best.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a HARD COVER book at Amazon as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

Thursday, June 9 at 1:30 PM Eastern Time Dr. Jennings will appear on the *Lifestyle Magazine* show, “Healing The Mind” that he recorded previously. It is scheduled to air on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN). Keep in mind that TBN can preempt the show at their discretion.

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Cape Town, South Africa



The Role of the Church in the Community Lesson 2 3Q 2016 Restoring Dominion

I received this email this week:

I would like one case of The Remedy NT. I took more than half of the first box to church and they disappeared. I'm traveling to WA on the 29th and would like to take a bunch to family and friends there. Thank you so much for all you do to share the truth about who God is. I see this message changing people from the inside out that I thought would never change. Wow! Praise God from whom all blessings flow! This message is so transforming. Yet I see others who are so indifferent. So sad. We just keep sharing and praying for open hearts. Thank you. I'm also ordering your other books but see I can't do it all at once. Will be sending a donation to help with costs. May God's rich love be more real to you each and every day

And also this email came in:

A friend gave me a copy of "Healing the Mind". I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and an Elder in our assembly (Yahweh's Assembly in Yahshua" ... in the King James' English: "The LORD's Church in Jesus"). Much of what Dr. Jennings teaches parallels what I learned from the Director, M. K. Downing ("Doc") of the Family Communication Center in Fresno (now not in existence). He taught "the Event - Meaning - Feelings - Behavior Continuum", "the Love Process" and other teachings. I love the concept that it is reason and conscience that form the judgments we make (I recognize judgment on a scale with one end, "discernment, and the other, condemnation, the first, healthy, and the other, unhealthy). I agree that it requires both of these, working in harmony and in the truth found in Scripture to find True judgment and discernment. I would love to share some information and ask some questions of Dr. Jennings, if he is so inclined.

This email came in this morning:

My Brother's and Sister's at Come and Reason Ministry,

When I stumbled upon your ministry, I was in such turmoil. The seventh day Adventist church that I am a member of presents our God as a punishing revengeful dictator. I raised my son in this church teaching him and presenting this GOD to him. At age 21, my son left the church stating its no different than the world. You saved my life by introducing me to the true God. Your ministry is the remedy to all the false teaching in the world. it is my responsibility to ensure that I help with introducing the God of love and design law.

Can you please send me a case of the Remedy:



SABBATH

What is dominion? Does it mean to dominate? Would it be that Adam was to be predominant? Or Adam was to be the dominant figure on earth? If Adam were to be predominant or dominate—prior to sin what would that have looked like? What actions might Adam have done? How would he have behaved? What methods would he have utilized?

Would he have acted like Jesus—Adam would have been predominant in service, in love, in protection, in wisdom, guidance, mercy, grace, freedom, always leading in SERVICE... giving of himself for the health of the rest of the planet?

Is that what you typically think of when you think of dominion and dominant?

What was Adam's dominion? Did Adam have dominion over nature? Did he have dominion over angels? Did he have dominion over Eve? What do you think Adam had the authority, ability to do prior to the fall?

While they remained true to God, Adam and his companion were to bear rule over the earth. **Unlimited control was given them over every living thing.** [What would that look like? Does it make a difference if one controls with a heart of love or a heart of selfishness? Do you think if they had control over every living thing, they also had control over non-living things like minerals and water and dirt?] The lion and the lamb sported peacefully around them or lay down together at their feet. The happy birds flitted about them without fear; and as their glad songs ascended to the praise of their Creator, Adam and Eve united with them in thanksgiving to the Father and the Son... {PP 50.2}

The laws and operations of nature, which have engaged men's study for six thousand years, were opened to their minds by the infinite Framer and Upholder of all. [What laws of nature are you aware of? Which have you found fascinating? Classic Newtonian physics, gravity, motion, friction, but also laws of magnetism, electricity, nuclear properties. All of these laws are fixed and don't change.

But what science has discovered is quantum physics. Now quantum physics is the law that basically encodes freedom of choice into the structure of the universe's fixed laws. It is the choice of the observer, the freewill agent that ultimately makes the reality occur. Computers work upon Newtonian physics, zeros and ones, our brains physiologically are working on Newtonian physics (blood flow, electrical signals etc), but our thinking, our minds—our souls are operating on quantum interactions.

Quantum entanglement is that two particles are in relationship regardless of distance in space and time and requires no physical link. This is a Biblical principle, we are all one body in



Christ; we are being built together in a temple for the Lord. This is very consistent with quantum mechanics. An interesting study to demonstrate the quantum connection that can exist between people was done. They took two individuals who meditated together and placed them in a faraday cage (which blocks all electromagnetic energy). This allowed them to form a bond, a connection. Then they separated the two into separate faraday cages in separate rooms, there was no connection physically or environmentally, and all electromagnetic emissions were blocked by the faraday cages. Then they shone a light into the eye of one of the meditators. The part of the brain that light up in that person's brain also lit up in the other meditator's brain, even though no sensory stimulation was provided to the second meditator.¹

Quantum mechanics can give some insight into why persons have been able to "know" when something bad has happened to a loved one miles away, or how people can be benefited by prayer. Our thoughts actually do change reality. We were created to, as free moral agents exercise our individuality to impact and direct the world around us. This has all been infected and perverted, but the basic design laws and protocols upon which God constructed it all remain. It is coming back into unity with God that we experiencing healing of our minds and become more capable of exercising our abilities in harmony with Him and His design. continuing on with the quote.

...They [Adam and Eve] held converse with leaf and flower and tree, gathering from each the secrets of its life. [what does this mean? Did they merely observe and learn by observation, or was there interaction, conversation? Could Adam and Eve instruct the plants, grow in this direction, put a flower on the third stalk on the left, reabsorb the second branch and grow it three inches further down?] With every living creature, from the mighty leviathan that playeth among the waters to the insect mote that floats in the sunbeam, Adam was familiar. He had given to each its name, and he was acquainted with the nature and habits of all. God's glory in the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolutions, "the balancings of the clouds," **the mysteries of light and sound**, of day and night--all were open to the study of our first parents. On every leaf of the forest or stone of the mountains, in every shining star, in earth and air and sky, **God's name was written**. [what does it mean God's name was written? Is this similar to Romans 1:20 that God's divine nature is seen in what he has made? What is name? Character and so is God's character of love seen throughout all creation? How and why? What is God's core central character? Love, and how does love operate? Giving, and in nature is all of it constructed to operate in love, in giving?] The order and harmony of creation spoke to them of infinite wisdom and power. They were ever discovering some attraction that filled their hearts with deeper love and called forth fresh expressions of gratitude. {PP 50.3}

¹ Dean Radin, "Testing Nonlocal Observations as a Source of Intuitive Knowledge," *Explore* 4, no. 1 (2008): 25.



So long as they remained loyal to the divine law, their capacity to know, to enjoy, and to love would continually increase. [Why? Is it, that as long as they stayed loyal they kept their golden security cards with access passwords that gave them access to the heavenly data base to continue to learn? But if they were disloyal God would cut them off from access to the celestial library? No, what happens to our ability to learn when we believe lies? Think about it. Imaging going back to the Dark Ages/Middle Ages and try to teach a person the truth about bacteria during the Black Death. What might have happened? Would the people have been open to truth? Would the clergy have been open to truth? What happens today when people believe so strongly that God must punish and kill the wicked? Do they lose the ability to assimilate new truth? Yes, so once they believed Satan's lie their minds became infected with fear and selfishness, and their knowledge base became corrupted with distortions] They would be constantly gaining new treasures of knowledge, discovering fresh springs of happiness, and obtaining clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the immeasurable, unfailing love of God. {PP 51.1}

So, with all of this in mind, before they sinned what might they have been able to do with their dominion on earth?

- Could they walk on water?
- Could they command the sun to stand still?
- Could they move objects with his mind – an axe head to float?
- Could they command the trees and flowers and vines to grow in any direction they wanted?
- Could they redirect rivers and streams?
- Could they communicate with the animals?
- Could they fly or teleport from place to place – like Satan taking Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple?

Did Adam prior to his fall have dominion over the forces of nature?

Read second paragraph, “Not only man...” What do you hear in this passage? What does it mean, “paying the penalty of sin”? Is this different than paying a legal penalty? Does the author here say “legal penalty”?

- So, what is the penalty of sin? Death,
- Why is death the penalty of sin?
- Why is death the penalty of taking a cyanide tablet, or cutting an artery and letting your blood bleed out, or tying a plastic bag over your head, or destroying your kidneys with poison?
- Why is death the penalty of such events?
 - Because each of these events violate God's design for life, and another word for design—is law. God's law is the protocol upon which life is built, and violations result in death, unless something is done to restore one back to harmony with design.

So, why did Christ have to pay this penalty?



- Level four and below thinking:
 - because justice requires punishment
 - because the law must be enforced
- Level five and above thinking:
 - It was the only way to eliminate the infection of fear and selfishness which now was the predominant principle, driver, motivator in every single human being, and simultaneously restore God's law of love back into the species human.

In dying Christ—destroyed death, destroyed him who holds the power of death and destroyed the devil's work (2Tim 1:10, Heb 2:14, 1Jn 3:8). In other words, the penalty was paid not as a legal payment, but as the price required to fix what was broken in humankind.

It would be like saying to someone who was dying of renal failure, that the person who donated a kidney paid the price to save them. Yes, the person who gave a kidney they did pay the price to save them, but it wasn't a legal price, it was the price their condition required.

Once Adam sinned, what was required for human beings to be saved?

- The restoration of trust—which required what? Truth to destroy lies, did Jesus pay the price to reveal the truth about God, Satan, the nature and character of sin? Absolutely, but what else was required?
- A new nature, a human nature free from fear and selfishness, a human nature not contaminated by sin—Jesus became part of this humanity, took upon Himself this terminal condition (He became sin though He knew no sin) and in Jesus the law of sin and death was destroyed and replaced by the law of life. When? In Gethsemane and the Cross, when Jesus exercised His human brain to love and say no to selfishness, dying on the cross eliminated the infection, and prior to the Cross Jesus experienced the temptation of what our fallen nature does. Jesus in Gethsemane experienced the temptation to save self—but after His death at the cross, when Love won, Jesus arose in a humanity that can never be tempted again. Jesus is the Remedy! Jesus fixed what Adam broke!
- Yes, Jesus paid a price, but it was the price reality, the condition itself required, not some legal imposition of punishment.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Someone recently..." How would you answer this person's questions?

First, what happened in history that contributed to thinking people giving up a belief in God?

It was when Christianity presented God through the lens of imposed law, with legal requirements and coercive enforcement. This resulted in all kinds of teachings that were nonsense, contradictory to reality, contradictory to common human decency and presented a god not worthy of worship. And since the truth about God was at that time in history not presented clearly, thinking people rejected the



idea of God and came up with evolution as something much more reasonable than the Dark Ages dictator god.

Yet, moving away from worshipping a false god construct to no god, still doesn't bring peace to the soul, doesn't provide answers to these big questions. How would you answer the questions in the paragraph?

What was God's purpose/s in creating human beings? Here is an historic quotation from the book *Education* p. 15:

In order to understand what is comprehended in the work of education, we need to consider both the **nature of man and the purpose of God in creating him**. We need to consider also the change in man's condition through the coming in of a knowledge of evil, and **God's plan for still fulfilling His glorious purpose** in the education of the human race. {Ed 14.4}

When Adam came from the Creator's hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. "God created man in His own image" (Genesis 1:27), and **it was His purpose that the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal this image--the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator**. [what is the glory of the creator? It is His character of love; what then would it mean to more fully reflect his glory? how would this happen on earth if Adam and Eve had not sinned?] **All his faculties were capable of development; their capacity and vigor were continually to increase**. Vast was the scope offered for their exercise, glorious the field opened to their research. The mysteries of the visible universe--the "wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge" (Job 37:16)--invited man's study. Face-to-face, heart-to-heart communion with his Maker was his high privilege. Had he remained loyal to God, all this would have been his forever. **Throughout eternal ages he would have continued to gain new treasures of knowledge, to discover fresh springs of happiness, and to obtain clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the wisdom, the power, and the love of God. More and more fully would he have fulfilled the object of his creation, more and more fully have reflected the Creator's glory**. {Ed 15.1}

But by disobedience this was forfeited. **Through sin the divine likeness was marred, and well-nigh obliterated**. Man's physical powers were weakened, his mental capacity was lessened, his spiritual vision dimmed. He had become subject to death. Yet the race was not left without hope. By infinite love and mercy the plan of salvation had been devised, and a life of probation was granted. **To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized--this was to be the work of redemption**. [Does this sound like a legal solution, or an actual healing solution?] This is the object of education, the great object of life. [Is this what Christianity has been teaching or instead a legal system devoid of God's healing grace?] {Ed 15.2}



Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. [What does this mean? Love the basis of creation—does this mean something more than emotion, is love functional, operational—how does love operate or function?] This is made plain in the law that God has given as the guide of life. [What law do you think is being referred to here? What do you think this author will cite next as the law God gave as a guide to life?] The first and great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." Luke 10:27. To love Him, the infinite, the omniscient One, with the whole strength, and mind, and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being--the body, the mind, as well as the soul--the image of God is to be restored. {Ed 16.1}

How many preachers have diverted minds away from the law of love to the 10 Commandments and a system of fear and behavioral conformity?

Again does that sound like a legal payment solution or a healing of our actual being back into harmony with God's original design for humankind?

So what was our purpose? To be godlike—literally, to be like Him in our being, our thoughts, actions, understanding, functioning, in all that we do to be like Him!

How does this purpose get derailed? By sin—and how does God's redemptive plan get derailed? By legal theologies that obstruct His healing plan!

MONDAY

Read first two paragraphs, "The biblical word..." So Adam and Eve were given authority, dominion and were to exercise power over the earth—what kind of power? How were they to wield power?

Would Adam and Eve, in a world before sin, use power to force others into compliance with their will? Would they have used compelling power?

Would there be lessons that would be learned about God in how Adam wielded power—in a world without sin? What lessons might be learned?

What about when Adam and Eve discussed a project—would they consult with their dog or cat or rhino or elephant in the planning? Why not?

Which is the bigger intelligence and knowledge gap, the gap between you and your dog, or the gap between you and God?



So, do we gain insight into why God didn't consult with His creation when He went about His creative plans? Is it because God is selfish and exclusionary or is it because created beings cannot communicate on the level of the Godhead, we cannot even comprehend it?

Does the earth's eco systems teach us anything about God? how what?

TUESDAY

What do you understand boundaries to mean? What are the purposes of boundaries?

In God's design are boundaries intended to restrict, enslave, trap, or imprison?

What are the purpose of boundaries? To protect—always to protect! And to liberate—how?

- Would a river, even in Eden, have boundaries—why, what happens when a river floods over its boundaries?
- Does the Bible describe God's law as the law of liberty—how?

Let's read Galatians 3:19-25 from *The Remedy*:

¹⁹ If God promised to heal us, then what was the purpose of the law? It was added because of our sin-sick state—our darkened minds and the rapid rate at which we were destroying ourselves—in order to diagnose our condition and teach us a healthier way to live until the only true cure, Jesus (the promised One) had come. God communicated this law through angels, and then through Moses as an intermediary to the people...

²¹ Is the written law, then, somehow in opposition to the promises of God? Of course not! The written law was simply a tool to diagnose our sickness and lead us to God for healing. If the written law could somehow cure the infection of selfishness and promote life, then healing would certainly have followed the giving of the law.²² But Scripture is clear: All humanity is infected with selfishness and is imprisoned by this terminal condition. It is by trust that we experience the only cure, the One promised—Jesus Christ—who was given to humankind as the Remedy to this terminal condition.

²³ Before Christ came, we were quarantined by the written law—restrained from continual self-destruction—until Christ procured the only true cure.²⁴ The written law was provided as a safeguard to protect us and lead us to Christ—the Great Physician—so that we might be restored to unity with God by trust in, and partaking of, Christ.²⁵ Now that trust in God has been restored—and we are set right in heart, mind, and character, and again practice God's methods—we no longer need the law to diagnose our condition or lead us back to God.

What is the purpose of the written law? To protect and lead us back to Christ for true healing. Then if this is its purpose, for whom was it written? 1Tim 1:8-11:



⁸ We know that the written law is a diagnostic instrument for the soul, and it is good if used properly.⁹ We also know that this diagnostic tool was not made for the spiritually healthy, but for those who are selfish in character, those who are spiritually diseased, who don't know God, who don't love others but kill their fathers and mothers, the ill at heart, murderers,¹⁰ sexual perverts and adulterers, human traffickers, liars, deceivers, and for everyone and everything else that is out of harmony with God's design for life or¹¹ doesn't harmonize with the incredible truth about God's character of love that he has entrusted me to share. (*The Remedy*)

It is just like MRI machines, they were not made for people with perfect health. the MRIs were made for people with sickness, to expose the disease—but the MRI has no power to heal. Likewise, the 10 Commandments were given as a protective hedge and diagnostic tool, but they have no power to heal.

So, then, how does the law provide freedom? Because if we live in harmony with the law (God's design protocols) we are healthier, in every way, and health is liberty and freedom, just ask anyone who has lost their health:

- If a person has smoked heavily and has bad lung disease, have they lost liberty?
- If a person has lived a sedentary lifestyle and eaten fatty foods and has heart failure, have they lost liberty?
- If a person has murdered someone, and even if not caught have they lost liberty? Do they live in fear, maybe on the lam?
- If a person has an addiction, have they lost liberty?
- If a person rejects love and lives selfishly have they lost liberty? Why? Because they are imprisoned with their fears, doubts, insecurity, perceived threats, and ultimate their fear of death.
- Fear paralyzes, love sets free!

Only returning to God, our Creator and His principles (i.e. law) of love do we find our highest fulfillment and true freedom. Everything deviant from God's design enslaves!

Bottom section—what are some specific boundaries we need to respect in regard to others—while we won't dig into personal lives, what about in the church?

What about Romans 14:5 is there a boundary in this verse we need to respect?

One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

What is the boundary? We present truth in love and leave others free—we don't set ourselves up as judges of another person's conscience or their service to God.

Remember man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.



Jesus told the story of the good Samaritan, why did Jesus pick a Samaritan to tell this story? What was the Jewish attitude toward the Samaritans?

So, what about this parable, in answer to who is my neighbor, perhaps we could say, who is a Christian—

A ship was sailing from US to England and hit an iceberg. The ship is sinking and people are frantic for seats on the lifeboats. The last lifeboat is about to be lowered over the side, completely full, when a child is discovered still on the sinking ship. A priest refuses to give up his seat, a pastor and theology professor also refuse, but a homosexual man, who lived an active homosexual life, gets off the lifeboat and gives his seat to the boy. Who, in the parable is the Christian—the one who is like Christ?

- By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” Jn 13:35
- Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. Jn 15:13
- This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. 1Jn 3:16

WEDNESDAY

What is the responsibility of human beings to care for the earth? Do we have a responsibility to care for the lower life forms? Do we have a responsibility to not pollute?

What has contributed to the massive pollution in the world today? When did pollution start?

Historians suggest pollution began with the industrial revolution, when items we use became increasingly disposable and prepackaged. Commercialization, with branding and packaging to enhance marketing, with disposable packages has contributed to huge garbage and waste in our societies today.

Studies found that in America, the average American throws away between 4.4 and 7 pounds of trash per day. That is basically one ton of trash per person per year we throw away—this is non-recyclable waste.

THURSDAY

The Restoring Role of the Church—what do you understand the role of the church to be?

- Would it be to convert people to a particular denomination?
- Would it be to get people to behave in certain ways?
- Would it be to get people to participate in certain rituals?
- Would it be to get people to attest to certain creeds?
- Would it be to help restore the image of God in humanity?

Is the church to be involved in helping restore the image of God in humankind?



How? What actions specifically can the church take to help restore the image of God in man?

- Present the truth about God's character of love, His methods of love, His law of love in the setting of the Great Controversy over His character
- Schools to educate people, so they learn in the right context
- Present reality, design reality, not imperialism
- To minister God's love in helping others—missions, health care, community services etc. etc.
- To create places of community where we can worship and fellowship and live lives in harmony with God's design

Dark section 2/3 of the way down the page, "How did the apostle John describe the reason Christ appeared on this earth?"

- The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. Jn 10:10

How do we have life to the full? Only restored back to harmony with God's design!

- The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. 1Jn 3:8

What is the devil's work?

The life of Christ is to be revealed in humanity. Man was the crowning act of the creation of God, **made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God; but Satan has labored to obliterate the image of God in man, and to imprint upon him his own image.** Man is very dear to God, because he was formed in His own image. . . {LHU 48.2}

Jesus destroyed the devil's work, how? By restoring God's image in humankind!

FRIDAY

discuss question 3



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase**—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Remedy—Is Now Available in Print Version in the US. We have printed 10,000 to give away and will reassess demand for them after those are gone. We are shipping a small number to Canada and Australia. **How to get copies:** In the US email orders@comeandreason.com with a valid US postal address; In Canada email canada@comeandreason.com and in Australia/New Zealand email Australia@comeandreason.com and request the number you want and we will ship them to you. If you are giving them away please give them only to people who want them. In other words, don’t put one at every seat in the church, or place setting at a potluck, or car in a parking lot. Such distribution methods result in vast numbers being thrown away. Let people know they are free and allow them to take one if they want too works best.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

Thursday, June 9 at 1:30 PM Eastern Time Dr. Jennings will appear on the *Lifestyle Magazine* show, “Healing The Mind” that he recorded previously. It is scheduled to air on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN). Keep in mind that TBN can preempt the show at their discretion.

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Cape Town, South Africa



The Role of the Church in the Community Lesson 3 3Q 2016 Justice and Mercy in the Old Testament: Part I

I received this email this week:

I recently ordered 3 of The Remedy for my family. I had been using it on line since AACC (Nashville) last year. I tell people that I finally have a New Testament in my own language. For example, the frequent use of the word "selfishness" instead of "sin" really gets my attention. As a Mennonite Christian, I also agree that various things went wrong in connection with Constantine. I will give and use the 24 copies at church for the men's bible study, my Sunday School class, and church leaders. I will also send a donation to help with the free things that you do. Thank you. Iowa

Following up from last week's lesson -- we discussed Quantum Mechanics and how we are connected in ways that defy Newtonian physics. Beyond Quantum theory is string theory, which postulates that everything in the universe is made up of tiny vibrating strings. These strings are identical, but why then does one string manifest as a heavy particle like a proton and another as a particle without mass like a photon (light)? It has to do with the vibration frequency. The more energy in the string the more mass it has. Strings are so small that if a silver dollar was magnified to be the size of our solar system, a string would be the size of a tree.

Do you find this a little too bizarre to think it could be real? Consider this quote from EGW:

The striking feature of **divine operations** is the accomplishment of the greatest work that can be done in our world by very simple means. It is God's plan that **every part of His government shall depend on every other part, the whole as a wheel within a wheel**, working with entire harmony. He moves upon human forces, causing His Spirit to touch **invisible chords, and the vibration rings to the extremity of the universe.**--Manuscript 22, 1897. {Ev 93.1}

What about healing from prayer, could it be that we are mobilizing these chords, the strings, with intention based on love that can actually result in altering DNA in the recipient of prayer and result in healing?

An interesting study was done by Dr. Rollin McCraty and colleagues. They had individuals trained to focus their intention with love and goodwill. They took human DNA from placentas and had the trained individuals focus with love and good will on vials containing the human DNA with the intention to either have the DNA wind itself tighter or to unwind looser. This can be measured by how much UV light the vials absorb. The more tightly wound the more light is absorbed. They were able to measure a 25% change in DNA conformation from these mental intention.



Now it gets more interesting—when the individuals would generate the same feelings of love and good will, but not focus attention on changing the DNA configuration, no change in the DNA occurred. And even more profound—when they focused intention but without love and goodwill, no DNA change occurred. It required both a focused intention AND the mobilization of love and goodwill emotions. How could they tell if the participants were generating love and goodwill emotions? By measuring heart rate variability, love emotions produce coherence, whereas hate, anger, negative emotions produce large fluctuations.

In a follow on study, to determine if this was perhaps a general electromagnetic field effect, or something that was more focused. Researchers had three vials with the DNA placed side by side and had the participants focus on changing the DNA conformation in two of the vials, but not the third—and—only the two the participants focused on showed the DNA change. Finally, researches had five different experiments in which the DNA vials were a half mile from the participants, and the same DNA changes occurred when the participants focused with intent and love. All of these studies reached statistical significant levels of change. (McCraty, 2003 *Modulation of DNA conformation by heart-focused intention* p. 6, Boulder Creek, CA: Institute of HeartMath)

Elizabeth Targ, MD, PhD conducted a study to measure the impact of remote (long distance, never having met the patient) prayer on terminally ill AIDS patients. She had the faith healers presented with a patient's photo, name and T-helper cell count. They took great pains to ensure that the no patient in the study new who were being prayed for and who was not being prayed for by these specific spiritual healers.

Six months later those who received remote healing prayer showed improved mood, significantly less doctor visits, fewer hospitalizations, fewer days in the hospital, higher T-helper cell counts, fewer AIDS defining illnesses, and significantly lower HIV viral levels. (*Western Journal of Medicine* 1998, 168(6), 356.)

This would mean that DNA changes were occurring in a myriad of various genes producing a host of proteins throughout the body—from the focused intention of prayers of goodwill.

In another study researchers placed cancer patients in Faraday cages, electro-magnetically shielded rooms, and even used fiber optic monitors so no metal wires were inside the room. Then they had either spouse or close friends focus healing intention to the cancer patient in the Faraday cage in 10 second bursts, randomly chosen by computer. During those 10 second bursts of healing intention they could measure changes in skin conductivity in the cancer patients, which corresponded with activation of the autonomic nervous system. (*Explore: Journal of Science and Healing* 2008, 4(4), 235.)

The point is that we are all connected, we are beings composed of more than just matter, we are living beings with real energy, but also with free will. We can choose, and our choices do impact the world



around us. Our thoughts, our beliefs, our heart felt intentions actual cause quantum changes in the world around us.

Now, what do you think of that EGW quote?

What about in James, “the prayer of a righteous person avails much”—what does it mean to be a righteous man? It is a person who is right in heart with God, which means a person who loves—not persons who do right rituals, but have no love. It is the love in the heart with intention that connects the universe. We can only be connected with God when we come back to the truth about His character of love and open our heart to His love!

SABBATH

What does the title of the lesson bring to your mind?

Is there a difference between justice and mercy? What is the difference?

What law lens do you view justice and mercy through?

What is justice through the human imposed law lens—law that has no inherent consequence for breaking, but requires external punishment? What is justice in this view? It is punishing law breakers.

And in the human imposed law lens, what is mercy? Finding some way not to punish them—one dictionary definition of mercy is:

“the discretionary power of a judge to pardon someone or to mitigate punishment, especially to send to prison rather than invoke the death penalty.”

So, level four and below thinking, justice is the infliction of just punishments whereas mercy is the pardoning of the just punishment. This level of thinking, with this view of law leads to the theory of penal substitution, the idea that God is just in punishing sin, but merciful to sinners because God punished Jesus instead of us so that both justice and mercy can be achieve. This is all based on a failure to understand God’s law and how God’s universe actually works.

More pointedly, this penal substitution view is based on Satan’s view of God’s law, that God’s law is no different functionally than the laws created beings make, rules requiring coercive enforcement. Thus, penal views of God supports Satan’s attack on God that God is no better than created beings. Something Satan has alleged all along.

But, God is the Creator, the Builder of space, time, matter, energy, life. His laws are the protocols upon which all reality is constructed to operate upon. Thus deviations from God’s laws are terminal to the deviant.



With this level of thinking in mind, what is justice?

- The sustaining of all the laws upon which life is built, which includes the law of love and liberty, which results in God granting people genuine freedom.

But, what then is the just course to take for those deviant from God's law?

- To grant them the freedom to reap what they have sown.

But, that would be death, so where does mercy come in?

- Mercy is God intervening to provide a free Remedy, which will restore all who choose to partake, back to God's original design, back to harmony with His law, while leaving all who reject the Remedy free to reap what they have chosen, which is death.

With this in mind, are justice and mercy different? Or are they, in reality, expressions of the same process—love—and love always does what is right and love always does what is merciful!

How?

If you saw your child dying from liver failure from years of alcohol abuse, yet you had the ability to provide a remedy that would save their life and restore them to perfect health, including victory over their alcoholism, would you do it? Would it be just, or right, if you had the ability to provide such a remedy to your child, for you to do so? Would it also be merciful?

But what if your child, even though you have provided this remedy, refuses to take it? What then?

What then is the just or right action to take? Would you need to inflict torture, beat them, or execute them? Or, in a universe of love, would justice require one to harmonize with the law of liberty, and thus leave them free to die of their disease?

And, if you did allow them to die, when you had a cure, but they refused the cure, would allowing them to die also be the merciful thing to do? Or would it be more merciful to use artificial means to keep them alive in a state of pain and suffering?

When we come back to design law we can see how God is love and how God is always just and always merciful to both the righteous and the wicked.

Here is a description of what happens to the wicked at the end of time from a book called *The Great Controversy*. Notice what is being described, go past declaratives to what is actually happening and see if you see justice and mercy, and if so what is justice and mercy?

God has given to men a **declaration of His character and of His method of dealing with sin.**
[what do you think that declaration is?] "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering



and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." [What do you hear? What is His method? Why will God not clear the guilty? What law lens do you see it through, imposed or design?] Exodus 34:6, 7. "All the wicked will He destroy." "The transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off." Psalm 145:20; 37:38. The **power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion; yet all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being.** {GC 541.2}

What does this mean? Do you hear retributive justice and think using power to inflict harm, pain, punishment? This would be level four and below thinking. The power and authority of the divine government will be employed—used—to put down rebellion. What is God's means, methods, power? Yes God's power, but the power of love, truth and freedom. Notice what is described in the following paragraphs...

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. [If this is true, can God then be the source of inflicted suffering, punishment and death? Is it possible to get free decisions, uncoerced choices, and love by threatening to kill those who don't choose what you want them to choose? Level 4 and below cannot harmonize these two paragraphs, level 6 and 7 can] **He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence.** [What reason would God have us obey? Not fear of punishment, but appreciation of His character of love, which cannot exist if God is the source of inflicted punishment. It is Satan's view that God must punish sin because it undermines love.] And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. {GC 541.3}

The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God. [What are the principles of God's character? Do these principles coerce, compel, or torture?] Christ declared that He taught nothing except that which He had received from His Father. **The principles of the divine government are in perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, "Love your enemies."** [Does love seek to inflict pain and suffering to punish? But notice what is describe next as love for our enemies] **God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited.** [What is justice? Doing what is right, under what law? Design law, which is the law of love, which means God wants to minimize pain, minimize suffer, heal all who will let him, but ultimately to stop the torment of those who wont allow Him to heal them. Thus, God's justice is like the parent whose child is in liver failure and refuses to be healed, the parent does seek to prolong and protract the suffering, but to allow the suffering to end. Notice what is described next.] **He would make them happy if He could do so in accordance with the laws of His government and the justice of His character.** [Why can't God make them happy? Because they refuse to participate in His methods, they



refuse to allow Him to heal them.] He surrounds them with the tokens of His love, He grants them a knowledge of His law, and follows them with the offers of His mercy; but they despise His love, make void His law, and reject His mercy. [How do they make void His law? By replacing it with a false law—imposed law. Think how sad it will be for those legal Sabbath keepers who wouldn't enter Pilates house while they sought to kill Jesus. Law keepers, but the wrong law, how many today are in the same situation?] While constantly receiving His gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that He abhors their sins. The Lord bears long with their perversity; **but the decisive hour will come at last, when their destiny is to be decided.** [what determines their destiny? Is it a judicial finding in a heavenly court, or the choice of the sinner to permanently harden their heart to the work of the Holy Spirit?] **Will He then chain these rebels to His side? Will He force them to do His will?** [These are rhetorical questions, meaning that God will not do this, which means He cannot be the source of inflicted punishment and death] {GC 541.4}

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power are not prepared to enter the presence of God. [Why? What does this mean?] **Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become fixed in their characters.** [How did it become fixed? Who fixed it there? If God “judges” their characters fixed, does He make it fixed or is God's judgment the accurate diagnosis of what they have chosen to do to themselves?] Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish. What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? {GC 542.1}

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,— every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,—could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? **Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no; [Why not? Because God uses divine power to prevent them, to torture them, to inflict harm upon them, or is their condition is incompatible with God's design for life?] years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; but they have never trained the mind to love purity; they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven.** [Why are they unfit? Is it that they don't have the right legal payment in record books, or is it something actually within them? Notice why they are not fit] **Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire.** [This is huge, what do they experience as torture? Purity, holiness and peace! Is this God using His power to cause pain, to inflict suffering, is there something coming out from God other than goodness, mercy, love and truth? It is their



condition which experiences goodness as pain, purity as torment, holiness and suffering. The torture happens because of sin in them, not as an infliction from God!] **They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction**, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. [What do the wicked actually want? Separation from God! Why do they want it? To be at peace, to stop their suffering; So, in this situation what is the just action for God to take, what is the merciful action for God to take? Is there a difference between justice and mercy? Notice the next sentences] **The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.** {GC 542.2}

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that the wicked are incurable. [This is design law, this is justice and mercy, and justice and mercy rightly understood is always an expression of God's character of love and does the same thing] {GC 543.1}

Read memory text, "He upholds..." Do you see justice here is healing, restoring, delivering those oppressed not punishing the oppressors?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Even in early Israel..." How do we understand justice? God's justice only works when we love others more than self. When we are selfish, then we immediately think about our rights, what is important to us and ours.

Keith Johnson is an online friend, who has worked for years in prison ministry teaching inmates about God's design law, helping them to move past imposed law constructs of right, wrong and justice. He developed four questions to help them understand more clearly what justice is from God's viewpoint.

1. What if I told you that your youngest child was murdered? Would you want mercy or justice *for* the perpetrator?
2. What if I told you that the murderer was your oldest child? Would you want mercy or justice *for* the perpetrator?
3. What if I told you that you are guilty of the murder of the only begotten Son of God? Would you want mercy or justice *as* the perpetrator?
4. What if I told you that you had a daughter, your only daughter, the apple of your eye, who has never given you a moment's grief, but tonight, as her father, you happen to have your tux hanging in the closet, because tomorrow you are scheduled to walk your daughter down the aisle and give her away to someone whom you approve? If you're the mother, you have your new dress hanging next to her wedding gown that you have been planning and preparing for



since the first time she held her in her arms. But tonight, your daughter is at a bachelorette party with her peers and they talk her into having “one-for-the-road,” the first ever in her life. Two, three, four, five, six, seven (drinks) later, while on her way home, she wipes out a school bus full of little children on their way to camp. Everybody aboard the bus dies in a fiery inferno, but you daughter survives. Do you want mercy or justice for your daughter (?) and...what do those who are related to the victims who were on the bus want?

Human justice is based on human law—imposed rules, and is motivated by selfishness and seeks vengeance under the name justice. The selfish heart has an ingrained sense of justice, but which in reality is nothing more than vengeance, and which is easily exposed because such ‘justice’ is sought only so long as it doesn’t apply to them or theirs.

Justice in God’s universe is entirely different. God’s justice always seeks to deliver, heal, restore, set right, fix, and save everyone who will allow God to do so. It is the justice of love—the law of God upon which God’s government runs.

MONDAY

The lesson points us to consider the Sabbath and justice—how does the Sabbath connect with justice?

The lesson points out three types of Sabbath:

- Weekly Sabbath
- Sabbath years when the land was not plowed or sown with seed
- Year of Jubilee when property returned to families and slaves set free

What do we learn about justice from these Sabbaths? What principles are being taught?

The weekly Sabbath—what is being taught here? Is this imposed law or design law?

Is the primary element of the Sabbath avoiding physical labor, or in **remembering**, focusing the mind, thinking, attending to God, strengthening our relationship with Him. Are the injunctions about not working, not primarily about the expenditure of energy, but about distractions for the mind, about minimizing those things which would occupy our minds and interfere with our remembering God and connecting with Him?

If the primary purpose of the Sabbath is to help us remember something, what is it to help us remember? The lesson suggests God as Creator and Redeemer, okay, upon what type of law is creation built? Thus to remember our Creator, means to remember design law, to worship the Builder, to reject dictator views of God, and what about redemption? How is our redemption achieved? Is it not by Christ actually fixing what Adam did, by Christ not only revealing truth to destroy lies and win to trust, but developing a perfect human character that He offers freely to all who will accept? This is also design law!



Thus the weekly Sabbath is design law, a signpost to remind us God is not arbitrary, and His laws are not rules that He must enforce with punishments.

What about the yearly Sabbath—design law or imposed law? Design law, the nitrogen cycle, allowing the land to lay fallow to restore nitrogen to the soil so that the land will continue to produce a bountiful crop.

What about the year of Jubilee, design law of imposed law?

Some might say imposed as the issues of slavery, land ownership are all imposed contracts and laws. And, it certainly entailed application of a code for imposed type rules, but what is the basis of all of it? The law of love! Which is about restoring people, not arbitrary rules, thus it is also the working out of God's design for life. The Jubilee was an object lesson of how God is working to set us free from the slavery of sin and restore us to our Eden home!

TUESDAY

Read memory verse at top of lesson, "Speak up for..." Do we see again justice is delivering the oppressed, not punishing the oppressor?

Read last paragraph, "Though, of course..." What does it look like to worship God while neglecting those in need?

- Any form of coercive religion—Dark Ages, inquisition, crusades, or Taliban and ISIS today?
- What about cruelty to any group?

If we want to help people in need do we first need to understand their need?

How do we balance helping people in need with Paul's admonishment to the Thessalonians:

For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." 2Thes 3:10

If we see someone hungry, does that mean we should automatically give them food? Or do the circumstances matter?

Would a job be more valuable to them than a mere handout of a meal? Why? What would a job, for those who are capable of work, provide that a meal would not?

Could handouts to those who are capable actually harm? How?

How do we find the balance?



What do you do if you realize someone needs a job, but they refuse to work and they prefer the life of living off other people's charity—when they are capable of working?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson asks us to read Isaiah 58:3-14:

³ 'Why have we fasted,' they say,
'and you have not seen it?'

Why have we humbled ourselves,
and you have not noticed?'

"Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please
and exploit all your workers.

⁴ Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife,
and in striking each other with wicked fists.
You cannot fast as you do today
and expect your voice to be heard on high.

⁵ Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,
only a day for a man to humble himself?
Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed
and for lying on sackcloth and ashes?
Is that what you call a fast,
a day acceptable to the LORD?

⁶ **"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?**

⁷ **Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with**

shelter—

**when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not
to turn away from your own flesh and
blood?**

⁸ **Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;**
then your righteousness will go before you,
and the glory of the LORD will be your rear
guard...

¹³ "If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath
and from doing as you please on my holy day,
if you call the Sabbath a delight
and the LORD's holy day honorable,
and if you honor it by not going your own way
and not doing as you please or speaking idle
words,

¹⁴ then you will find your joy in the LORD,
and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the
land
and to feast on the inheritance of your father
Jacob."

The mouth of the LORD has spoken.

What do you hear? Is this level two—make a deal with God, if we do this then God does that? Or is this level 6/7 design law, how things actually work, the more you give the more you receive. As you exercise you get stronger?

Can you actually experience the blessings God has by doing the work, but not enjoying it? Why or why not?

What is it God wants for us? Transformation of heart/character, and this only happens when our hearts have the right motivation for the action, it is not in the actions itself.



THURSDAY

The lesson is about the church being a force of good in the community. About helping those who don't have a voice to help themselves. How can the church do this?

FRIDAY

Discuss questions 1 and 2



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase**—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Remedy—Is Now Available in Print Version in the US. We have printed 10,000 to give away and will reassess demand for them after those are gone. We are shipping a small number to Canada and Australia. **How to get copies:** In the US email orders@comeandreason.com with a valid US postal address; In Canada email canada@comeandreason.com and in Australia/New Zealand email Australia@comeandreason.com and request the number you want and we will ship them to you. If you are giving them away please give them only to people who want them. In other words, don’t put one at every seat in the church, or place setting at a potluck, or car in a parking lot. Such distribution methods result in vast numbers being thrown away. Let people know they are free and allow them to take one if they want too works best.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

Thursday, June 9 at 1:30 PM Eastern Time Dr. Jennings will appear on the *Lifestyle Magazine* show, “Healing The Mind” that he recorded previously. It is scheduled to air on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN). Keep in mind that TBN can preempt the show at their discretion.

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

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The Role of the Church in the Community Lesson 4 3Q 2016 Justice and Mercy in the Old Testament: Part 2

SABBATH

Can anyone recap for us what we discussed last week about Justice and Mercy?

What is Justice? What is Mercy? Are they different? What law lens do you view it through?

What is the typical, common, view of justice? Punishment—why is this the common view? Because it is through the law lens of sinful beings—the imposed law lens which requires coercive enforcement. So, this idea leads us to think justice requires broken law to have punishment inflicted.

But, what is justice in God's kingdom of love—through design law lens? Doing what is right—which is what? Healing all who will allow it, and setting free those who reject healing to their own choice, which is what?

What is mercy under imposed law? Setting aside punishment—which is transmuted in Christian thought for those still operating upon the infection of imposed law to God actually punishing an innocent in the place of the guilty so God can let the guilty off.

But what is mercy in design law? God through Christ mercifully sacrificing Himself to provide the cure, the remedy, the needed treatment to heal and restore those who will allow Him!

SUNDAY

Alive in Christ—what does this mean? What does it mean to be “in” Christ?

I was doing some research on this concept and came across this in the book *Evangelism*:

It is not orthodox theories, not membership in the church, not the diligent performance of a certain round of duties, that gives evidence of life. In an ancient tower in Switzerland I saw the image of a man that moved as if it possessed life. It looked like a living man, and I whispered when I came near, as if it could hear me. But though the image looked like life, it had no real life. It was moved by machinery. {Ev 116.6}

Motion is not necessarily life. We may go through all the forms and ceremonies of religion; but unless we are alive in Christ, our work is worthless. The Lord calls for living, working, believing Christians.-- Review and Herald, April 21, 1903. {Ev 117.1}

What do you hear? Do you agree? What is being suggested that is required to be alive in Christ?



What about this quotation from one of the founders of the SDA church?

The fourth chapter of Ephesians contains instruction which we should all heed. After speaking of the need of unity, the apostle says, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may **grow up** into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." **To speak the truth in love means to walk in the truth, to practice the truth in the transactions of life, to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, doing works which correspond to the elevating influence of the truth. It means to have a faith which works by love and purifies the soul, making us alive in Christ. It means to have in the soul the living water, which Christ gives and which springs up unto everlasting life. {3MR 59.2}**

What do you hear? Did you hear from Ephesian we are “grow up”—would being alive involve growth? If one doesn’t grow up, which means develop, mature then would that be a sign of going through the mechanical motions of life but not being alive?

What does it mean to grow up? Does it mean to think for oneself, to reason, to weigh evidences? Remember Hebrews 5:14, “the mature are those who have developed by practice the ability to discern the right from the wrong”?

What is the living water? The living water is the principle upon which life is built, which is what? It is love! Unless we have love in our hearts we are not alive. In order to be alive we must speak the truth in love, truth and love are the prevailing powers in God’s government and to be alive in Christ means we have hearts that love the truth.

This sounds good, but it is not natural. The natural position of the human heart is to lie—lie to self, to deceive oneself, to distort the truth, to deny. What does Scripture say?

The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Jer 17:9 NKJV

What does this mean? Why is the heart deceitful? In what way?

The heart deceives about our own condition, the selfish heart doesn’t want to look in the mirror, the sinful heart doesn’t want to see its defects—why?

- Fear—fear of failure—don’t want the responsibility to make the decision, what if it is the wrong one?
- Fear of rejection—what if I offend someone?



- Fear of inadequacy, guilt, shame—fear of our own defects in character, mistakes—people couldn't love us if they knew how defective we are. So we deny, distort project, because we don't want to look into the mirror of truth and see ourselves as we are.

The false law construct inflames this fear and causes more deception, and obstructs the truth. Those who believe in the false law construct, the idea that sin must be punished, are afraid—they fear there might be some sin that will keep them out of heaven, something they have forgotten to confess. They fear if people really knew their secret sins they would not be loved, would be rejected, would be punished because the just thing to do is to punish defects and sin—in that false model. Thus their theologies deny truth and obstruct God's healing:

- Sins confessed erased from history and no one will know
- God can't see me if I am covered by the robe of righteousness

This is why those in this view reject the integrative evidence based approach, which requires the harmony of Scripture, Science and Experience. Because science and experience—how life actually works—when harmonized with Scripture make it much harder to deny truth. But when Scripture is used detached from science and experience the Scripture itself can be twisted and used to perpetuate deceit.

Consider this quote sent by Mark Cox this week:

"A true experience will be in perfect harmony with natural and divine law. False experience will array itself against science and the principles of Jehovah." { 3T 72.2 }

Wow—did you hear that? Those whose theologies array against science, design law, the integrative evidence based approach, according to this author, have a false experience, they are living in a distorted understanding of how reality works!

And if they are denying reality, they are not growing in truth, and if a person is not growing then would that mean they are not alive in Christ?

Being alive in Christ doesn't mean one knows all truth, for we will never know all truth, it means we have hearts that love God, other and also love truth, that we have minds that are hungry and eager to grow in truth and we have not set up mental blockades that obstruct the truth so that we advance, develop and mature in Christlikeness.

Read last three paragraphs, "Our acceptance with God is sure..." What does it mean that our acceptance with God is sure only through Jesus?

Traditional answers are that Jesus paid the price and that only the innocent blood of the Son could satisfy God's justice and assuage His wrath. Or, that only the blood of Jesus is the proper offering,



gift, legal payment, necessary to present to God to get God to accept us. And that to be accepted with God a person has to make a specific legal declaration of acceptance of Jesus' payment for their sins—and if someone doesn't do this they cannot be saved.

What about Romans 2:12-14:

All who sin apart from the law [the knowledge of Scripture] will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴ **(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law,** they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since **they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts,** their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)

What is the new covenant?

This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel
after that time, declares the Lord.

**I will put my laws in their minds
and write them on their hearts.**

I will be their God,
and they will be my people. Heb 8:10

So, those who have never heard Scripture have the law written on the heart, would be part of the new covenant experience, yet they haven't heard about the new covenant—how is that possible?

Impose law constructs, which are false, get stuck on this because in their view the legal process requires the intelligent acceptance of the legal payment. Someone has to come to Jesus, say the sinners prayer, legally get accounted in the ledgers of heaven etc. etc. They see it through the false law of a human court system.

However, when we view it through Design Law, and remember God as Creator, then we realize sin is deviation from God's design, lawlessness, outside His construction protocols. And we are all suffering from the same defective condition. We realize that God loved us too much to allow us to die in this condition without providing a Remedy that cures, heals, saves. Thus, Jesus came to be sin for us so that we can be restored to righteousness, or set right, or healed.

Therefore, Jesus procures the Remedy, which is a perfect character, which the Holy Spirit applies to the hearts and minds of all who allow it.

So, as an example, if we have people dying from anthrax infection, and an antibiotic called ciprofloxacin (cipro for short) is the cure and all who take it will live: Do people have to call it cipro to



benefit from taking it? What happens if they call it rose water, or jungle juice, or Buddhas delight, or Muhammad's magic—will calling it some other name change the effectiveness of the antibiotic?

On the other hand, what happens if they take something they are told is cipro, but is actually a counterfeit, either nothing but plant fiber, or even something toxic like more anthrax—what happens if they call anthrax cipro?

Likewise, if people cherish and embrace truth and Godly love, and follow truth and Godly love the Holy Spirit takes what Christ achieves and transforms those people, writing God's law back on their hearts/characters. They are being healed by what Christ achieved, even if they don't know about Christ.

But whenever people choose to deny truth, say no to truth, they obstruct the working of the Holy Spirit, they stop the healing process, regardless of their religion. So people who use the name Jesus, but promote selfishness, elitism, bigotry, including denominational prejudice, denying truth, clinging to ritual without enlightenment, living in fear of judgment and punishment—they are not partaking of Jesus, but promoting the counterfeit.

Consider this quotation from the book *The Desire of Ages*. In my opinion this author has it right:

Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. [Where would they have discovered God's principles to cherished if they had no theological instruction? From nature and real life experience via the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit!] Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. [selfless love manifest in their hearts before Scripture presented—how? Only because of Jesus' work being applied by the Holy Spirit, even though they don't know its source they value its rightness] Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God. {DA 638.2}

Now, is it possible for such heathen to be transformed to love others without Jesus? No! Jesus is the means whereby God introduces His law, methods, presence back into the human species. Jesus developed the Remedy to our condition, which the Holy Spirit applies.

Here is another quote from the same book:



The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He [Jesus] could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. **The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail.** The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead,** who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. **It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer.** It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. *Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature.* Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. {DA 671.2}

Jesus developed a perfect character—the Holy Spirit reproduces that divine nature/character in all who trust Him and let Him do His work in us!

What does it mean that we are accepted through the merits of Christ alone? What do you understand merits to be? Is it legal payment or is it meritorious achievement?

Would it make more sense if it said, “We are restored to harmony with God through the achievements of Christ alone?” or “We are healed through the Remedy achieved by Christ alone?”

But what about James, faith without works is dead? If it is by grace through faith we are saved, and only through what Jesus accomplished and our works play no role in our salvation, then what about faith without works is dead?

What is faith?

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Heb 11:1 NKJV

The Greek for substance is: hypostasis

- Hypo = under or below
 - Hypoglycemic (low blood sugar)
 - Hypotension (low blood pressure)
 - Hypodermic (injection under the skin)
- Stasis = Standing

Translated to Latin as *Substance*

- Sub = under or below
 - Subway
 - Subterranean
 - Submarine



- Stance = Standing

Translated to English Faith is our *under-standing*

Understanding has two meanings first, comprehension, we do have to comprehend before we can have faith, but in the Bible sense this alone is not faith. Bible faith includes the next part.

Imagine you had fractured your leg, and in the ER, the orthopedic surgeon meets you and says, “I can set the bone in your leg, but I need your permission. And after the surgery you will need to take antibiotics for five days and then go to physical therapy—do we have an *understanding*?”

What happens if you say yes to the surgeon, but you don’t take your antibiotics or do physical therapy? Your understanding, your faith, is dead, it doesn’t result in the healing outcome. Why? Because your healing requires your active participation. But does your participation heal set the bone, produce the antibiotic, or even provide the life energy which causes the cells to knit themselves back together? But will your refusal to participate obstruct all the healing energy, resources, and remedies coming from the doctor?

Now, if you take your antibiotics are you healing yourself? Or does the antibiotics do something you can’t do for yourself? But do you still have to take them, apply them to your life?

Understanding, also means an agreement—and what is the agreement with have with God?

We agree or trust God with our hearts/minds/characters to heal and transform us, but we must be active participants to apply His methods to our lives as we comprehend them. We do not procure the Remedy, we do not make the transforming changes in our own character, but we must choose to grant God permission and choose to align ourselves with God’s plan and this results in healing.

We must do this because only by our active choosing do we embrace and internalize the healing power of God. God cannot, by force, by divine power, inflict, inject, insert, impose His healing power into our minds/hearts/characters because do to so would destroy our individuality and we would no longer be us. The only way, in God’s universe of genuine love and freedom is for us sinful beings to choose to partake of what Jesus has procured for us!

Here is another quote from the same book:

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. **In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself.** True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine



energy of the Holy Spirit, and **they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God.**
{DA 466.4}

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read Ezekiel 47:1-8:

The man brought me back to the entrance of the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. ² He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was flowing from the south side.

³ As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits and then led me through water that was ankle-deep. ⁴ He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. ⁵ He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross. ⁶ He asked me, “Son of man, do you see this?”

Then he led me back to the bank of the river. ⁷ When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. ⁸ He said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, where it enters the Sea. When it empties into the Sea, the water there becomes fresh.

What do you think this means? Is it literal or symbolic?

What is the temple symbolic of? We are temples to God, individually and corporately—but, while we were created to be temples where God dwells, sin corrupted our beings so that we were no longer temples of God—something had to happen to cleanse the human temple, the temple had to be rebuilt.

Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: **‘Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord.** ¹³ It is **he who will build the temple of the Lord**, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.’
Zech 6:12, 13

The temple first and foremost represents Jesus, who when speaking of His body said, “destroy this temple and I will raise it in three days” and who cleansed humanity by His perfect life and selfless death. Secondly, it represents us individually and corporately.

What does the water represent? Remember Jesus’ discussion with the woman at the well? Is this symbolic of the water of life, which is what? Love—and from where does the water flow? From the



Temple, which symbolically represents Jesus the source love and truth, the source of water of life. He is the source!

The water comes from the south side of the temple—Jesus came up from Egypt “So he [Joseph] got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.” Mt 2:14,15 Where is Egypt in relationship to the temple? South!

To where is the water flowing? Into the desert which would represent what? The world without the truth and love of God, a world dying for lack of truth and love. The sea becomes fresh, what does this represent? What sea is east of the temple? This is the *Dead* Sea, the sea in which there is no life, the sea of selfishness, which symbolically represents the sea of selfish humanity inhabiting the world—dead in trespass and sin—terminal in our condition deviant from God’s design! But love and truth from God flows out from Christ and transforms the dead sea of humanity into living stones, built together into the house for the Lord!

TUESDAY

What do you think of the title, “The Church: A Source of Life.” I would feel more comfortable if it would have said, “The Church: A Conduit of Life” what do you think?

Jesus said to the woman at the well:

Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the *water I give* him will never thirst. Indeed, the *water I give* him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” Jn 3:13,14 emphasis mine

Jesus is the source of living water that we can partake of and that living water will transform us and flow out from us to others, but we are not the source are we?

Regarding the Church as a Conduit of life—what would the church communicate, deliver, and provide that would bring life? Would it not be the truth and love of God?

And what church is the conduit of life? Is it a specific denomination that is being referred to or is it the church invisible—the church made up of all those who are united with God in heart, mind, and spirit and are cooperating with God to provide God’s true healing Remedy?

Would the heathen referred to above, who is not a member of a denominational church, but doing what the law requires be part of the church that is the conduit of life?



Could this understanding give hope to people who have family members who don't belong to a denominational church? Is the question one of denominational affiliation, or being united with Jesus and on mission for Him?

Does that mean organized denominational churches are bad and we should avoid them? Of course not! Organization allows cooperation and support and growth and ability to achieve goals and reach people we could never do on our own. So organized denominational churches can do great good for God's cause—I just wanted to be clear that when it comes to salvation it is about unity with God in heart, mind, character not membership in a specific denominational system.

One evidence that a person is united with Christ in heart is that they are seeking to connect to people, to use their energy and resources to uplift, enlighten, enrich, heal, restore other human beings back to God's original design and intent for us. So, while membership in a specific denominational institution doesn't qualify for salvation, those who are growing with God will be increasingly engaged with others for the saving of souls.

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, "Isaiah 61 begins with..." What does it mean to preach good news to the poor?

What is the good news and who are the poor?

- Would the good news be the good news about God and His methods of truth and love?
- Would it be the good news of a remedy for our condition?
- Would the poor be the same as the poor in spirit, the poor in the gold described in Revelation—the gold tried in the fire, the gold of a righteous character?
- And would the good news be that God is not only good, but He has provided richness, the gold of a perfect character freely for all who will accept it?

What does it mean to bind up the brokenhearted?

- Would it mean to create new hearts in people broken by sin and selfishness?
- Would it mean to circumcise the heart by the Spirit?
- Would it mean to write the law on the heart—which would mean to recreate the inner being to love others more than self?

Who are the captives and from what are they freed?

- Would they be people captive to fear, selfishness and sin?
- Would it be people captive in addictions?
- Would it be people in the bondage of destructive habits?
- Would freedom be free to love, free to live in harmony with God's design, to experience the last fruit of the Spirit—self-control?



Who are being released from darkness and despair?

- Would it be the darkness of misunderstanding about God, darkness about sin, about one's own condition, about what is necessary to be free?
- Would it be the darkness of the penal/legal system of appeasement and punishment?
- Would it be from all lies, distortions and misunderstandings, but primarily about God?

Well how? How is all of this accomplished and by whom?

THURSDAY

The lesson is focusing on Micah 6, so let's read versus 6-8:

With what shall I come before the Lord
and bow down before the exalted God?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
⁸ He has showed you, O man, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.

What do you hear? What is the message?

What did God want in OT times? Was it sacrifice? No, it was transformation of heart, renewal of character, which is always what God has wanted. It has never a legal problem with a legal solution, it was always a condition of being that needed curing/healing/transforming/renewing.

Read third paragraph, "Today God continues to reject..." What does it mean "God continues to reject"? Is it implying that God is deciding, determining, making a ruling on what constitutes true religion i.e. what is acceptable? Is that how it works?

Or is it that true religion is religion that is in harmony with God's design and methods for life whereas false religion violates God's design?

For instance, the practice of Corban in which during Christ's time people could mark their property to be given to the Temple at their death and thus this property was only used for themselves and they were not using their resources for others, including caring for their own family i.e. parents. Thus their



religion caused them to violate the design protocols of love and institutionalized selfishness as something a virtue. Other ways selfishness becomes institutional religion?

- Fasting for effect—Christ called them on this one too
- Praying in public
- Giving offerings to be recognized
- Paying tithe so God will give you more

FRIDAY

Discuss questions 2 and 3



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase**—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Remedy—Is Now Available in Print Version in the US. We have printed 10,000 to give away and will reassess demand for them after those are gone. We are shipping a small number to Canada and Australia. **How to get copies:** In the US email orders@comeandreason.com with a valid US postal address; In Canada email canada@comeandreason.com and in Australia/New Zealand email Australia@comeandreason.com and request the number you want and we will ship them to you. If you are giving them away please give them only to people who want them. In other words, don’t put one at every seat in the church, or place setting at a potluck, or car in a parking lot. Such distribution methods result in vast numbers being thrown away. Let people know they are free and allow them to take one if they want too works best.

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The Role of the Church in the Community Lesson 5 3Q 2016 Jesus on Community Outreach

SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs, “Robert Louis Stevenson...” Nice image about poking holes in the darkness. The lesson is using the metaphor of darkness and light, in spiritual terms what is darkness and what is light?

Read John 1:1-9:

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning.

³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ **In him was life, and that life was the light of men.** ⁵ **The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.**

⁶ There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that **light**, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the **light**; he came only as a witness to the **light**. ⁹ **The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.** John 1:1-9

What is the light? What is the darkness? Why don't people come into the light?

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. ²¹ **But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light**, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.” John 3:19-21

What does the light do to darkness? So, if the light is the light of truth and love and darkness is the darkness of lies and selfishness, what happens when the light shines into darkness?

What did Jesus mean when He said, “This is the verdict”? Is Jesus describing a judicial proceeding and a judicial finding by the judge? What is the “verdict”?

The verdict is a description of reality, what actually is the true condition of hearts and minds and how such hearts and mind react to the truth. This is not an infliction by God or a punishment by a judge. This is a great example of how God's judgment does work!

What is one of the great sources of physical light in the world? Sun, fire, flame, and how is the presence of God, who is the source of all truth and love, depicted or how does it appear? As pillar of



fire, streams of fire, rivers of fire, tongues of fire—but it's not combustion? Is there some lesson in that?

What about this text, what do we learn?

“Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the Lord Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them.”² But for you who revere my name, **the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.** Malachi 4:1,2

Let's focus on the sun of righteousness, this is “sun” but to whom is it referring? What is it that extends out from the “sun”? Beams, it is not wings, but beams, the beams of light which extend out from the sun, and what are those beams extending out from the sun of righteousness? The beams of truth and love—and what do those beams do? They heal, those who cherish and assimilate truth and love.

Jesus said, “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” Jn 8:32 but only those who appreciate, accept and assimilate the truth, but what of those who reject the truth who call the truth a lie, does it heal them?

Also, notice how the sun of righteousness appears, the sun rises... what is the implication?

If you are in a dark cave with no light at all and you are brought out at noon on a bright sunny day what is your experience? It is overwhelming, painful and you want to cover your eyes and be protected from the sun, maybe run back into darkness.

But what happens if you are brought out of the cave at 4 a.m. and sit there while the sun rises, what then? What is the lesson?

Today, right now in this time in human history, Jesus is slowly rising, like the sun with healing in his beams of truth and love. The truth of God is becoming ever more clearly revealed. The message of mercy, the truth about God's character of love has been steadily increasing over the last 200 years. As we assimilate, appreciate, and internalize the truth we are able to appreciate and understand more and we grow more and more into God's character of love and truth, so that when Jesus appears we celebrate and rejoice and live in His fiery presence.

But for those who reject the truth and continue to live in the darkness of lies and selfishness when He appears in His glory the beams of truth and love will be overwhelming and they will run from His presence and beg the mountains to hide them from Him. They prefer the darkness to the light.

This happens at the beginning of the 1000 years and at the end of the 1000 years.





At the beginning of the 1000 years the Bible says:

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the **breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.** ⁹ The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, ¹⁰ and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. **They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.** 2Thes 2:8-10

Notice they are destroyed by the breath of His mouth and the brightness of His coming, what is being presented here? What comes from the mouth? Words of truth and what does the splendor represent? His life giving glory, the fires of truth and love. This is the beginning of the 1000 years.

Here is a description of the end of 1000 years, when the New Jerusalem is on earth, the wicked dead are raised and the mob marches to attack the city. From the book *The Great Controversy* 664.

With military precision, the serried ranks advance over the earth's broken and uneven surface to the city of God. **By command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed,** and the armies of Satan surround the city, and make ready for the onset... Now Christ again appears to the view of his enemies. Far above the city, upon a foundation of burnished gold, is a throne, high and lifted up. Upon this **throne sits the Son of God,** and around him are the subjects of his kingdom. **The power and majesty of Christ no language can describe, no pen portray. The glory of the Eternal Father is enshrouding his Son. The brightness of his presence fills the city of God, and flows out beyond the gates, flooding the whole earth with its radiance."**

Do you notice a couple of important depictions in this account:

1. the gates of the New Jerusalem were open up until the point the wicked marched in mass to attack it—what do we learn from that fact? That the wicked outside the city are not kept out by God. The gates were open the entire time, but none came in. They were kept out by their own condition, their own free will choice. Some get uncomfortable with this and say, “Are you saying the unrepentant wicked get a second chance?”
 - a. How would you answer that question?
 - b. What law lens—if we look only on external factors, and the actions of the ruling authority, then it could appear that the ruling authority is giving the wicked another chance—this is how level four and below see this, those with penal theologies. They don’t like it, to them “it isn’t fair.
 - c. But, when you see reality as it is, and understand God’s design law, then you understand there is no second chance here, there is only demonstration, revelation—God is allowing the wicked to reveal what He already knows, that they are hardened and no evidence or opportunity will change that. They are fixed in their rebellion and this action on God’s part to leave the gates open reveal that fact.





2. Second point, the fire, where does it flow first? Into the city, and who lives there? The righteous, so what does this reveal about the fire? Why then do the wicked suffer and die in it?
3. If this is the fire that the righteous in the city are living in, then is it the source of inflicted death?
4. But, what does love and truth do to those solidified in selfishness and lies? Is it pleasant, or as we read earlier they prefer the darkness because the light exposes their wickedness. So, what will the wicked experience in God's unveiled love and truth?
 - a. weeping and gnashing of teeth
 - b. torture and torment of mind
 - c. agony of soul, regret, shame, guilt,
 - d. how long will this continue? Until they voluntarily surrender their lives and choose no to live any more.

Here is another quote from the same book:

A life of rebellion against God has **unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee** from that holy place... **They would welcome destruction**, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. **The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves**, and just and merciful on the part of God. Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that the **wicked are incurable**. GC 541,542

Why would it happen like this? Is God inflicting this, or is this the natural result of choosing to change oneself to be out of harmony with how life is constructed to operate?

If it does work this way, wicked beings confronted with truth and love and the reality of their own life history, their own sins being exposed causing them torment of mind, agony of soul to the point they voluntarily choose to die rather than live in a universe of perfect love—what might that imply for how long some suffer in the fire?

- Would we expect every being to come to that conclusion at the exact same moment?
- Would it be likely some might accept the reality of their condition sooner than others?
- Would it be likely some might resist the truth and deny the love longer and thus suffer longer?
- So, could this mean some might be in the fires many days until they day? If so would it be an infliction by God?

So here is a description from the book *Early Writings* which some have really struggled with. Tell me what you hear it saying now and if any parts are difficult to understand:

Satan rushes into the midst of his followers and tries to stir up the multitude to action. **But fire from God out of heaven is rained upon them**, and the great men, and mighty men, the noble, the poor and miserable, are all consumed together. **I saw that some were quickly destroyed**,



while others suffered longer. They were punished according to the deeds done in the body. **Some were many days consuming,** and just as long as there was a portion of them unconsumed, all the sense of suffering remained. Said the angel, "The worm of life shall not die; their fire shall not be quenched as long as there is the least particle for it to prey upon." {EW 294.1}

Satan and his angels suffered long. Satan bore not only the weight and punishment of his own sins, but also of the sins of the redeemed host, which had been placed upon him; and he must also suffer for the ruin of souls which he had caused. **Then I saw that Satan and all the wicked host were consumed, and the justice of God was satisfied;** and all the angelic host, and all the redeemed saints, with a loud voice said, "Amen!" {EW 294.2}

What do you hear being described, in light of all we have read before, harmonizing all the previous Bible texts and statements?

Right now, here on earth today, we are being presented with truth—light, and each of us are deciding are we growing in truth or rejecting truth and darkening our own minds. God provides the truth, the light, the love, the transforming presence of His Spirit, who takes the character of Christ and reproduces it in all who trust Him—it is our choice, what choice are you making each day?

Read the last paragraph, "We've seen a bit..." We are to reflect Jesus—but are we to reflect others? Did Jesus say we are to be reflectors in the world or to be lights in the world? Are reflectors and lights the same thing? Is there a difference? What is the difference? Now to be sure, we are reflectors of Jesus in the sense that light/truth/wisdom doesn't originate with us, all truth and wisdom has its source in God. However, I think there is a difference in the thoughtless reciting of truths, like a mindless recording device, and an intelligent appreciation and comprehension of the truth in which we eagerly agree and promote. The truth becomes ours at it is assimilated into our character and becomes part of our way of thinking and functioning, thus we become lights, not mere reflectors. Thoughts?

Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator-- **individuality, power to think and to do.** [Does God want us to use this individuality to shine the light of truth, or wait from some instruction "say it like this, paint it like this, play it like this." and we are to remain frozen waiting for an outside agency to move our actions for us?] The men in whom **this power is developed** [what power? the power to think and act, remember the last fruit of the Spirit is self-control] are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, **to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought.** Instead of confining their study to that which men have said or written, **let students be directed to the sources of truth,** [what are the sources? notice--] to the vast fields opened for research in **nature and revelation.** [science, experience and Scripture] Let them contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny, and the mind will expand and strengthen. **Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act,**



men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions. [How can institutions of learning send for such persons of strong mind? By indoctrinating them? By sheltering them to memorize Scripture, or by teaching them the integrative evidenced based approach and demonstrating how Scripture, science and experience perfectly harmonize and leading them to understand how reality actually works!] {Ed 17.2}

Does God want more than reflectors from His intelligent creatures?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Jesus, the young...” the lesson asks half way down, “Why would Jesus stop short of completing the sentence in Isaiah 61:2?”

Read last paragraph, “Perhaps Jesus stopped...” What about today? Do we have misunderstanding as to what God’s vengeance is?

Therefore the Lord, the Lord Almighty,
the Mighty One of Israel, declares:
“Ah, I will get relief from my foes
and avenge myself on my enemies.
²⁵ I will turn my hand against you;
I will thoroughly purge away your dross
and remove all your impurities. Isaiah 1:24,25

What is the Lord’s vengeance? It is the vengeance a doctor takes upon disease, to destroy polio, HIV, Zika, Malaria—but never to hurt, abuse or injure the patient. God seeks to destroy sin, to destroy all deviations from His design, while saving all who will let Him, yet always in harmony with His character of love, which means leaving others free, just as we read above.

What do you think it means when the Bible describes the people’s reaction to Jesus’ teaching as one who taught with authority? What does that mean?

- Does it mean He was teaching authoritatively—I have authority listen to me or else?
- Was He using the authority of position—You recognize John was a prophet of God, John has endorsed me, therefore, I have authority as a messenger of God. Or, I am the Son of God and as God’s Son I have authority, you need to listen to my authority? Did Jesus make use of His position as the source of His authority?
- Was Jesus promoting an authoritarian God?
- What authority?
- The authority of truth and how reality actually works in real lives—Jesus was integrating Scripture with science and real world experiences and the truth is authoritative





Here is a quotation from one of the founders of the SDA church:

Christ spoke with authority. Every truth essential for the people to know He proclaimed with the **unfaltering assurance of certain knowledge**. [So first, His speaking with authority was the confidence and authority of one who actually knows and understands reality, what is happening, and what will happen when choices to violate God's design law are made. A doctor today can speak with this type of authority when they say, it is damaging to your health to smoke cigarettes. 150 years ago, doctors didn't have that authority—because they didn't know that reality.] **He uttered nothing fanciful or sentimental. He presented no sophistries, no human opinions. No idle tales, no false theories clothed in beautiful language, came from His lips.** [Again, Jesus spoke authoritatively because He spoke reality, truth, how things truly work, not speculation, not hypothesis, not guesses, not myth, not traditions, no religious theories—but simple reality of God's kingdom.] The statements that He made were truths established by personal knowledge. He foresaw the delusive doctrines that would fill the world, but He did not unfold them. **In His teachings He dwelt upon the unchangeable principles of God's word.** [What did He focus upon? the unchangeable principles of God's word—which is God's design law!] He magnified the simple, practical truths that the common people could understand and bring into the **daily experience**...[He taught how God's design law was real and impacted their daily life experiences, he was harmonizing Scripture, science and experience.] {8T 201.2}

In all His teaching, Christ brought the minds of men in contact with the Infinite Mind.[How? Notice how Jesus brought human minds into contact with God's mind.] He did not direct the people to study men's theories about God, His word, or His works. **He taught them to behold God as manifested in His works,[science/nature] in His word,[Scripture] and by His providences.[experience]** {8T 201.3}

What made Jesus' teaching authoritative? They were truth—the truth of Scripture, harmonized with science/nature and experience in such a way they were actually applicable to people's lives. Jesus made sense and His teachings were sensible, not mystical, not magical, not incoherent and contradictory.

MONDAY

Read memory text, "Thou shalt love the Lord..." What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?

Can people who don't love themselves actually love others—why or why not?

If a person doesn't have a healthy self love, valuing themselves for who they are as a child of God, at peace with themselves and God, then they are not whole on the inside; they are insecure, fearful of rejection and don't possess healthy love to give to others. Instead, such people generally seek to get from others to fill what is missing in them. They seek to get:





- love
- reassurance
- acceptance
- validation
- praise
- security

Those who don't have healthy love seek to get from others rather than seek to give to others, thus we are unable love others well until we are first healed in heart and mind by the indwelling Holy Spirit—we must come to peace with ourselves and love ourselves as children of God.

The lesson also explores when we do seek to love our neighbor who our neighbor is and the lesson states—anyone in need.

What does it mean to help someone—giving what they want? What are some reasons not to help someone in need?

Read Mark 6:1-6:

Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. ² When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

“Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! ³ Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.

⁴ Jesus said to them, “Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor.” ⁵ He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ⁶ And he was amazed at their lack of faith.

Were there people who Jesus did not help, in need? But they were in need, why didn't Jesus help them?

Are there people in need we are unable to help? Should we force our help onto such people?

Whom should we seek to help? Those in need, or those in need, who recognize their need and who will permit us to help them?

TUESDAY

What does it mean to be the salt of the earth? What does salt do? How are we to be like salt?

Matthew 5:13 from *The Remedy*





"You are like salt to humanity: preserving the knowledge of God, providing the flavor of heaven, and increasing the thirst for God. But if salt loses its saltiness, unless it becomes salty again, it is useless and will be thrown out and trampled upon.

What does it mean for the salt to lose its savor?

- To lose the knowledge of God, in other words to present God in a false light, like a dictator who imposes law and is the source of inflicted punishment
- Which doesn't cause people to have increased thirst for God, but instead causes people to want to be away from Him or hidden from Him
- And causes people to become more like such a dictator God and become dominating, controlling and abusive of power to coerce others, thus the flavor provided is not one of heaven, but the flavor of hell

What is to be done with such a picture of God? It should be thrown out—we need to throw out from our Creeds, Fundamental Beliefs, Doctrines, Books, Commentaries, Seminaries all these distorted and false ideas about God!

WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph, "Workers have done..." What does this mean?

What does it mean to prepare the soil? What do they mean that the soil is prepared before the evangelist comes—is the evangelist not to be involved in preparing the soil? Is the evangelist the harvester?

Read last paragraph, "Reaping the harvest is..." While all of the actions listed can be very useful in their place, if we go into a community to assess the demographics, community assessment surveys etc. all as part of a strategy *to get people to join our organization*, is such a process legitimate Bible evangelism? Why or why not?

Should the focus of evangelism be on getting people to join our group, or seeking to provide to people the healing Remedy of Jesus Christ and His truths, love, methods and principles so they experience regeneration of character to be like Christ—regardless of what organization they join?

What would it mean to win someone to Jesus Christ?

THURSDAY

Church planting—what does this term mean?

Read first paragraph, "It seems..." Would this be a good method to use here in America today? Why or why not?





Does culture play a role in what method we use?

If we went to a community—basically as a homeless person—with only the clothes on our back and knocked on doors telling people we are here to tell them about Jesus but need a place to stay and food to eat etc. would we represent the gospel or misrepresent the gospel?

FRIDAY

Discuss questions





ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase**—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Remedy—Is Now Available in Print Version in the US. We have printed 10,000 to give away and will reassess demand for them after those are gone. We are shipping a small number to Canada and Australia. **How to get copies:** In the US email orders@comeandreason.com with a valid US postal address; In Canada email canada@comeandreason.com and in Australia/New Zealand email Australia@comeandreason.com and request the number you want and we will ship them to you. If you are giving them away please give them only to people who want them. In other words, don’t put one at every seat in the church, or place setting at a potluck, or car in a parking lot. Such distribution methods result in vast numbers being thrown away. Let people know they are free and allow them to take one if they want too works best.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Cape Town, South Africa





The Role of the Church in the Community Lesson 6 3Q 2016

Jesus Mingled with People

SABBATH

Read memory text, “Now the tax collectors...” What do you think of the allegation of the Pharisees and lawyers?

Why were the religious leaders upset that Jesus was mingling with tax collectors and sinners?

Why did they consider this to be wrong?

What was the basis of their value system, or another way to say it, what was the measuring device they used to determine what was right and wrong? Was it not an imposed law construct?

And where does an imposed law construct focus one’s attention? In other words, when one operates in a legal system, who does one remain primarily concerned with? Self! They were more concerned with their own legal standing before God and so-called righteousness than they were with helping others. In fact, they would sacrifice others, neglect others, in order to do what they thought was “right” for themselves.

What about today, do we find within Christianity that this same dynamic is at work—people so focused on not sinning they would neglect someone in need?

What did they focus upon to determine a wrong? Was it not behavior?

But where does God look? Upon the heart! So, is behavior what is most important—the specific act one does, or is it the motive of the heart?

And, can we always tell the condition of the heart by the behavior? The Bible says by their fruits we can know them—but does that mean by the behaviors?

What would you say of a man who organizes his own militia to attack a wealthy caravan of a sovereign nation and in the process kills many people?

Didn’t Abraham do this? Abraham went to war and killed many people, his behavior was one of killing others, a violation of the commandment—yet what was his heart?

- Was Abraham a person who liked to kill—bloodthirsty?
- Was Abraham a person who valued life? How do we know?
- Remember Abraham pled for the lives of the wicked in Sodom? What does this reveal about Abraham’s heart?



- How many Christians today are pleading for the lives of people they view as living in sin?
- Yet, Abraham led his men to kill many people—but what was the motive of his heart? Was it to kill or was it to save? Wasn't it to save Lot and the others who were being taken as slaves?

Was Abraham condemned by God for going to war to rescue Lot and the others?

Even though Abraham's motives may have been to rescue, to save life and not take it, what was the likely impact upon Abraham?

Was there a price Abraham paid, was there a toll on Abraham's mind, heart, psyche?

Notice, Abraham's actions after the battle, he refused any reward; he would not take any increase in wealth or payment—why?

What is the world's response to winning a battle? To celebrate, to feel good, to feel empowered, to feel rewarded, to feel blessed by God—but do you think Abraham had a different take?

Was it possible Abraham was sad? Was it possible Abraham saw this entire series of events, not as something to celebrate, but as something to grieve? Yes, it was necessary to save Lot and others, but it was a sad thing to do—like severing a gangrene limb—who wants to do that? We may have to do it to save a life, but should we really rejoice—"Yeah—we just cut off an arm!!!" No! this would be a very corrupt way of seeing the world.

How many today see war, conflict, fighting, killing as something to celebrate rather than something to grieve?

Is it the specific behavior that matters or the condition of the heart?

So, back to the religious leaders in Christ's day and how they criticized Christ, what did they value? Why did they do it?

- Did the leaders value selflessness, and focus upon the motive of the heart
- Or did the religious leaders value externals, rituals, legal forms and ceremonies?

What did Christ value? How did Jesus see people?

How did the Jewish leadership, and all of society for that matter, see lepers? As sinners who should be condemned and shunned!

How did Jesus see lepers? As children who needed healing! How do we see sinners today?



The lesson talks about being Jesus to people, can we be Jesus to people if we see sin as a legal problem that requires punishment?

How must we understand sin and sinners in order to be Jesus to people? Isn't it a necessity to see sin as a spiritual sickness in need of healing?

Is there Scripture to support this?

Ah, sinful nation,
a people loaded with guilt,
a brood of evildoers,
children given to corruption!
They have forsaken the Lord;
they have spurned the Holy One of Israel
and turned their backs on him.
⁵ Why should you be beaten anymore?
Why do you persist in rebellion?
Your whole head is injured,
your whole heart afflicted.
⁶ From the sole of your foot to the top of your head
there is no soundness—
only wounds and welts
and open sores,
not cleansed or bandaged
or soothed with oil. Isaiah 1:4-6

Save means to heal, salvation means to make whole, to restore. All of Scripture, rightly understood is about restoring, healing, fixing our brokenness.

But, when we see sin as breaking rules, we want to inflict punishment rather than to heal and restore.

If we approach people this way we misrepresent Christ, we obstruct people from knowing God, we may convert them to a religion, but we don't bring them to Jesus.

SUNDAY

The lesson takes a paragraph from *The Ministry of Healing* about how Jesus approached people and makes a list of how to approach people, let's read the second paragraph, "Christ's method..." thoughts?

What do you think about this list? Why did Jesus mingle with people?

- He loved people and that alone was a reason
- But He also wanted to connect in order to heal and save



- Thus, it was a requirement to mingle in order to bring the people into contact with truth and love

Jesus did care about people; He was compassionate; He did sympathize and He did seek to meet the needs of people—what impact upon people did this have?

What happens in you when you experience someone who actually cares about you, sympathizes with your struggles and you can tell they really want to help meet your needs?

Do you experience yourself drawn to them? Does it increase your trust in them?

Read bottom green section, “Dwell on this amazing...” Would anyone like to share what they have experienced, considered, realized as you have contemplated that our Creator became human and dwelt among us?

Do you think it would have been hard for you to believe that Jesus was God if you had been there 2000 years ago?

I watched a movie recently called *Risen* and it is about a Roman centurion investigating the reports of Jesus rising from the dead. And it is very well done, but it really brought home how hard it would have been to see Jesus and recognize Him as fully God. He was so humble, so human, that I think I would have really struggled with it had I lived back then.

Has anyone else ever considered this?

So, when Jesus asked them who people said He was Peter answered:

“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷ Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. MT 16:16,17

So, I don’t think it would have been possible to recognize Jesus except for the enlightenment of the Holy.

MONDAY

The lesson is about the parables of the lost sheep, lost coin and lost son.

What is the difference between the sheep, coin and son? What lessons do we learn from each?

Did the coin know it was lost?

- Are there people who are lost that don’t even know it?



- Did the one who lost the coin go searching for it?
- Are we to be God's agents to search for the lost who don't know they are lost?
- How? What method to reach the lost who don't know they are lost?
- Would this be the classic missionary taking the truth about God to people who have never heard it?

Did the sheep know it was lost?

- Probably, but did the sheep know its way back?
- Are there people who know they are lost but don't know how to find their way back?
- Are there people who know their lives are messed up but don't know how to fix their lives?
- Are there people who don't even know there is a healing remedy for their lives, even though they know they are sick in heart?
- Are there people who are lost, know they are lost, and have been taken advantage by those who claim they are there to help them? How, what kind of exploitation happens to the lost?
 - Certainly the gross exploitation that is criminal even in this sinful world
 - But what about exploitation and entrapment by those seeking to deliver them? Does this happen?
 - Do people who are lost ever end up in cults?
 - Do they ever end up trapped in religions that burden with guilt?
 - Did Jesus tell the religious leaders in His day that they were doing this to people, burdening them, not delivering them?
 - Does this happen today?
- Do we have a message for the lost who know they are lost that will actually heal, deliver, and lead the lost to being found?
- What is that message? How would you share it? What would you say?

Did the son know he was lost—initially? No! Did he eventually realize he was lost? Yes! And did the son know the way home?

- Are there people who have gotten lost who don't know they are lost because circumstances are so good for them they don't realize it?
- And are there people who, having wandered away from God's design for life—left God's estate—have eventually found themselves at rock bottom, in the proverbial pigsty?
- And are there people in the pigsty, who do know the way back, who must make the choice to return before any help can be given? Why?
 - Because if help were given before they make the choice to return it would only keep them from coming home, it would obstruct them from turning their life around.

What is our role in dealing with these different types of lost people?

We must have wisdom to discern the different types of the lost—who are the ones that need us to reach out to help lead them home, versus those who must choose to come home before they can be helped.



We are to be—lights in the world, to be beacons, to be bastions of hope, to reveal a better way, to offer a real remedy—how? What message offers hope?

Read bottom Green Section, “Have you ever...” Does this happen, do we ever avoid witnessing, offering hope to people because we don’t want them in our communities?

Why would we do this?

Do we avoid offering medicine to someone who is sick because we don’t want them well?

Is it possible we don’t witness to certain people because much of what Christianity has shared in the past has been a false gospel with no power to heal, so on some level we realize that the people we witness to will not be changed, and therefore will come into our fellowship with the same baggage, issues, problems, and we don’t want them?

Would we have a different attitude if we believed the gospel of Jesus Christ would truly transform people to be the most lovely, kind, trustworthy, patient, understanding of all?

- Imagine we find a sick individual, and we begin providing a treatment that will heal and cure, is wellness achieved instantly?
- Are there often symptoms in the healing process?
- While the medicine and treatments are working, are there still fevers, coughing up phlegm, diarrhea, vomiting?
- Can people who are actually getting well, who are participating in the healing process still have symptoms that we might find offensive, symptoms that might be gross, might smell bad, might turn our stomachs?

When people who have lived in the world, who have been battered by the world, who have suffered in the world, who have participated in the vileness of the world and are sick in heart, full of fear, insecurity, selfishness, come to Christ and genuinely begin the healing of their hearts, do they often still struggle with symptoms? And what might these symptoms look like?

Could a person in the healing process say things in hurtful ways? Could they act insensitive to others? Could they be so wounded still that they react with criticism, defensiveness, and even accusations toward others?

Does this mean they are not getting well or could it be there is a lot of healing still to do?

Mary Magdalene came to Jesus and some suggest she gave her heart to Him, but then there was a period of struggle where she relapsed back into old behavior before she was finally free.



Mary had been looked upon as a great sinner, but Christ knew the circumstances that had shaped her life. He might have extinguished every spark of hope in her soul, but He did not. It was He who had lifted her from despair and ruin. Seven times she had heard His rebuke of the demons that controlled her heart and mind. She had heard His strong cries to the Father in her behalf. She knew how offensive is sin to His unsullied purity, and in His strength she had overcome. {DA 568.1}

Are we able to see past the immediate behavior to understand that people are often wounded, and in the process of healing and not take personal offense? Can we mingle with people who are struggling and be gracious?

But are there others, who we must set boundaries with and restrict from fellowship, whether at the hospital or at church? Who would they be? Those who persistently refuse treatment and are actively sabotaging the health of others.

TUESDAY

Read Mt 9:10-13:

While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples. ¹¹ When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

¹² On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ¹³ But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." NIV

What is the message Jesus is giving them? What did He want them to learn?

What does it mean "I desire mercy not sacrifice"?

Where does mercy necessarily focus the attention? On others! Mercy focuses our minds our hearts upon delivering, restoring, helping someone else. Can you be merciful without someone to be merciful to?

Where does sacrifice focus the attention? On self, on paying for one's sins, on fulfilling one's duty, on influencing one's god with one's sacrifice, on earning some credit, on being recognized etc.

So, what was the point Christ was making? That salvation is about restoring love into the heart, about recreating the inner being to be in harmony with God and His design of love. But their religion, rather than restoring love, was actually working to solidify them in selfishness, to make selfishness a virtue.



- They thought it was a virtue to deny one's parents care and donate the money to the temple, perhaps have a building named after themselves,
- to give large offerings in public so everyone would notice,
- to say long prayers so people would realize their piety,
- to fast and make sure everyone saw they were fasting.

But, they wouldn't help the wounded man on the street, they drove the sick out of their presence, they criticized the poor as condemned by God.

Read third paragraph, "Here again, we are seeing..." Does this happen today? Do people focus more on ceremony, than the condition of the heart? For instance, is the form of baptism what is essential, or the condition of the heart?

Can people be baptized by immersion and have hearts that remain filled with selfishness and still be enemies of God?

Can people be baptized by sprinkling and have renewed hearts and be God's children?

Do Christians every get caught up in fighting and arguing over ceremonies and miss what is really important—the condition of the heart?

Could the same be said for which day one worships upon?

Read fourth paragraph, "Thousands are making the same mistake..." What do some make their idol? An idea or opinion!

What is an abomination? Fasting and prayer actuated by a self-justifying spirit—why?

Because it leads to false security, it leads people to think they are well while they are dying.

Did you hear a few years ago of a pharmacist who had taken people's expensive anti-cancer medications and replaced them with placebo and gave the cancer patients nothing but a fake medicine, while telling them they were getting the cancer treatment, billing the insurance company for the expensive medicine and then selling the real medicine on the black market?

What is your reaction to such deception? Isn't it an abomination? Why? Because a healer is a fraud, he is tricking people into taking a false remedy that not only will fail to heal them, but will prevent them from seeking a true remedy because they think they are getting one.

This is what fasting, prayer, communion, Sabbath observance, or any other religious ritual does when it comes from hearts that seek to justify self—which happens under the penal legal model.



There is another form of this abomination—those in which people don't seek to justify themselves with works or ritual, but in which they claim legal justification accounted in books in heaven WHILE there is no actual change of heart or character, no rebirth, no renewal, no regeneration. In other words, a false legal remedy that brings a false sense of security so people don't participate in God's true remedy.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about how to we mingle in the world without being corrupted by the world.

The lesson notes errors on two extremes:

- Those who don't want to be corrupted so they cloister themselves away from the world—either in monasteries, or in religious ghettos and only interact with people from one's own religious community.
- And on the other extreme are those who become so connected to their friends in the world they leave God behind and become part of the world.

What wisdom would you share to help people find that right balance?

Are there any elements that would be *requirements* before one can successfully find such a balance?
What makes one vulnerable to corruption by friends in the world?

I would suggest several elements are necessary, actual requirements:

- One cannot share what one doesn't possess—so before a person can successfully witness in the world that person has to come into a knowledge and experience with God and His kingdom
- One must have some level of health before one can be a healer to others. Those who are so wounded, broken, in pain, in crisis, in need, empty, lonely, etc. that they can't see past their own hurt are not yet in a position to handle the stress of interacting with those who are not mature in Christ—why not?
 - Persons who are still wounded, empty, and needy seek relationships to get—to get approval, love, validation, acceptance, or perhaps fame, wealth, security. They live in fear of not getting, fear of rejection, fear of failure and thus are vulnerable to compromise if the prize they are seeking is threatened.
- To be able to successfully interact with the world we must be healthy enough to walk away, to tolerate rejection, to handle criticism, to be able to be okay when not included, to set others free to have their own opinions
- The mature are those who focus on doing in governance of self that which is right, healthy, reasonable, while leaving others free to love us or hate us and realizing that such actions are evidences of where the other people are in their journey.



THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “No question...” What have we been given in Christ? How would you describe it? What is it that you have received from Christ that is worth sharing with others?

Is it future eternal life insurance that we are promoting, or do we have something that we receive from Christ that has real value in our lives right now? What?

Read last four paragraphs, “Robert Linthicum...” What do you think of these three descriptions of churches?

Do you find these distinctions valuable? Or are they artificial?

What does it mean to be in the world but not of the world?

Is there a difference between institutional religion and organized ministry? What is the difference?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase**—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Remedy—Is Now Available in Print Version in the US. We have printed 10,000 to give away and will reassess demand for them after those are gone. We are shipping a small number to Canada and Australia. **How to get copies:** In the US email orders@comeandreason.com with a valid US postal address; In Canada email canada@comeandreason.com and in Australia/New Zealand email Australia@comeandreason.com and request the number you want and we will ship them to you. If you are giving them away please give them only to people who want them. In other words, don’t put one at every seat in the church, or place setting at a potluck, or car in a parking lot. Such distribution methods result in vast numbers being thrown away. Let people know they are free and allow them to take one if they want too works best.

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The Role of the Church in the Community Lesson 7 3Q 2016

Jesus Desired Their Good

SABBATH

Read Sabbath's lesson, "On Sabbath morning..." Isn't this a beautiful thing, to love others and connect with people like this? Can you envision your church doing this?

Now, the real question—would you be willing to do this? And, if you were willing to do this would you be willing for your children to bring their skateboards and skateboard with the children from the community around your church on Sabbath?

Why or why not?

Is it okay to skateboard on Sabbath before joining the church but not okay to skateboard after joining the church?

Should the message to those youth skateboarding around the church be that if they accept Jesus they must stop skateboarding on Sabbath? Or, do they only have to stop skateboarding on Sabbath if they join the SDA church—if they join any other Christian church they can be united with Jesus and still skateboard on Sabbath?

Do we show more compassion and grace to people we view as being outside the church than to those inside the church? Are we more critical and restrictive to those we view as being in the church?

Is joining Christ, becoming a member of His Church Universal, supposed to result in greater restrictions or greater liberty?

Do we as church members communicate a message that is freeing or a message that is enslaving?

What makes the difference?

What did Jesus mean when He said: "And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them." Lk 11:46

Do you think it is an accident, a coincidences, that Jesus states that those who are burdening people are the experts in the law? How do the legal theologians burden people?

They focus on behavior and arbitrary, artificial rules, not on design law.



Sabbath—the legal religionists 2000 years ago wanted to restrict healing on Sabbath, Christ wanted to heal, which would set people at liberty, set them free, give them more autonomy and independence—by healing on the Sabbath!

Did Jesus heal only emergency cases on the Sabbath?

The legal religionists wanted to restrict how far someone could walk on Sabbath—Christ never gave any such restrictions—should we be able to walk freely on Sabbath?

The legal religionists wanted to restrict how much someone could carry on Sabbath—Christ never gave any such restrictions—should we be free to carry whatever we judge to be necessary on Sabbath? Even today some Jewish people observe such laws. I read this on a Jewish website describing some of these carry restrictions:

On Shabbat one may not carry or transfer objects between a "*reshut ha-yachid*" (private, enclosed domain, such as the house); and a "*reshut ha-rabim*" (public domain, such as the street). Examples of this prohibition include: carrying in one's pocket; carrying anything in the hand; wheeling a baby carriage or shopping cart, going outside with gum or food in the mouth.

Under such restrictions I could not carry the Bibles, study guides, DVDs and other materials we give away here each Sabbath. Should Sabbath be a day of such legal restrictions?

The legal religionists in Christ's day wanted to restrict pulling heads of grain on Sabbath and eating—Christ defended the disciples, giving them freedom to provide nutrition to their bodies on Sabbath.

What about today? Do we get caught in arbitrary rules that restrict liberty, or do we live free in Christ—harmonizing with His design law thus experiencing greater liberty?

Jesus said, ““Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” MT 11:28-30

What was Jesus providing that the legal theologians were not?

Jesus was providing restoration to how life is constructed to operate! Real healing for not just body, but for mind and soul!

Legal religions occur because of people, who often intend to do good, but who fail to understand reality and instead operate upon level four and below thinking.

This is one of the dangers when people try to jump levels, remember level seven is not only loving others and understanding God's design but fulfilling God's purposes for your life. What is the danger



when a person is operating at level four and below and they get inspired to live a purpose filled life, to go out and do what they believe is God's purpose? They may misconstrue God's purpose through a false legal lens and do exactly what Jesus said the teachers of the law were doing, burdening people, or worse.

SUNDAY

The lesson contrasts Jonah's message to Nineveh with Jesus' message to Jerusalem—what lessons to we learn from these two messages?

First, identify the characters and the roles they play and see where the differences occurs:

- God—who sent both Jonah and Jesus
- Jonah the messenger to Nineveh
- Jesus the messenger to Jerusalem and the world
- The people of Nineveh
- The people of Jerusalem and the world

Did God have a different agenda for the two cities?

Was the specific presentation, appeal, message presented differently?

Why were the messages presented differently if God had the same goal for both cities?

How would you characterize the message from Jonah to Nineveh? Threat, imminent destruction, punishment—was it a message of love and mercy or a message of intimidation and fear?

How would you characterize the message from Jesus to Jerusalem? Grace, love, forgiveness, the goodness of God?

Which message more accurately reflected God's true character, ideal, and government?

What was the response of the two cities? Which message appears to be more effective in bringing to repentance? What lesson do we learn? Why would the lesser light be more easily accepted than the greater light?

What caused the different response?

What is God's heart, goal, for both cities?

So, while Jonah's presentation of the message was different that Jesus' presentation, what did God, by His actions, reveal to Nineveh? Didn't God reveal the same character of love, patience, mercy to Nineveh in sparing that city that Jesus presented in His ministry to Jerusalem?



What was Jonah's response to God's mercy? If Jesus would have been there physically in Nineveh when they repented, what do you think would have been His response to their repentance?

If Jonah was in Jerusalem when Jesus appeared, whose side do you think Jonah would have chosen—Jesus or the church authority? Might Jonah have been at risk to side with those who hated the Samaritans?

What was God's attitude toward Jonah and Jonah's anger and selfishness?

Here is a brief description from one of the founders of the SDA church:

Jonah revealed that he did not value the souls in that wretched city. He valued his reputation, lest they should say he was a false prophet. . . . Now when he sees the **Lord exercise His compassionate** attributes and spare the city that had corrupted its ways before Him, Jonah does not co-operate with God in His merciful design. **He has not the people's interests in view.** It does not grieve him that so large a number must perish who have not been educated to do right. Listen to his complaint:

“Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. Then said the Lord, Doest thou well to be angry? So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city. And the Lord prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd.”

Then the Lord gave Jonah an object lesson. He “prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.”. . . “Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: And should I not spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?”

In the history of Nineveh there is a lesson that you should study carefully. . . . You must know your duty to your fellow beings who are ignorant and defiled, and who need your help.—Manuscript 164, 1897. {CTr 172}

What is our duty to our fellow human beings?



What message will most likely reach people today—the message of impending doom and destruction that Jonah preached, and some people eagerly preach today, OR the message of love presented by Jesus? From the book *Christ's Object Lessons*:

“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. **At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known.** Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth...**The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.**” *Christ's Object Lessons*, p.415

Why is the message of love to be the final message to the world?

What happens when we present a message of fear?

What is the result when we present God as full of anger and wrath as the one who inflicts punishment and pain? It undermines trust! Such a message may convert people to a religion, but it hardens their hearts and obstructs their healing and maturing of character.

Only the message of love has the power to actually transform lives.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “A leper approaches...” What do you think of the idea of “the anyway principle?”

What is being presented by this idea? Is it that what matters to us is NOT what matters to God. What is it that seems to matter to us?

- Ethnicity—Jews were very prejudiced, do we struggle with this today?
- Status—social class, wealth, position
- In earthly politics—which the Bible describes as beastly, the systems of the beast—do they pursue unity or division? Right now, whether from the political left or right do you hear messages that result in unity or stirring up division? Why? Power, it is about mobilizing people to serve one’s own agenda, creating an enemy to unite followers against.
- Health—do we shy away from people with health problems? What about mental health problems, do we discriminate against people with mental health diagnoses?
- Religion, do we discriminate against others based on religion?
 - How about beliefs within a religion, were there divisions amongst the Pharisees and Sadducees?
 - Do we have divisions that matter to us within Christianity, within our own denominations, but do those divisions really matter to God?



- History of sin, do we discriminate because of someone's past failings?
 - Polygamy—Abraham
 - Deceit and fraud—Jacob
 - Murder—Moses?
 - Adultery and Murder—David
 - Making idols—Aaron, Gideon
 - Would any of these people be permitted into leadership in our churches today? Why not?

What matters to God? Why did God allow the people cited above to remain in His service?

What is the only issue that has ever mattered?

- The condition of the heart/character—do we genuinely trust God, enough to open our hearts to him so that we are healed and restored to God's design? Are we willing to allow Christ into our hearts! That is the only issue—partaking of Jesus!
- Will there be people in heaven who have not been renewed in heart and character to be like Jesus? No!
- Will there be people in heaven who
 - belonged to different religious groups while on earth?
 - were baptized in different ways, or who never even had ritual baptism?
 - who partook of communion ceremony and those who never partook communion?
 - who worshipped on Sabbath and who never worshipped on Sabbath?

Read last paragraph, "Jesus is calling..." Read bottom green section—"How do we understand..."

Do we believe God is actually kind to the wicked? Or do we believe He is only kind up to a point and He keeps score and if the kindness of God fails to lead a person to repentance then God stops being kind and turns to His scorecard and begins inflicting proper amounts of punishment to make the unrepentant pay?

What is wrong with such a picture? What is the basis for such a picture?

TUESDAY

Love Never Fails—what does this mean? How does love never fail? When does love never fail?

If love never fails what happened to Lucifer and Judas—did Jesus not love Lucifer and Judas? So what happened?

Are there limits to what love can achieve? What determines those limits? What obstructs love?



Why will love never fail? Do we understand love is more than emotion, more than concern, more than goodwill, that love is life itself—how is love life itself?

Does understanding love as the basis of life give insight into how it never fails? What fails is sin—selfishness fails, because sin/selfishness breaks love which fail—that is what fails, love doesn't fail.

Why do selfishness and breaches in love fail? Because those breaches result in pain, destruction and death, but this understanding only works when we return to seeing God as love and His law as love and the universe constructed to operate upon love!

Middle section of the lesson asks, “What are some examples you can find in history, or even today, of how ‘Christians,’ or at least people bearing the name ‘Christians,’ have done some terrible deeds, sometimes even in the name of Jesus?”

- Crusades
- Inquisition
- Burning dissenters at the stake
- Salem witch trials
- Slavery
- Domination of women
- Any use of state power to coerce conscience
- Catholic and Protestant violence
- Rwanda
- Blowing up abortion clinics or shooting abortion doctors
- Domestic violence

Others?

Why would Christians act in such ways? What would cause a person who identifies themselves as Christian to believe it is right to carry out the Crusades, or Inquisition, or torturing unbelievers, or slavery etc.?

What is necessary for such things to occur under the name Jesus Christ?

For the law of God—the law of love, the design protocols of life, to be replaced with the human imposed law concept and to accept the idea that God operates His government no different than humans operate theirs. Once people believe that sin is breaking rules and that broken rules require inflicted punishment then it inevitably leads to the practice of punishing those who don't believe and live the way we do.



Further the false legal definition of sin allows for selfishness to remain in the heart—how? Because under the legal view the problem is the deeds, not the selfishness in the heart, and the legal problem of behaviorally breaking the law is addressed through—

- legal payments
- substitutionary propitiation
- blood sacrifices
- penance
- rituals
- works

All of these concepts allow people to remain self in heart while falsely believing they are right with God. This leads to intolerance in those who are not behaving as we feel pressured to behave. So, what do people do? They seek to control government to force people to obey the rules they want obeyed.

But if one practices such methods what happens to love? Why?

The lesson asks us to examine 1Cor 13 and consider what love does and doesn't do—what does love not do?

Love keeps no record of wrongs—is God love? Then does He keep records of wrongs? Why do so many teach that God has recording angels following you around to keep track of every wrong to make you face and punish you for? But love doesn't do this—something is wrong, what?

If love keeps no record of wrongs does that mean there are no records? Or does the Bible teach there are records? And does the Bible teach people are judged by what is in the records? Then what is the proper understanding, where is the harmony?

Do doctors keep medical records? And do the medical records document the pathology, the disease, the symptoms, the problems? For what purpose? To find wrongs in the patient in order to punish the patient, or to find problems in order to heal? And if a patient refuses treatment and dies of a curable disease whose remedy was provided by the doctor and the family sues, what comes into evidence. The records, for what purpose? To vilify the deceased person or document the proper diagnosis and to demonstrate the death was a result of the choices to refuse what the doctor provided thus the records also vindicate that the doctor did everything right and the only reason the person died was their refusal to accept their diagnosis or what the doctor was providing? This is the purpose of the records in the end!

WEDNESDAY

Read Mark 8:22-25:



They came to Bethsaida, where some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged him to touch him. ²³Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. After spitting on the man's eyes, Jesus placed his hands on him and asked him, "Can you see anything?"
²⁴The man looked up and said, "Yes, I can see people, but they look like trees walking about."
²⁵Jesus again placed his hands on the man's eyes. This time the man looked intently, his eyesight returned, and he saw everything clearly. ²⁶Jesus then sent him home with the order, "Don't go back into the village." GNT

The top of the lesson asks, "What spiritual lesson can we learn from the fact that Jesus' first healing touch didn't fully heal the blind man?"

Did you notice the lesson interpreted what was stated in Scripture. Did the Scripture state the man was not fully healed on the first touch? No, only that the man didn't see clearly—could there be another explanation—that the man was fully healed the first time, but something else was causing his inability to see clearly?

Here is from *The Remedy*

²²When they came to Bethsaida, some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged Jesus to touch him. ²³He led the blind man by the hand outside the village. Then, to avoid introducing doubt, Jesus met the man's expectations for how healing was done and put saliva on the man's eyes and then placed his hands on him. Then Jesus asked, "What do you see?"
²⁴The man looked up and said, "I see people; but its kind of blurry; they look like trees moving about."
²⁵So Jesus touched the man's eyes once more, wiping them clean. Then the man could see everything clearly. ²⁶Jesus sent him home, instructing him, "Don't go back to the village."

To me it sounds like Jesus first healing touch was effective, but the man still had saliva in his eyes that needed to be cleared away. Or, is it more likely that the first touch wasn't enough and Jesus the Creator had to give it a second go?

The lesson asks what spiritual lesson from this description?

Could it mean that when God does something in our lives to enable, equip, empower us for His service that we instead are blinded by the miracle, the equipping, the empowering that we lose sight of where we are to put our ability to use?

Other applications?



THURSDAY

Read top memory text, Philippians 2:3-5: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:"

Does this mean all of us are to be doing the same thing? Or, has God gifted people with different abilities in order for the entire body of believers to be benefited?

Have you ever found yourself pressured by a church member to do something for others outside your calling? For instance, some people are not gifted as teachers or speakers, and have no calling by God to teach or speak, but someone might say, "You claim to be a Christian but you won't speak or teach?"

What about saying to someone, "you claim to be a Christian but you don't visit those in prison?" Are all Christians called to visit people in prison? If 100% of Christians visited those in prison as their ministry, who would preach, who would write, who would heal, who would teach the children, who would feed the hungry?

Are we able to recognize that it is okay for a Christian to follow the path God has called for them and not to be derailed onto *worthwhile* missions that God has called others to fulfill?

When Christ ascended to heaven, He left the work on earth in the hands of His servants, the undershepherds. **"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:** till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." {5T 237.3}

In sending forth His ministers our Saviour gave gifts unto men, for through them He communicates to the world the words of eternal life. This is the means which God has ordained for the perfecting of the saints in knowledge and true holiness...

All who have been benefited by the labors of God's servant should, **according to their ability**, unite with him in working for the salvation of souls. This is the work of all true believers, ministers and people. They should keep the grand object ever in view, each seeking to fill his proper position in the church, and all working together in order, harmony, and love. {5T 238.1}

Every branch of the work of God is to have recognition. "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Ephesians 4:11, 12. This Scripture shows that there are to be **different workers, different instrumentalities. Each**



has a different work. No one is required to lay hold of another's work, and, though untrained, try to do it. God has given to each according to his ability. One man may think that his position gives him authority to dictate to other workers, but this is not so. Ignorant of their work, he would enlarge where he should retrench, and retrench where he should enlarge, because he can see only the part of the vineyard where he is working. {8T 170.2}

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 4



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The Role of the Church in the Community Lesson 8 3Q 2016

Jesus Showed Sympathy

I received this email this week:

We are using this book (Could It Be This Simple?) in Folsom Prison Woman's Facility. We just got word we will begin in the men's facility at the end of this month and will need to order more then. I know you have heard this before but this message/book is changing lives. The lives of actual murderers! BTW we finally got the approval to take in The Remedy and it has gone like hot cakes!! We need to send some testimonies in. "Shadow People" seems to be one of the most eye opening chapters next to the first couple of chapters regarding the mind. It's amazing to have the women come in so excited after ready it! It is the highlight of our week--we participate in the most freeing work in the world! It has changed our lives too--the cycle of beneficence in action! Last week we talked about the givers and the takers. How we are changed by what we think and do. May God continue to bless you all!

Susan Kollenberg, California

Before we start the new lesson, there was a point from last week's lesson I wanted to cover, so from **Lesson 7: WEDNESDAY**

Read Mark 8:22-25:

They came to Bethsaida, where some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged him to touch him. ²³Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. After spitting on the man's eyes, Jesus placed his hands on him and asked him, "Can you see anything?"

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²⁵ Jesus again placed his hands on the man's eyes. This time the man looked intently, his eyesight returned, and he saw everything clearly. ²⁶ Jesus then sent him home with the order, "Don't go back into the village." GNT

The top of the lesson asks, "What spiritual lesson can we learn from the fact that Jesus' first healing touch didn't fully heal the blind man?"

Did you notice the lesson interpreted what was stated in Scripture? Did the Scripture state the man was not fully healed on the first touch? No, only that the man didn't see clearly—could there be another explanation—that the man was fully healed the first time, but something else was causing his inability to see clearly?



Here is from *The Remedy*

²²When they came to Bethsaida, some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged Jesus to touch him. ²³He led the blind man by the hand outside the village. Then, to avoid introducing doubt, Jesus met the man's expectations for how healing was done and put saliva on the man's eyes and then placed his hands on him. Then Jesus asked, "What do you see?"

²⁴The man looked up and said, "I see people; but its kind of blurry; they look like trees moving about."

²⁵So Jesus touched the man's eyes once more, wiping them clean. Then the man could see everything clearly. ²⁶Jesus sent him home, instructing him, "Don't go back to the village."

To me it sounds like Jesus first healing touch was effective, but the man still had saliva in his eyes that needed to be cleared away.

Or, is it more likely that the first touch wasn't enough and Jesus the Creator had to give it a second go?

The lesson asks what spiritual lesson from this description?

Could it mean that when God does something in our lives to enable, equip, empower us for His service that we sometimes are instead blinded by the miracle, the equipping, the empowering and lose sight of where we are to put our ability to use?

Other applications?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "The universe..." It is true that such a future—a belief that we live a few years, pass from existence and there is nothing more than the few years we live now, can contribute to a sense of meaninglessness, purposelessness and hopelessness?

Yes, I think such a belief system can lead to a sense of why does it matter anyway. But, what was a contributing factor to the rise of Darwinism and a godless worldview?

Satan has ascribed to God all the evils to which flesh is heir. He has represented him as a God who delights in the sufferings of his creatures, who is revengeful and implacable. It was Satan who originated the doctrine of eternal torment as a punishment for sin, because in this way he could lead men into infidelity and rebellion, distract souls, and dethrone the human reason. {CE 73.2}

What has Satan done? Misrepresented God to be like sinful human beings, and what would be the result of this? Leading people to reject God and become unreasonable in their thinking.



Here is a quote from famed atheist Richard Dawkins:

“The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.” -- Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*

Which causes a more hopeless future, to believe there is no God or to believe in the god Richard Dawkins describes?

So, when someone rejects a god like Richard Dawkins describes, are they moving away from God or toward Him?

Do we allow for that, or do we thoughtlessly become antagonistic toward atheists who take the position there is no God?

Is there a place to realize the worst view put forth is not the view of the atheist but the view of the religionist who promotes a view of God similar to what Dawkins described above?

The lesson asks us to read the following verses:

Judges 2:16-18:

Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders. ¹⁷ Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them. Unlike their fathers, they quickly turned from the way in which their fathers had walked, the way of obedience to the Lord's commands. ¹⁸ Whenever the Lord raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived; for the Lord had compassion on them as they groaned under those who oppressed and afflicted them.

2Kings 13:22,23:

²² Hazael king of Aram oppressed Israel throughout the reign of Jehoahaz. ²³ But the Lord was gracious to them and had compassion and showed concern for them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. To this day he has been unwilling to destroy them or banish them from his presence.

Isaiah 54:7-10:



“For a brief moment I abandoned you,
but with deep compassion I will bring you back.

⁸ In a surge of anger
I hid my face from you for a moment,
but with everlasting kindness
I will have compassion on you,”
says the Lord your Redeemer.

⁹ “To me this is like the days of Noah,
when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth.
So now I have sworn not to be angry with you,
never to rebuke you again.

¹⁰ Though the mountains be shaken
and the hills be removed,
yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken
nor my covenant of peace be removed,”
says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

Read second paragraph, “Contrary to the popular...” Do you find these texts the most helpful texts in the OT to show God is compassionate to *all humanity*?

What texts might be more effective in showing God’s compassion to all humans?

Isaiah 19:18-25:

¹⁸ In that day five cities in Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the Lord Almighty. One of them will be called the City of Destruction.

¹⁹ In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the heart of Egypt, and a monument to the Lord at its border. ²⁰ It will be a sign and witness to the Lord Almighty in the land of Egypt. When they cry out to the Lord because of their oppressors, he will send them a savior and defender, and he will rescue them. ²¹ So the Lord will make himself known to the Egyptians, and in that day they will acknowledge the Lord. They will worship with sacrifices and grain offerings; they will make vows to the Lord and keep them. ²² The Lord will strike Egypt with a plague; he will strike them and heal them. They will turn to the Lord, and he will respond to their pleas and heal them.

²³ In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. ²⁴ In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth. ²⁵ The Lord Almighty will bless them, saying, “Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance.”

Or, what about the entire book of Jonah—does it show God to be compassionate to more than just the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?



Isaiah 56:7: “for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

What about:

- The mixed multitude saved at the Exodus
- Rahab
- Ruth
- Naaman
- Nebuchadnezzar
- The widow and her son who housed Elijah

Do we have many places in the OT that demonstrate God’s compassion and mercy to all humanity more effectively than those the lesson emphasizes?

So how do we understand the texts the lesson chose? Do they show compassion to the entire human race? How?

It is all about context, what is the context of what is happening on planet earth and specifically to the human race?

Humanity is infected with a terminal condition. ALL human beings will die without Jesus’ incarnation and successful mission. Thus, God is working to save the entire human race, but God is being opposed by forces who want to obstruct Jesus the Remedy. This is what we see transpiring in the OT.

Hollywood uses the great themes of the conflict between good and evil and recasts them in myth, fantasy and metaphor. Metaphorically this problem in the OT is presented in novels and movies—any examples? One of the classic would be in zombie movies. The typical scenario goes like this:

- A greedy corporation develops a virulent virus that gets loose and infects humanity. It spreads across the world in a matter of weeks. (Metaphor for Satan and his thought virus of lies and selfishness which infects the entire human race)
- Those infected become thoughtless, mindless, zombies who are vicious wild animals seeking to destroy and kill anything they can and who are contagious to any they contact. (Metaphor for those hardened in sin beyond healing)
- A remnant of humanity has not yet been infected and one child has a natural immunity to the virus. That child is the key to saving humanity. (Metaphor for sinners who have not rejected the remedy and been hardened beyond healing, and of Jesus the remedy to our sinful condition)
- The child must be taken to a secure research facility with equipment to create an antidote from his blood. (Metaphor for Jesus must become incarnate and live a perfect sinless life in human flesh and destroy the infection of selfishness through His selfless death)



- The few uninfected humans battle the infected humans as they struggle to get the boy to the laboratory. (Metaphor for God's patriarchs, prophets, Abraham and God's faithful through history)

In this movie scenario, do the healthy humans rejoice in their hearts when they kill the infected zombie humans? Or are they trying to save them all by getting a remedy? In the movie scenario, a person on the healthy side is always confronted by a friend or family member who gets infected and has become a zombie and is trying to kill them—what do they do? Why do they do it?

Now, does this metaphor give any insight into what was happening in the Old Testament? Was Satan using human agencies in OT times to try and destroy Israel, the avenue for the Messiah? Was God working to keep that avenue open?

We can add one other piece, that first death is not eternal death and all those who died the first death are not eternally destroyed. So, if we make our movie metaphor more accurate, rather than the healthy people killing the zombies, they would have freeze guns which would put the zombies in cryogenic storage—freeze them—suspend them in time, rather than kill them, and wake them up at a later date.

Now, where do the popular notions of the severe God of the OT come from? From Satan, from accepting Satan's lie about God's character, law and methods.

MONDAY

Read paragraphs 2-4, "The word *sympathy* also..." The lesson states, "True compassion will lead you toward comforting and actively helping friends as well as strangers in practical ways."

What interferes with our ability to do this?

- Selfishness and an uncaring attitude of course—but anything else?
- Is it only lack of sympathy and empathy—or could it be:
 - fatigue?
 - business?
 - limited time/resources?
 - Did Jesus ever take time away from people in order to rest?
 - What about thinking someone else is already helping?
 - What about fear of being presumptuous? Not being intrusive? Could a person who is empathetic and sympathetic stay away because they perceive the person wants time alone?
- How do we know when to intervene and when not to?
- What helps? Really caring about the other person! When we really care about the other person, then much can be done and much can be accomplished.



- But, what if we act based on obligation, to get credits in our ledger in heaven so we can get a bigger mansion, so we can get others to like us, need us, value us, appreciate us, so we can get converts to our cause?

Can people have equal amounts of love and compassion in their hearts yet take different actions?

Does love and compassion ever discipline, say no, or refuse to relieve a burden? Why? When Paul said those who don't work should not eat, was he being hard-hearted or was he being loving and compassionate? How and why?

So, do we think the best of others who don't show compassion the way we would? Do we allow the Holy Spirit to guide each person to use their abilities, talents, gifts, resources as God directs them?

Have you ever been pressured by someone calling on your Christianity, "You claim to be a Christian but...."?

How do you handle this?

What about someone to you, "you claim to be a Christian but you don't visit those in prison?" Is visiting people in prison one of the ministries Jesus specifically mentions? Yes! Yet, are all Christians called to visit people in prison? If 100% of Christians visited those in prison as their ministry, who would preach, who would write, who would heal, who would teach the children, who would feed the hungry?

Are we able to recognize that it is okay for a Christian to follow the path God has called for them and not to be derailed onto *worthwhile* missions that God has called others to fulfill?

Here is an interesting quote from one of the founders of the SDA church:

Every branch of the work of God is to have recognition. "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Ephesians 4:11, 12. This Scripture shows that there are to be **different workers, different instrumentalities. Each has a different work. No one is required to lay hold of another's work, and, though untrained, try to do it. God has given to each according to his ability. One man may think that his position gives him authority to dictate to other workers, but this is not so.** Ignorant of their work, he would enlarge where he should retrench, and retrench where he should enlarge, because he can see only the part of the vineyard where he is working. {8T 170.2}

Read bottom green section, "While eating..." They use the word "guilty"—do you perceive any wrong done here? If so, what?



Can you personally respond to every disaster, every need, every want in the world?

Does today's modern communications, with TV, internet etc. which broadcasts desperate situations from around the world cause a different experience than people living at the time of Christ when they would have primarily heard only about problems in their local community?

Do you think our modern technology, with telecommunications, causes emotional and empathy burnout in which our finite human ability is paralyzed by the scale of the perceived need? Do we fail to set boundaries and focus only on what we can do, and instead get overwhelmed by focusing on the constant need?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "*Compassion* comes from the Latin..." The first rule of a psych ward is staff safety, not patient safety, because if the staff are not safe, then no one is safe and no care can be provided.

Likewise, we must love others as we love ourselves. If we do not care for ourselves, provide ourselves good rest, nutrition, time with God, healthy recreation etc. we deplete our energy, vitality, and even the love in our hearts and find ourselves incapable of serving others. We end up sick or dead—remember the life history of James White?

Is such a balanced approach, setting boundaries, taking time away to rest an act of selfishness?

One of Satan's tricks to undermine God's agents is to dupe compassionate people into never saying no, to get them to say yes to all requests, to think that any act for self is selfish and thus burning themselves out.

Second paragraph focuses on the story of the Good Samaritan and notes how the Samaritan had compassion and pity and used his resources to help the injured victim.

What do you see as the most significant difference between the Samaritan and the man in the bottom of Monday's lesson who changed the subject being discussed?

Is it not that the Samaritan was actually in proximity to the injured victim and had a real opportunity to intervene and help, while the man in Monday's lesson had no real opportunity to help and only opportunity for personal mental anguish that would benefit no one?

The lesson states, "sometimes being Christian involves risks and can be, potentially, very costly."



How do you know when it is appropriate to put oneself at risk? What criteria do you use? How do you balance the risk, with Jesus' warning not to cast your pearls before swine lest they turn and rend you asunder, in other words in some circumstances we are not to put ourselves at risk—when?

WEDNESDAY

John 11:35, the funeral of Lazarus, “Jesus wept.” The lesson asks, “What does this verse tell us, not just about the humanity of Jesus, but how in that humanity He related to the suffering of others?”

So, one interpretation here is that Jesus was moved by the sadness and grief He felt in others and empathized and sympathized with their sadness and wept along with them.

Is there any other possibility as to why Jesus wept?

Think about it, if you were going to a funeral of a close relative, everyone is crying, but you know with 100% certainty that you are there to raise the dead back to life—what would you do? Would you extend the pain, the suffering, the sadness, and sit down and wallow in the despair by grieving?

If you came upon someone with a broken leg and they were suffering and you knew with 100% certainty you were there to miraculously, instantaneously heal their leg, would you sit down and cry with them and allow them to suffer longer?

Yes, it is possible Jesus was merely shedding tears of empathy—but I think something else entirely was going on. Is it possible that Jesus was crying for their lack of faith, for their failure to understand who stood amongst them, for their overall darkened minds and hardened hearts that left them so hopeless and discouraged, not merely because Lazarus was asleep?

Read third paragraph, “The weight of the grief of the ages...” Was something more going on with Christ than mere empathy to the family of Lazarus?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “The word *comfort* comes from...” What do you understand comfort to mean? Does comfort include something that makes us stronger? What?

What brings the most comfort, empathy while we die, or deliverance from what is killing us?

Is there pain, suffering, difficult in the healing process?

Once there is brokenness there are no pain free options—but there are options that, while painful, heal, restore and eventually lead to resolution of pain. This is true in our hearts and minds as well.



Thus, 2Cor 1:3-7, from *The Remedy*:

³All thanks, acclaim and recognition be to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—for he is the Father of mercy, compassion and healing—⁴who provides Remedy for everything that troubles our minds and warps our characters, so that we can share this Remedy, which has brought peace to our minds, with everyone in any distress.⁵As we emulate Christ—suffering as he did—we, through Christ, experience healing and restoration of godly character.⁶If we suffer, it is to comfort you by our example and to encourage you with evidence that in God’s plan, suffering results in healing. It is our comfort to then comfort you with the assurance that endurance in God’s treatment plan, though at times uncomfortable, results in healing and wellness.⁷Our hope for you is strong because we know that if you participate in God’s treatment plan and suffer as we have, you will, like us, experience the comfort of a transformed character and peace with God.

The lesson gives some suggestions on how to empathize and show sympathy:

- be authentic, listen more than speaking
- show sympathy out of your own unique personality
- be present
- allow people space to grieve in their own way
- be educated on the stages of grief
- be careful about saying, “I know how you feel”
- remember there is a place for professional counseling
- Don’t say “I’ll pray for you” unless you will
- organize support groups

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase**—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Remedy—Is Now Available in Print Version in the US. We have printed 10,000 to give away and will reassess demand for them after those are gone. We are shipping a small number to Canada and Australia. **How to get copies:** In the US email orders@comeandreason.com with a valid US postal address; In Canada email canada@comeandreason.com and in Australia/New Zealand email Australia@comeandreason.com and request the number you want and we will ship them to you. If you are giving them away please give them only to people who want them. In other words, don’t put one at every seat in the church, or place setting at a potluck, or car in a parking lot. Such distribution methods result in vast numbers being thrown away. Let people know they are free and allow them to take one if they want too works best.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Cape Town, South Africa



The Role of the Church in the Community Lesson 9 3Q 2016

Jesus Ministered to Their Needs

I received this email this week:

Dear Team,

My mother and I are working in China sharing with all who will listen the God Who is Love. Those who hear love this. It answers the deep longings of the human heart. We are currently home for the summer holiday but will be returning there August 22. I would like to have this set of videos before we go.

In China you are my Sabbath School that I join every week. I am a teacher in a university and my job is to get my students to talk. I teach them the integrative evidence-based approach to truth and the 7 levels of moral development. They love my classes. This is the grace of God for which I am deeply grateful. Thank you for making these materials free as I also share the website with them.

I was so sorry that The Remedy was not available in hard cover... Those I have shared this with have loved it and it quickly becomes their favorite version. We did a whirlwind tour during Spring Festival of Daniel and Revelation and it helped them so see Jesus as the center of all prophecy and time.

I want to thank all those who make it possible for those of us with limited or no incomes to have these materials. I, too, believe this is the final message to go to the world. I need constant reminders that God is not what His enemies have made Him out to be, arbitrary, unforgiving and severe which my natural, fearful, selfish heart gravitates toward, but that He is a Good Father who loves and wants me above all. And this is what I want to share in word and life to hasten the day.

So, thank you, thank you, thank you!!! And God bless the work you are doing.

SABBATH

Read memory text, “Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.”

The lesson title is Jesus Ministered to Their Needs, what needs do you hear from this text that Jesus was meeting?

- teaching
- proclaiming the good news of the kingdom—what kingdom?



- healing

What is the greatest need of humanity today?

- Health care?
- Tax relief?
- Food, shelter, clothing?
- Political freedom?
- Social justice and equality?

From the book *Education*:

Christ is the "Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John 1:9. As through Christ every human being has life, so also through Him every soul receives some ray of divine light. Not only intellectual but spiritual power, a perception of right, a desire for goodness, exists in every heart. But against these principles there is struggling an antagonistic power. The result of the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is manifest in every man's experience. There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist. To withstand this force, to attain that ideal which in his inmost soul he accepts as alone worthy, he can find help in but one power. **That power is Christ. Co-operation with that power is man's greatest need. In all educational effort should not this co-operation be the highest aim?** {Ed 29.1}

Does anyone disagree that the greatest need of every human being is cooperation and unity with Christ? Why is this the greatest of all needs?

But, how do we help people realize this need and connect with Christ? From the book *Christ's Object Lessons*:

Sin is the greatest of all evils, and it is ours to pity and help the sinner. But not all can be reached in the same way. **There are many who hide their soul hunger. These would be greatly helped by a tender word or a kind remembrance. There are others who are in the greatest need, yet they know it not. They do not realize the terrible destitution of the soul.** Multitudes are so sunken in sin that they have lost the sense of eternal realities, lost the similitude of God, and they hardly know whether they have souls to be saved or not. They have neither faith in God nor confidence in man. **Many of these can be reached only through acts of disinterested kindness. Their physical wants must first be cared for. They must be fed, cleansed, and decently clothed. As they see the evidence of your unselfish love, it will be easier for them to believe in the love of Christ.** {COL 387.1}

Did you hear two different groups described?



- One who know their need but hide it, these are people who live behind masks, walking around fearful of someone discovering their true selves, not believing anyone could really like them if they new them. The woman caught in adultery and dragged before Christ would be such a person. The woman at the well would be another. And how did Christ reach them? Just as was said above, by speaking tender words to them.
- But there is another class, those who don't even realize they have souls needing saving, so burdened with life and ignorant of God and distrusting human beings. They are reached by acts of *disinterested* kindness, meeting their physical needs.

For an example of this class of people Read Sabbath's lesson, "A retired..." What was happening in this story? What is drawing the people? Was it a way of living that put them in harmony with nature and resulted in real improvement in their wellbeing?

Why did it result in real improvement in their wellbeing? Because they were working with the laws of nature, teaching how to live in harmony with those laws, and who created those laws? This is God's law, His design for life.

The last sentence said a "powerful and practical example." Is there any form of truth that is not practical, that doesn't actually apply, and work in our lives for our healing and restoration?

How many things done in religion are impractical, or become impractical? Why, what causes something to be impractical?

What does practical mean? Useful, something that actually works.

And impractical means not useful, not helpful. So, what things done in religion are impractical and why?

And this brings us to a third class of people not spoken of in the quote above, can anyone think of that class?

- The Laodiceans? Those who believe they are righteous, they realize they have souls to save, but think they are already saved—already spiritual healthy and well when they are not.

Do such religious people do things that are impractical? Examples?

- All superstitions
- How about vegans who become so strict that they die of malnutrition?
- How about persons who refuse antibiotics for their children and their children die of curable diseases?
- How about people with mental health problems who refuse treatment because they believe if they had more faith they wouldn't need treatment?



This type of impractical belief system is perhaps the saddest of all because these are typically good-hearted people, who truly want to do what is right, but who have been deceived into believing something that is actually harmful.

And, does anyone have an insight what one of the common underlying beliefs are that contributes to most of these impractical beliefs? Misconstruing God's law as imposed, which results in viewing God as a cosmic judge who must punish sin, and sin is doing bad things which deserve to be punished. This leads to a fear based religion, so people focus on self, they don't want to eat the wrong things, they don't want to be accountable before God for giving their children medicine and not having enough faith, etc. This is all fear based religion, which results when we accept the lie about God's law.

What is the solution? Jesus—who is God's law made visible and accessible to us. What do we see in Jesus? Did He ever punish anyone? What did He do to Judas? How did He treat His enemies trying to kill Him? Jesus is God made visible to us—yet we constantly deny the testimony of Jesus.

Remember Revelation says the Remnant who are saved at the end of time, hold to the testimony of Jesus—are we? Are we holding to the testimony Jesus gave about His Father?

SUNDAY

The lesson references the story of Jesus on his way to heal Jairus' daughter when the woman with the history of bleeding touched his garment and was healed. The lesson describes this as Jesus being interrupted and then asks some questions, read second through fourth paragraph, "Let's face it..."

The lesson is making some good points about the struggles we often have with interruptions, no doubt. Yet, I am not certain the example chosen is the best for depicting someone interrupting Jesus.

Did the woman interrupt what Jesus was doing, or did she act unobtrusively such that no one noticed her, except Jesus perceived healing energy leave Him? And who stopped what Jesus was doing? Jesus did, why? Why did Jesus stop, because this was an interruption and He needed to make it clear people should not interrupt Him? Was this an interruption?

I don't think so. What was Jesus mission? Jesus was on earth to reveal and restore God's true character into all people and strengthen their confidence in God by living and revealing God's true methods. Did stopping to expose this healing to all the people and to commend the woman's faith, interrupt His mission, or did it provide an opportunity to magnify and emphasize His mission?

Even when He was teaching and the paralytic was lowered down from the roof above in the middle of His discourse, Jesus didn't take this as an interruption, but as a grand opportunity. Consider the high drama that must have occurred at that moment. If anyone in the crowd was dozing off don't you think they came alert at this point? And Jesus used this to magnify and emphasize His mission of revealing God's character! So, even this was not an interruption to His mission!



But there were interruptions, any examples? All the traps and tricks set for Him by the religious leaders, these were designed to derail Him, divert His attention, distract Him, trick Him, trap Him... How did Jesus handle such interruptions?

What about the interruption when Peter pulled out his sword or when Peter said no way Lord, you aren't going to go and die—was Peter seeking to interrupt the Jesus' mission? And how did Jesus respond to these interruptions?

Peter in those two places, and the religious leaders however, were interruptions. And notice how Jesus handled those?

What is the lesson for us in dealing with interruptions? To first know what our mission is, what our goals are. Are we on task for God, is our primary goal to reveal God in all we do, or do we get distracted on the things of the world and miss our true mission and purpose—which is how we handle things, not the things themselves?

This gives us a good example of how the Bible can be *interpreted* to mean different things to different people, depending on their viewpoint, how they are understanding what they are reading. To me the lesson misses the true mission of Jesus and thus interprets the woman touching Jesus' hem as an interruption that Jesus doesn't consider an interruption but an opportunity and part of His mission. Such misinterpretations can lead people to draw the wrong lesson from Jesus' actions.

If you find yourself being irritated by interruptions, perhaps rather than getting down on yourself for being irritated, it might be time to step back and ask, *What is my mission and is this really interfering with my mission, or an opportunity to magnify God and His kingdom of love?*

MONDAY

The lesson points us to blind Bartimaeus and the paralytic of 38 years and points out that Jesus asked them both questions, and the lesson asks "Why would He do that?"

Why would Jesus ask them questions, like "What do you want" or "Do you want to get well?"

As a doctor, I always ask my patients, during their initial evaluation, what their goal is in coming to see me, what they want—why? Because not every person actually wants to get well. Some, in fact, do not want to get well, some have habituated their lives in the sick role and use their symptoms as tools to control the people in their lives. If these individuals didn't have their symptoms they would have to get a job, do chores, care for themselves, lose their disability check and some people have become secure, comfortable in their sickness and it frightens them to get well. They are afraid if they were not sick their spouse might leave them, or they fear they would fail, so it is easier to stay sick and be cared for by others.



Jesus is asking what they want because God doesn't violate freewill. God does not force people to be well who don't want it. In fact, doctors really can't heal people against their will. I have patients that I know a certain treatment is extremely likely to benefit them, but if they have been biased against the treatment, and have a strong enough belief that it will cause them terrible side effects, I don't even try it, why? Because their strong belief will almost certainly cause those side effects, which would negate the benefit of the treatment, but further undermine their confidence in me and damage our therapeutic relationship as they would feel like I don't listen to them.

Does God ever take actions with us that He knows is not the most likely to help, but He is limited in what He can do for us by our biases and strongly held beliefs, doubts, fears, preconceived ideas? Remember when Jesus was on earth there were entire villages where He could do very little because their minds were so closed to Him.

Further, Jesus wanted to engage them in relationship with Him. He wanted them to realize they were seeking something from Him and open their hearts and minds to something more than just the physical healing.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Jesus, as the Lord, knew more..." The lesson rightly points out that Jesus did know things about people, what was in their hearts, what they were planning, like the fact that Judas was going to betray Him, and in other situations before they disclosed their intentions. So this is a fact of history. Do we all agree Jesus did have these insights into people?

But the question is how the lesson used the phrase, "as the Lord" and what they mean by it? Are they suggesting that Jesus, because He was fully God, was using His own divine abilities and power to access knowledge that other humans could not access?

Would it be an issue if Jesus did do this? Why or why not?

Are there evidences in Scripture that Jesus did NOT perform any miracle, which would include the miracle of knowledge, by using His own divine power?

- Mark 1:35 "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."
- Luke 5:16 "But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."
- Luke 6:12 "One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God."
- Gethsemane—Jesus praying for strength

Why does Jesus pray if He has access to His own divine abilities?



John 5:30, Jesus says by Himself he can do nothing, what does this mean? Isn't He fully God? Then why can He do nothing by Himself? Because, at that time He had divested Himself from accessing His divine abilities, and everything He did, He did by trust in His Father. In other words:

- Jesus raised the dead like Elijah raised the dead
- Jesus walked on water like Elisha raised an axe head
- Jesus healed the sick like the Apostles healed the sick
- Jesus had foreknowledge like Daniel had foreknowledge
- Jesus face radiate like the sun like Elijah's and Moses' face next to him

Why is it important to realize this? What is implied if we suggest Jesus was using His own powers? - That Jesus didn't have to trust His Father—and what would be the problem if Jesus didn't have to trust His Father? That Jesus didn't overcome as a human, which would mean Jesus didn't exercise His human brain to develop a perfect human character. The remedy for sin would not have been achieved. Also, it would not have been demonstrated that there was no manufacturer's defect in the creation of man. Jesus, living a perfect sinless life—as a human—accessing only the powers available to all humans who trust God as Jesus did, not only developed a perfect human character, but demonstrated that there was no defect in humankind as God created him.

Thus Jesus not only reveals the Father perfectly, reveals His own character perfectly, while simultaneously exposing Satan as a liar and fraud, but also develops a perfect human character in the damaged machinery of weakened humanity, thus demonstrating God's creation was not flawed, another evidence vindicating God and His design for life!

The next two paragraphs are about the paralytic man lowered through the roof in front of Jesus, and before Jesus healed him Jesus said, "your sins are forgiven you."

Several questions to consider:

- In that culture would it have been hard for people to realize the man's sins had been forgiven prior to the events of this day? Why? What made that hard to realize?
- Was the man truly forgiven of his sin?
- When was the man forgiven? When did God forgive the man?
- What caused God to forgive the man?
 - For God so loved the world...
 - While we were yet sinners Christ died for us...
- Was God the problem that needed a solution? In other words, was God unforgiving and something needed to be done to God to get God to forgive?
- So, when was this man forgiven?
- What did the man believe about his standing before God?
- Why did the paralytic believe he was in a condemned state before God?
- Did the man's belief about God's attitude toward him, that God had not forgiven him, accurately reflect God's attitude?
- So, was God forgiving toward this man BEFORE the man knew it?



- What prevented the man from experiencing God's forgiveness?
- His false beliefs about God and sin, and where did those false beliefs originate—did the man make those ideas up? No! Those false beliefs came from his church—thus he was made twice the son of hell, because he was indoctrinated into a false system about God that kept him trapped in despair, guilt and hopelessness.
- So, what did Jesus do? He overturned their theories about God. He demonstrated God forgives freely, without payment, without legal adjustment, without being pled with, without sacrifices being offered. And to prove it, Jesus healed the man, taking away that culture's evidence of condemnation and providing evidence of good standing before God.
- How did the religious leaders react?
- Why?
- Because they had their legal system of appeasement and payments based on a false law construct, and refused the truth.

This is exactly what happens in many places today when we take the truth about God's character and methods of love. Those stuck in penal substitution theology reject the truth and cling to the false law construct.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about Dorcas, who ministered to those in need in her community.

Read second paragraph, "The 'believers'..." This would be excellent, to have people say such things. Would it be less excellent if they instead said, "See how those Christians love and care for others?"

Are we trying to get people to see the SDA church or Jesus Christ? Is there a difference?

What are we promoting when we promote the kingdom of God? How does one enter God's kingdom? How does one become a member of God's kingdom?

Is membership in God's kingdom the same as joining a denomination?

Can we sometimes miss the mark, miss the mission Christ has sent us on by focusing on the institution?

THURSDAY

Read memory text, "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans." (Prov. 16:3)

What does this mean? How do you understand it?



Does it mean:

- Commit to the Lord the plans *you make* and He will establish and ensure *your plans* work out?
- Commit to the Lord your activities and *He will make the plans* that will ensure the venture works out?
- Commit yourself to the Lord and plan to follow Him and then having experienced a renewed heart, and following in your mind, heart, methods the leading of the Holy Spirit your plans will be His plans and He will ensure they succeed?
- Or, something else?

Here is this verse from several versions. The lesson states they quoted the NIV, they actually quoted Today's NIV which is an updated version of the NIV, but this is the original NIV:

- Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed. NIV
- Ask the LORD to bless your plans, and you will be successful in carrying them out. GNT
- Put GOD in charge of your work, then what you've planned will take place. The Message
- Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established. NRSV
- Commit your works to the LORD, And your thoughts will be established. NKJV

What does it mean? If you commit your work to God, then God will make it happen?

The last paragraph references Luke 14:34,35: ““Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? ³⁵ It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out.”

Then the lesson states, “The flavor of the salt in Luke 14:34 represents devotion. Without this, our service, our discipleship, is useless and meaningless.”

Do you agree that the flavor of the salt represents devotion? Or does it represent the actual *savor of heaven*, which is truth, love and freedom?

Can you be devoted to things without the savor of heaven? So, can people be zealously devoted to religions that violate God's character of love, truth and freedom? And if so, do they have the heavenly salt because they are devoted? No! The salt, in my view doesn't represent devotion, but the proper savor of heaven, which is a character like Jesus!

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

September 15-17: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC National Conference in Dallas, TX. For more info, see AACC.net

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Cape Town, South Africa

November 4: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Fall Summit at the Calvary Chapel in Naperville, IL.



The Role of the Church in the Community Lesson 10 3Q 2016

Jesus Won Their Confidence

I received this update from Gary Jones and Come and Reason Canada:

We have been reaching out to our brothers and sisters of all faiths this month and we have two more C&R branches one in Ontario and one in Halifax and that now makes 4 C&R branches in Canada thus far. We are working on having one in Western Canada soon.

David Clarke from Ontario stopped here in Nova Scotia on his way to Newfoundland and picked up one case of each DVD series to give out there and take the remainder back to Ontario. We are praying someone in Newfoundland will ask to become a C&R branch.

Yes there is one more thing. I was just chatting via Skype with a friend that is with Paradigm Missions in Uganda. Her name is Linelle, I told her about C&R some time ago and she check it out and is now using C&R to teach the God of Love message to close to 13 villages. From what she was saying it's a new message to the people of Uganda and most of them are from a religious background and Christian backgrounds. C&R is opening hearts and eyes in place with no light and I mean no electricity or water but they are now getting the light of God and the Water of the Spirit. I will update you with more on this, I asked Linelle to send me a email with a update on this.

*God Bless,
Gary*

Here is the email from Linelle in Uganda:

Hi Gary

I just wanted to share a little bit about what I have been doing here in Uganda and the work of Paradigm Missions and how Come and Reason has become a part of that program.

Now that we are in full swing evangelism mode it has become vital to ensure that the people who are reaching out into the community not only understand the gospel commission in its holistic context but also that they have a true and accurate picture of God to portray to the people. Sadly the culture here is one of fear. Beating is the modus operandus of homes and business and people really feel that taking advantage of others and getting something for nothing is the way to go. Children are not instructed in the way to behave, they are left to roam until an adult is annoyed with them and then they are beaten and then given instructions later. I have witnessed in horror as Christians have chosen this kind of management strategy. Women even say they wouldn't feel that their husband loved them if he didn't beat them to correct them. It's incredibly sad to walk around the block during the evening and hear the screaming of



women and children inside houses while the people on the street and in the yards pay no mind because it is standard practice.

I have been working through the Come and Reason material with my volunteers during the week and preaching the message of a God of Love in Sabbath School and church and putting it into practice in Sabbath afternoon outreach here in Kotido. They are really drinking it in and asking lots of questions and shifting their understanding. The brand new converts who have only ever heard the message of the God of Love just smile as I preach and cannot seem to get enough of this great news - which of course it is.

As you described your strategy to give Come and Reason DVDs with every Christian book purchase at your local bookshop I instantly thought of the high volume of spiritual books available in bookstores in Kampala and how popular they are. We could totally replicate that process here and have a positive impact on people's understanding of God in this way. I really believe this is the only way this country can move forward from its current attitudes and functioning. Indeed it is the only way forward for all of us.

I loved Tim's statement in the Question and Answer time of the God and Your Church series where it was spelt out clearly that God will only pour out his Holy Spirit on those who are accurately representing his character. This is exactly what we are here to do. This is evident in the leaps and bounds we are making "... in drawing all men unto Him." It really isn't our work, it is His and it is just fantastic to see the truth flourishing.

Currently we desperately need a church building to accommodate the incredible growth of the membership here. Each week new souls are added to the congregation and even those who have only attended a few times are bringing their friends and they are bringing their friends as they see the value in what they are receiving. We desperately want to construct two churches here in northern Karamoja before the end of the year and we have the land, the building plans and a builder. Now we are just praying for the \$50,000 to make that happen as we 'shake every tree'. I know you will join with us in bringing this before the Lord and putting your mind to the task as well.

God bless you as you continue to serve him in whatever way you can. You have certainly been a blessing to me and Paradigm Missions.

*Kindly
Linelle*

SABBATH

What do you think of the title? How did Jesus win their confidence? What did He do? What qualities did Jesus possess and display that won their confidence?



The Jews in Christ day had this same question, should we have confidence, trust, faith in Jesus or not, notice this discussion they had with Jesus in John 6:28-30:

Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

So they asked him, “What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?”

What were they looking for in order to have confidence in Jesus? Was it important for Jesus to perform miracles? Why?

Yes, it was important because one of the evidences Jesus needed to demonstrate was that He does have power over nature, sickness and death itself. Why was this an important evidence to demonstrate?

What if Jesus had only demonstrated great wisdom, love, truth, but had no power over nature, sickness and death?

In delaying to come to Lazarus, Christ had a purpose of mercy toward those who had not received Him. He tarried, that by raising Lazarus from the dead He might give to His stubborn, unbelieving people **another evidence that He was indeed "the resurrection, and the life."** He was loath to give up all hope of the people, the poor, wandering sheep of the house of Israel. His heart was breaking because of their impenitence. In His mercy He purposed to give them **one more evidence that He was the Restorer, the One who alone could bring life and immortality to light.** This was to be an **evidence** that the priests could not misinterpret. This was the reason of His delay in going to Bethany. **This crowning miracle, the raising of Lazarus, was to set the seal of God on His work and on His claim to divinity.** {DA 529.1}

So, for Jesus it was very important, that in addition to demonstrating the truth of God’s character, that He was a conduit of God’s creative energies and demonstrated miracle working power.

But, are miracles alone a good barometer for having confidence in someone? Another way to say it, are miracles alone a good basis to put our faith or trust in someone? Why or why not?

Can miracles be counterfeited? Can great magicians perform what appear to be miracles?

- Jannes and Jambres counterfeited the miracle of the staff turning to a serpent (Exodus 7:11, 2Tim 3:8)

Can true miracles be performed by agents of evil?

- Serpent spoke in Eden
- Satan showed Jesus a great panorama and transported Jesus to the top of the temple
- Satan brought fire and storm in the book of Job



- Revelation says the image to the beast will bring fire down from heaven

Here is a quote from one of the founders of the SDA church:

The way in which Christ worked was to preach the Word, and to relieve suffering by miraculous works of healing. **But I am instructed that we cannot now work in this way, for Satan will exercise his power by working miracles. God's servants today could not work by means of miracles, because spurious works of healing, claiming to be divine, will be wrought.**--2SM 54 (1904). {LDE 169.2}

God's people will not find their safety in working miracles, for Satan will counterfeit the miracles that will be wrought.--9T 16 (1909). {LDE 169.3}

What does this mean? Does this mean that the true movement of God will not be accompanied by miracles, but the false movement will be, and we merely need to watch for miracles and go the other way?

Joel prophesied that before the Lord comes there will be a latter rain of the Holy Spirit—will the latter rain come with less miracle working power than Pentecost?

“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. ²⁹ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. ³⁰ **I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth** Joel 2:28-30

Would this include miracles? What about this quote from the same SDA founder:

It is with an earnest longing that **I look forward to the time [It hadn't yet happened in 1886 when she wrote this]** when the events of the Day of Pentecost **shall be repeated with even greater power than on that occasion.** John says, "I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory" [Revelation 18:1]. Then, as at the Pentecostal season, the **people will hear the truth spoken to them, every man in his own tongue.**--6BC 1055 (1886). {LDE 202.3}

In visions of the night, representations passed before me of a great reformatory movement among God's people. Many were praising God. **The sick were healed, and other miracles were wrought.** A spirit of intercession was seen, **even as was manifested before the great Day of Pentecost.**--9T 126 (1909). {LDE 202.4}

The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former



rain at the opening of the gospel, are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. . . . {LDE 203.1}

Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. **Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers.**--GC 611, 612 (1911). {LDE 203.2}

What does this mean? How do you understand the two statements? Is there a contradiction?

Did she say that miracles would not accompany the true work of God, or that miracles would not be the proof of God's endorsement and safety in whom we trust could not be found in miracles? In other words, was she saying that miracles are no longer valid evidence of God's true movement because both sides will be performing miracles? So, God's people can absolutely look for miracles to accompany the work, but the presence or absence of miracles has ZERO bearing on whether the work is approved of God or not.

So, how did Jesus win their confidence? In addition to miracles, what else did Jesus provide that won their confidence?

- Kindness
- Trustworthiness
- Loyalty
- Reliability
- Genuine love—for all people—breaking down prejudices
- Gentleness
- Mercy
- Knowledge of how reality actually works and able to explain the true meaning of Scripture
- Value of truth over tradition and authority of office
- Courage—standing for truth in face of institutional opposition
- True to duty, continuing His mission in spite of opposition
- Wisdom
- other qualities?

What is the message and method we are to use to win people to God's kingdom today? We have read most of the following quote before, but notice the last part, in the context of what is to be the message to win people:

It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. **At this time** a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. **His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth...** {COL 415.3}



Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, "Behold your God." **The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. {COL 415.5}**

What does it mean to reveal God's character in our own?

- The proud become humble
- The mean become kind
- The cruel become compassionate
- The selfish become loving
- The critical become merciful
- The gossips become confidants who hold their tongues
- The insecure become sure and strong
- The fearful become courageous
- The hoarders become givers
- The weak become strong
- The ignorant become knowledgeable
- The foolish become wise
- The coercive become liberators
- The discouraged become hopeful
- The doubters become certain
- The deceitful become honest
- The addicted become free
- Those in darkness become enlightened

Other qualities?

And what happens when people are changed like this? What is the impact upon them, their families, their communities?

And what does it mean when such transformation happens? How is it possible?

Is not the transformation of hearts and minds the most magnificent evidence of God's power, the miracle working power of God?

Which is the greater evidence of God's miracle working power, for the Creator to speak something into existence that is perfect, or to take corruption and return it to perfection?



This is what the church at the end of time is to accomplish—we are to proclaim a message, “Be in awe God, and reveal His character within you (bring Him glory) for the time in human history has come for people to make a right judgment about God, for people to throw off the lies about God and return to Him and worship Him who made the heavens, earth, and fountains of water—to worship the Designer and reject the dictator views of God!”

We do this by becoming the righteousness of God—“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” 2Cor 5:21

This is the final message!

And when we experience this life transforming power, renewing us to be like Jesus, should we expect other miracles to accompany our work? Do we see few miracles today because we ask for few and we expect few? Should we ask for more?

When can we have confidence that miracles will happen?

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. Jn 14:12-14

What is the condition to expect miracles?

But to pray in Christ's name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works {DA 668.2}

Remember name means character, so when Jesus says to ask for anything in His name, it means with the same character, attitude, motive, desire, purpose, reason, i.e. because you love God and others and want to advance God's kingdom.

Here is John 14:12-14 from *The Remedy*

I tell you the truth: Anyone who genuinely trusts me will also be in unity with the Father and will reveal his character—just as I have been doing. His life will be a further revelation of the life-giving power of God and the healing power of his methods. My life reveals the truth of God's character and methods; but those who trust in me will reveal that God's methods, when applied in trust via the Spirit of God, actually heal and transform those who are deformed by sin. I am going to the Father.¹³ And I will do whatever you ask—that is in harmony with my character, methods, and principles—so that the Son may bring honor and glory to the Father by revealing the healing and life-giving power of his methods.¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in harmony with my character and methods, and I will do it.



SUNDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “After desiring...” What do you understand is being described here regarding faith or confidence?

The basic concept is one of persuading a person in their own mind and heart into agreement, thus amen really means, “I agree” or “That’s right” or “Well said” or “Absolutely true.” The idea is that you as an individual have comprehended the concept, thought it through, come to understand, value and choose with your own unique identity and individuality to align yourself with that truth, to make it a part of yourself.

This is what Paul is referring to in Romans 14:5 when he says, regarding which day people esteem Sabbath or another day, that every person should be fully persuaded in their own mind. Paul is not commenting on which day is Sabbath, or the sanctity of Sabbath, but the fact that regardless of truth it has no transforming power in an individual’s heart and mind until they are persuaded and actively choose it for themselves.

The last sentence says, “Yet, when those we serve show confidence in us, we must point them to Jesus and what He has done for them.”

How do you do this? What do you tell people that Jesus has done for them? Does the explanation you provide increase or decrease people’s confidence in Jesus and the Father?

A few weeks back I brought to class an evangelistic tool some people use. It was designed to look like a one million dollar bill and on the back it read:

Here Is The Million Dollar Question: Will you go to Heaven when you die? Here’s a quick test: have you ever lied, stolen, or used God’s name in vain? Jesus said, “Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” If you have done these things, **God sees you as a lying, thieving, blasphemous, adulterer at heart, and the Bible warns that one day God will punish you in a terrible place called Hell.** But God is not willing that any should perish. **Sinners broke God’s Law and Jesus paid their fine. This means that God can legally dismiss their case:** “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Then Jesus rose from the dead, defeating death. Today, repent and trust Jesus, and God will give you eternal life as a free gift. Then read the Bible daily and obey it. God will never fail you.

Does such a presentation increase or decrease trust in God? What kind of a god is presented in this view? This is a pagan god, this is not the God Jesus revealed. This comes from accepting the lie about God’s law and seeing God functioning no different than human dictators—and who would trust a human dictator? So, what view of God do you present?



MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “At the same time...” This is a very good point, all God’s representatives (other than Jesus) are sinners, which means they have faults, weaknesses, make mistakes, are in need of the same remedy as we are. Do we allow for this, or if we see someone working for God’s cause, and find some fault in them do we get offended, do we reject the message they are presenting because of it?

- Jonah had prejudice problems, was he a false prophet?
- David had anger issues, was he God’s enemy?

Do we see God’s messengers, prophets, Apostles as real people, or do we tend to put them on some idealistic pedestals? Have you ever considered what it might have been like to be around the New Testament Apostles?

- Paul is described by the Corinthians as small, weak and a dry boring speaker
- Peter was impulsive, blurting out answers, not waiting his turn, jumping out of boats, cutting off ears, acting frequently without thinking first.
- James and John were called sons of thunder and were constantly vying for first place, seeking advantages for themselves, and judgmental of others, asking if they should call fire down from heaven on the Samaritans (Lk 9:54)
- What of Matthew? Was he perhaps quiet, unassuming, introvert—more of the classic accountant type? Or, the proud, intrusive, extortionist?

Understanding the Apostles were all human beings, does it give insight into why many people didn’t listen to them? And does it make clear why we are to point people to Jesus and not ourselves.

The same is true today, for each of us, we are not perfect, each of us has human frailties, weakness, issues we are struggling to overcome. One of Satan’s strategies when the true gospel message is presented is to get people to focus on the messenger rather than the message.

This is a classic attack on EGW and the allegations some bring about plagiarism. To me such allegations are irrelevant, the question is whether what she wrote was true or not, that is what matters, not the primary sources for each point.

Read last paragraph, “Of course, we...” What is required to be the kind of people that can be relied upon and trusted?

Does these passage help?

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. Eph 4:14,15



We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn.¹² In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Heb 5:11-14

What quality is described here? Maturity! What does it mean to be mature?

- To be able think for oneself and discern truth from error
- To be able to stand firm for what is true and not be overly influenced by the opinion of others

Consider the types of Untrustworthiness:

- The untrustworthiness of the evil in heart, the terrorist, the antisocial sociopath, the person with intent to harm—such people we cannot trust
 - But most people are not in this category, most people that betray our trust are not intentionally seeking to do so
- The untrustworthiness of the immature
 - If you were treasurer of your church and collected \$5000 in cash and your 5 y/o child said, "I will take that to the bank for you mommy/daddy." Would you trust them to do? Because they have evil intent? No! Because they are not mature enough to handle the responsibility
 - This is what the Bible is describing above, people with good intent but they have not
 - Mastered themselves
 - Matured
 - Learned to think for themselves
 - Developed the ability to tolerate rejection if necessary
 - Developed discernment and wisdom
 - Come to love others more than self (Peter upper room)

TUESDAY

The Proverb at the top states, "A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold." (22:1)

What is the point of this proverb? That retaining one's integrity is better than compromising one's self for money.

The point of the proverb is that we are to value mature Christlike character above wealth or earthly attainments.

Absolutely true—but what is the potential misunderstanding that might occur from this proverb that would be harmful?



Valuing the estimation (esteem) of others, letting the opinion and feedback of others be the measure of your character, such that one becomes focused, not on being the healthiest most Christlike person they can be through God's grace, but instead focusing on what others think of them. Why is this a problem?

This is what Peter did when Paul confronted him publicly. Peter was concerned about being esteemed by the Jewish leaders and this concern caused him to compromise his character and misrepresent the gospel. Instead of standing for truth, instead of witnessing God's love for all people, and thus being the most Christlike person, he compromised for the approval of others and damaged himself as well as his witness and misrepresented the gospel, for which Paul needed to correct him.

I love this quote:

The greatest want of the world is the want of men--men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall. {Ed 57.3}

But such a character is not the result of accident; it is not due to special favors or endowments of Providence. A noble character is the result of self-discipline, of the subjection of the lower to the higher nature--the surrender of self for the service of love to God and man. {Ed 57.4}

Read last two paragraphs, "The means that..." What do you think of the idea of God using people who are not converted to Him to help promote the gospel and His cause?

The lesson states the support of those not on the team shouldn't automatically be accepted or automatically be rejected. What criteria should one use? What makes the difference?

- If it is given with or without strings? How about designated donation—give specifically for a building project, or food for the hungry, or missions? Does such designation mean strings attached?
- If given without quid pro quo—meaning no favors are expected in return. What if someone wants a church plant in a certain part of town so they make a donation? What if a member of the church wants a position on the church board for a large donation to the building fund? Or a position on the school board for a large donation to the worthy student fund?
- What if the money comes from sources contrary to the mission of the church? See Friday question 3
 - What determines if it is "tainted money"?
 - Where did the wealth come from to build the sanctuary of the Lord at Sinai?
 - Should the church investigate the sources of a person's money?
 - What if the money is donated by a prostitute? Did Jesus reject the donation of a gift costing a year's salary? Yet, she was converted. Would he have rejected a donation from anyone?



- What of the donation of the church board member who makes a large donation in order to have their name on a building?
- What if a drug dealer recognized the good a Christian clinic was doing in their neighborhood, because his mother benefited from the clinic and made a large donation?
- What about money gained from industrial farms or slaughter houses? Or companies that have been caught illegally dumping toxic waste?
- In the August 2016 NAD issue of the Adventist Review on page 11 there is an article entitled, “Oakwood University Church Honors NBA Legend Magic Johnson” The article reports that Magic Johnson donated \$500,000 to the Oakwood University church’s family life center and created a \$50,000 scholarship. Any thoughts on accepting this money?

Should we be in the business of investigating donations or using what is donated for God’s cause and not allowing our mission to be diverted by the donors?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “There is no question...” Any examples of the light from the Lord with which we have been blessed?

- Health message
- Day of rest
- The Great Controversy of God’s character
- The truth of God’s character
- God’s design law

The lesson listed several theological issues for which we have light, “such as understanding the Cross, the sanctuary, the state of the dead, the Sabbath, the great controversy.”

Do we have clear understanding on all these issues? Is the explanation of the sanctuary clear, or still trapped in metaphor, symbol and dark speech?

Are all presentations of the Cross within our own church enlightening, or do some presentations actually darken the mind about God?

The last paragraph asks, “Would our community miss us if somehow our congregation disappeared overnight?” Would Come and Reason Ministries be missed if we suddenly were no longer here?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

September 15-17: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC National Conference in Dallas, TX. For more info, see AACC.net

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The Role of the Church in the Community Lesson 11 3Q 2016 Jesus Bade Them “Follow Me”

I received this email yesterday:

Dear Dr. Tim,

My brother and I were brought up SDA, legalistic, beat over the head with EGW, frightened of God and living in fear. After leaving home, and getting married, I left the church not seeing any way I could work enough to earn my way to heaven, so why beat myself up trying? 25 years later (1997) I was diagnosed with MS (multiple sclerosis) and 2 years later started attending church again, remembering that they had the health message and for the first time in my life started reading EGW and seeing an entirely different God picture that didn't align with my upbringing. I started searching for God with a new heart.

*Since 2009 my husband and I have been eating a whole food plant based diet, my MS has been completely reversed, my last MRI showed no new or recent activity, (my Dr. couldn't believe it). I have been off **all** the MS meds since October 2011.*

A few years ago my brother shared your audio book “God Shaped Brain” what an eye opener! Also shared your Sabbath School lessons and other information with me and it is completely changing my view of God. For the first time in my life I am experiencing a God of Love, and for the first time can discuss Him with non-Adventists, and co-workers, and even other struggling church members. After attending church for the past 15 years, I was finally re-baptized last year. I have shared your materials with many friends, and recently one of my friends and I started a Monday night Bible study group using your materials as the base.

I just can't get enough of Him and its all because you are sharing your teachings of the Creator, Designer, God is love, view of the law.

Lately I've also been transcribing most of your SS class presentations and sharing them with my friends, because there is so much more information in the classes than in the notes you so kindly provide. My mind doesn't absorb things well, so I need the entire transcription to refer back to when I want to review some of the issues that come up in my discussions with others who struggle with their image of God.

When I discovered your Let's Talk article on Difficult Questions and Biblical Answers I felt almost like it was a gift just for me. Answers to lots of problematic Bible stories I was never able to reconcile with a God of love.



May God continue to bless and keep you, your family and your class (including the virtual one) as you continue to share to truth about His character, and all those being released from the bondage we're in from looking through the wrong lens view.

With a very grateful heart I thank you. Rita Hartman

Just a reminder to our online listeners to take advantage of our comeandreason.com website online resources. We have a large number of blogs and other resources that answer many questions. So if you have a question, use the search feature at the top of the home page and type in your subject and see what resources we already have available.

SABBATH

What do you think of Jesus' calling to "Follow Him?" Have you considered how difficult that would have actually been?

Consider, you are at work one day this week and a visitor comes to your organization and as he is walking past your workstation he says, "Follow me." Perhaps it is a person you have heard about, but don't personally know, would it be easy to just walk away from your job? What if you have a wife and kids that need your income?

Is this close to what Jesus called His disciples to do?

Now Jesus calling of His disciples wasn't without some preparation—what kind of preparation preceded Jesus calling of His disciples?

- Jesus Himself had been preparing His entire life to be our Messiah
- The Holy Spirit had been preparing receptive hearts for the arrival of Jesus
- John the Baptist had been preparing the hearts and minds of the nation to receive Jesus and John made an announcement to some of the ones who became Jesus disciples.

³⁵ The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶ When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

³⁷ When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?"

³⁹ "Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour.

⁴⁰ Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother



Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ).⁴² And he brought him to Jesus. Jn 1:35-42

- Individuals had been preparing themselves by their worship, life choices, study of God’s Word, practicing of God’s methods

So, when Jesus called them, there had been preparation happening before that moment.

What about in our lives, if we are to be ready for some calling Jesus has for us, do we have preparation to do BEFORE the calling occurs?

Read memory text, “But they [the sheep] will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” John 10:5

What does this mean?

- Does it mean that we hear the voice of Jesus like you hear my voice right now?
- Is it supposed to mean this?
- Could it mean this, sometimes?
- Will it one day mean this?
- How do we get to know the voice of Jesus so well we recognize it and also recognize any voice that is not His?

Consider this description from the book *Christ’s Object Lessons*:

Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ; we are to draw constantly from Him, **partaking of Him**, the living Bread that came down from heaven, drawing from a fountain ever fresh, ever giving forth its abundant treasures. **If we keep the Lord ever before us, [law of worship, by beholding we are changed]** allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, **[law of exertion, the more we exercise something it gets stronger]** we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. **He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet joyful sense of the presence of Jesus.** Often our hearts will burn within us as He draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. When this is in truth the experience of the Christian, there is seen in his life a simplicity, a humility, meekness, and lowliness of heart, that show to all with whom he associates that he has been with Jesus and learned of Him. {COL 129.3}

How is it we get to know the voice of Jesus and that we hear Him speak His mysteries to us?

Can we hear the voice of Jesus if we:



- Stay high on drugs or alcohol? Why not? Is God unwilling to speak to us in such a state, or are we in such a mental fog we can't hear?
- Are so proud and arrogant that we cannot be taught?
- Have beliefs about God that make us afraid to let Him talk to us lest He kill us? (Job's friends)
- Have beliefs that we need someone to protect us from God?
- If we think we already have the answers and there are no mysteries to reveal?
- Fill our minds with entertainment, TV, video games, worldly reading material?
- Are so busy with life we never stop to listen—remember Martha
- If we conclude there is no God and thus don't ever consider He is there to listen to?
- If we worship a false god and have trained the mind to listen to a false voice?

So how do we know the voice of Jesus and hear Him speak to us?

- We must recognize our need of Him
- We must spend time with Him
- We must clear the mind of anything that obstructs His voice, stop the noise, take time to listen
- Read and study His Word, harmonized with science and real life experience (The integrative evidence-based approach)
- Meditate on His Creation
- Contemplate His methods (identify, understand, appreciate His design laws)
- Choose His principles (apply His design laws)
- Remove the distortions about Him that we may have in our minds
- Open the heart and invite Him in and actually reach the mind out in conversation and discussion with Him over the issues and problems of life

Other actions?

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, "It is, of course, important..." What is "divinely given discernment"? The ability to tell the difference between things, in this case between truth and error, right and wrong, healthy and unhealthy.

But how do we get this? Is this just a gift that God uses His divine power to impart to some but not others?

Heb 5:14:

- But solid food is for the mature, **who by constant use have trained themselves** to distinguish good from evil. NIV
- But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those **who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern** both good and evil. NKJV



Discernment is something that we develop by practice. If you want to be a great musician you must practice. You cannot become a great musician by listening to the stereo 10 hours per day; you must practice. Now, listening to other great musicians is appropriate to inspire and learn etc. but at some point you will have to practice. Likewise, to be a great thinker at some point, after listening to others, you will have to think for yourself.

What helps a person to discern?

What do you think of this quote?

All whom God has endowed with reasoning powers may become intellectual Christians. God has given **abundant evidence** of the truth of his word, and he requires that those who would be counted as the followers of Christ **should study the Scriptures**, that they may be able to give to every man a **reason** of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear. **He has not required any one to believe without evidence.** Let the inquirer after truth put to the **stretch his mental powers in diligent study of the word of God.** {Medical Missionary, May 1, 1892 par. 5}

What, according to this quote is required to be discerning?

- Possessing reasoning powers
- Application of one's reasoning powers in study of Scripture
- And harmonizing Scripture with evidence, the integrative approach

One example, some of the people who criticize what we teach in this class do so because of passages in Scripture like:

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.* Prov 9:10

The critics argue that we teach a message that removes fear of God and that passages like this teach we must be afraid of God.

So, this is opportunity to discern, to practice, to think—how do you know which view is right?

- First fear can also mean be in awe, not be afraid, but even so
- What about perfect love casts out all fear 1Jn 4:18, if we come back into perfect love with a perfect God do we have more fear or less?
- What about the law of liberty? What does fear, terror do to love? If God is saying love me or I will kill you, what happens?
- If God were to use power and might to put down sin by infliction of pain, suffering and death i.e. kill His enemies, then why not just do it from the beginning?



The paragraph in Sunday's lesson also pointed out that there is an enemy who works by great stealth to keep people from coming to a saving relationship with Jesus.

Is Satan's most successful and stealthy methods of keeping people from a saving relationship with Jesus achieved through non-religious means? Or, is the stealthiest attack of Satan done through religious channels?

Any examples?

Read next paragraph, "Nevertheless, we can be..." Blind leading the blind—was Jesus referring to non-religious people when He used this description? No! Jesus was referring to the church leaders of His day. What made them blind? How were they blind? To what were they blind?

Let's check the Scripture, Matthew 15:1-14:

Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, ² "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!"

³ Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴ For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' ⁵ But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,' ⁶ he is not to 'honor his father' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. ⁷ You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

⁸ " 'These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.

⁹ They worship me in vain;
their teachings are but rules taught by men.' "

¹⁰ Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand. ¹¹ What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean.' "

¹² Then the disciples came to him and asked, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?"

¹³ He replied, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. ¹⁴ Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

To what were the religious leaders blind? They were blind to God's character of love and God's design law! They were worshipping through the imposed law lens and more interested in rule keeping, than living in harmony with God and His design of love!



Do we have any problems in religion today? Is there an accepted orthodoxy, that is rarely questioned, that God's law requires God to punish? Is this a stealthy attack on God's character?

MONDAY

The lesson is about seeking the lost—what does it mean to seek the lost?

read second paragraph, “If you merely focus on praying...” Is there something we are to pray, to ask, that is to come to us?

We are to pray to the Lord of the harvest for more workers in the field! But, the workers are to go out into the field to reach those ripe for harvest!

Can you think of ways we can be more effective in outreach, in taking this healing message to those who need it? Any idea?

If you think of any possible ways Come and Reason Ministries could do more than we are to share this message and reach people, send us an email with your idea. We are constantly looking for ways to wake people up and help them see the reality of God's character of love and God's methods for their lives!

One of the methods of Come and Reason has been to teach people the truth about God, His character and methods, and call people to a saving relationship to Jesus Christ. Our ministry has not sought to call people to a specific worship facility, or to join a specific denomination, but has operated under the belief that God needs His true followers in every highway, byway, institution, and denomination and thus we leave it to the Holy Spirit to direct people where they should specifically worship, affiliate, attend, and work for God's kingdom.

Do you think this is the right approach or is there some element we are missing?

In **TUESDAY's** lesson, second paragraph, we read this quote:

“The Lord does not now work to bring many souls into the truth, because of the church members who have never been converted and those who were once converted but who have backslidden. What influence would these unconsecrated members have on new converts? Would they not make of no effect the God-given message which His people are to bear?” {6T 370.3}

What is this saying? Is this saying that some churches are not healthy places for new converts to attend and that God doesn't convict everyone of His followers into the same organization?



Read first paragraph, “Sometimes a church...” Do you see yourself as a bridge, an ambassador, an envoy from God to people?

Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also. ¹⁹**Our message is that God was making the whole human race his friends through Christ.** God did not keep an account of their sins, and **he has given us the message** which tells how he makes them his friends. **Here we are, then, speaking for Christ, as though God himself were making his appeal through us.** We plead on Christ’s behalf: let God change you from enemies into his friends! 2Cor 5:17-20

Do we see ourselves as God’s ambassadors, with a message from God that God wants every human being to be His friend?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Jesus and His disciples...” What do you understand medical missionary work to be?

Here is a quote from EGW, one of the founders of the SDA church:

Again and again I have been instructed [by whom do you think?] that the medical missionary work is to bear the same relation to the work of the third angel's message [what is the third angel's message] that the arm and hand bear to the body. Under the direction of the divine Head they are to work unitedly in **preparing the way for the coming of Christ.** The right arm of the body of truth is to be constantly active, constantly at work, and God will strengthen it. **But it is not to be made the body.** At the same time the body is not to say to the arm, "I have no need of thee." The body has need of the arm in order to do active, aggressive work. **Both have their appointed work, and each will suffer great loss if worked independently of the other.**--Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 288. {ChS 134.4}

What do you hear in this admonition?

- Who is EGW stating this message is from? God!
- What message is the medical missionary work to be part of that is to be taken to the world? – the message of the three angels, which is what? How do you understand it?
 - The three angels message is the end-time message that God is to prepare the world for Christ’s return. What is that message?
 - That God is Creator, Designer, Builder of reality and His laws are the laws upon which reality is built. We are to give glory to Him, by being healed in our characters to be like Him and live out His law of love, because the time in human history has come for human beings to make a right judgment about God! (first angel)



- The other churches and religions of the world are fallen into a system of imposed law, arbitrary rules and legal theology with a punishing God, just like Babylon; it is a system that doesn't make sense and is confusing. We are to come out of her. (second angel)
- And those who reject God who is love and His law of love, and prefer the beastly methods of human imposed law constructs, and mark themselves in their minds by believing and promoting the methods of coercion, or mark themselves by their works of practicing the methods of coercion, will ultimately die of their terminal and unhealed selfish condition. (third angel)
- Why is it the right arm of the message and not the message?
 - Because the laws of health are design laws, nothing reveals design law better than the laws of health and how violations of the laws of health result in pain, suffering and death to the unhealthy, and that doctors don't have to have tribunals and inflict punishments upon their patients for breaking the laws of health. But healing the body is not the same as saving the soul and thus the health message is the right arm, not the gospel itself. God wants to heal the mind, cleanse the heart, purify the character and that is what happens when the true gospel message—that God is not like Satan says, that God is not the source of pain, suffering and death, that God is love and that through Christ God is reconciling, restoring, and healing the world back into unity with Himself.

THURSDAY

What is the balance between:

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

and passages like this:

- Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. Rev 3:20
- Parable of the lost sheep and lost coin

Are we to seek to be saved, or is God seeking to save us? What is the balance? What is meant? Who seeks first?

- But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Rom 5:8
- Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? Rom 2:4
- John 3:16

Salvation is a cooperative effort between God and sinful humans. Sinful humanity could do nothing to heal, fix, save or cure ourselves. Thus, God sought to save us.



- Immediately, in Eden God went after Adam and Eve.
- God began interceding with the powers of darkness, holding Satan in check,
- God intercedes in the hearts and minds of sinners to convict, draw, woo,
- And He sent Jesus to intercede in the natural course of sin, fixing what Adam broke and creating a Remedy to heal and restore us.

But, we each must choose to accept God's call, to cooperate, to seek after God and God's methods.

We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}

There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies-- divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding,** but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . .** . Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}

And he who seeks to give light to others will himself be blessed. "There shall be showers of blessing." "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." Proverbs 11:25. **God could have reached His object in saving sinners without our aid; but in order for us to develop a character like Christ's, we must share in His work.** In order to enter into His joy,--the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice,--we must participate in His labors for their redemption. {DA 142.2}

This is design law; by beholding we are change, and the law of exertion, and the law of liberty and the law of love all together here. God cannot change a person without the freewill participation of that person, but a sinner has no ability on their own to change and heal themselves. It is a partnership with God, through Jesus. Thus Jesus said we are to take His yoke upon us. A yoke binds to together to share the work!

Jesus would have them lay aside this yoke of bondage, and **take upon them his yoke of love,** that they may learn to be meek and lowly in heart. The weakest soul, wearing Christ's yoke, bearing his burden, may become strong in his grace, and he will find the yoke easy, the burden light. {ST, January 19, 1891 par. 5}



FRIDAY Discuss question 3

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

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The Role of the Church in the Community Lesson 12 3Q 2016 Urban Ministry in the End Time

Lisa Wright, an online listener, emailed me this week with a Bible quote regarding the discussion we had on the fear of the Lord in class last week:

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." Proverbs 4:7. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Psalm 111:10. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." Proverbs 8:13. {PK 34.2}

This is an excellent method of discernment, in addition to all the evidence we gave in class last week that to fear the Lord does not mean to be afraid, here is a Bible reference with an excellent definition. To fear the Lord is to be in awe of Him such that you hate everything that is opposed to Him and His character of love!

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, "The three angels'..." Can someone tell me what the three angels messages are? What they mean?

Here is a description from EGW, one of the founders of the SDA church:

The proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages has been located by the Word of Inspiration... {CTr 338.2}

The first and second messages [Revelation 14:6-8] were given in 1843 and 1844, and we are now under the proclamation of the third; but all three of the messages are still to be proclaimed. It is just as essential now as ever before that they shall be repeated to those who are seeking for the truth. By pen and voice we are to sound the proclamation, showing their order and the application of the prophecies that bring us to the third angel's message. There cannot be a third without the first and second. . . . {CTr 338.3}

"Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people.⁷ He said in a loud voice, 'Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.'" This message, if heeded, **will call the attention of every nation and kindred and tongue and people to a close examination of the Word, and to the true light in regard to the power that has changed the seventh-day Sabbath to a spurious sabbath.** . . . The Sabbath memorial, declaring who



the living God is, the **Creator** of the heavens and the earth, has been torn down, and a spurious sabbath has been given to the world in its place. **Thus a breach has been made in the law of God...** {CTr 338.5}

In the first angel's message people are called upon **to worship God, our Creator**, who made the world and all things that are therein. . . The message proclaimed by the angel flying in the midst of heaven **is the everlasting gospel**, the same gospel that was declared in Eden when God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." Manuscript 32, 1896 (Manuscript Releases, vol. 17, pp. 6, 7). {CTr 338.6}

What did you hear?

First question are we now in the time of the three angels? Or are we in the time of the fourth angel? What is the fourth angel?

Revelation 18:1-3:

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. ² And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying,

Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen,
And is become the habitation of devils,
And the hold of every foul spirit,
And a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

³ For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication,
And the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her,
And the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

And from EGW:

The three angels' messages are to be combined, giving their threefold light to the world. In the Revelation, John says, "I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory."... **This represents the giving of the last and threefold message of warning to the world.** {Mar 173.5}

Revelation 18 points to the time when, as the result of rejecting the threefold warning of Revelation 14:6-12, the church will have fully reached the condition foretold by the second angel, and the people of God still in Babylon will be **called upon to separate from her communion. This message is the last that will ever be given to the world**; and it will accomplish its work. When those that "believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:12), **shall be left to receive strong delusion** and to believe a lie, then the **light of truth will shine upon all whose hearts are open to receive it**,



and all the children of the Lord that remain in Babylon will heed the call: "Come out of her, my people" (Revelation 18:4). {Mar 173.6}

The light that we have upon the third angel's message is the true light. The mark of the beast is exactly what it has been proclaimed to be. **All in regard to this matter is not yet understood, and will not be understood until the unrolling of the scroll,** but a most solemn work is to be accomplished in our world. {CTr 350}

So, while we are to give the message of the 3 angels, that message was originally given over a century ago, and Revelation describes its original presentation in Revelation 14. But, in Revelation 18, that message is to be given again—a combined message in which all the pieces fit together in a way not previously given, and which result in a coming out of the systems that misrepresent God.

So, what is the message for today? What are the matters regarding the three angels that were not yet understood in EGW's day?

What is the message to call people out, what message are people to recognize and see?

- That God is Creator, Designer, Builder of reality and His laws are the laws upon which reality is built. We are to give glory to Him, by being healed in our characters to be like Him and live out His law of love, because the time in human history has come for human beings to make a right judgment about God! (first angel)
- The other churches and religions of the world are fallen into a system of imposed law, arbitrary rules and legal theology with a punishing God, just like Babylon; it is a system that doesn't make sense and is confusing. And it is this *POWER* (the power of imposed law) that changed the Sabbath. This is the issue—what God do we serve, the God who creates and whose law is design protocol, or the god who is a dictator and whose laws are no different than human laws, imposed rules coercively enforced. This is the issue of which the Sabbath is only a sign, not the specific problem. We are to come out of her. (second angel)
- And those who reject the God who is love and His law of love, and prefer the beastly methods of human imposed law constructs, and mark themselves in their minds by believing and promoting the methods of coercion, or mark themselves by their works of practicing the methods of coercion, will ultimately die of their terminal and unhealed selfish condition—regardless of which day they worship upon. (third angel)

Read first paragraph, "Cities bring together..." Does it depend on the city? Do you think there is greater tolerance for new ideas in Mecca or Tehran?

What is the message the SDA church is to take to the world?



Does the corporate SDA church today take a message to the world that is different than the message found in any other evangelical church? If so how?

Was the SDA church founded to take a picture of God to the world and His law to the world that is different than what is found in other religions, including other Christian religions? How?

But has the SDA church become infected with the same false law construct, and therefore has ended up presenting the same distorted view of God as the rest of the world? To the degree we present penal substitution, with God's law as imposed and God as the source of imposed punishment, requiring legal payment not to kill us, we present the same infection as every other false religion.

But is there a remnant group of people who have remained loyal to the testimony of Jesus, the testimony Jesus gave about His Father, "if you have seen me you have seen the Father" and who have come back to worship Him who made the heaven, earth and sea? They worship the Creator, Designer and Builder by not only recognizing His memorial to Creation, but actually living in harmony with His design for life and thus they give Him glory by revealing His character of love in their lives? They present the truth in love and leave others free—they never use coercion. They never seek to get governments to enforce their religious views on others!

In the second paragraph, talking about Paul, the lesson states, "He taught in the synagogue until he was kicked out, and then he started a house church in the home of a believer."

Why was he kicked out? What was Paul doing that caused them to kick him out? Was he denying the existence of God? Was he denying Moses or anything Moses taught? What was the reason they kicked him out? Was he upsetting their traditions and traditional interpretations of Scripture?

Is this unusual today? Or is it common that when people bring truth to church that is contrary to long held tradition, that most of the time people reject the truth and kick out those bringing it?

MONDAY

Second paragraph states, "In the city, there is more of everything—more people more buildings, more traffic, and more problems."

Perhaps I show my conditioning as a psychiatrist and am being too picky. But I am very sensitive to absolutists thinking and all or nothing statements, and I know the lessons author's meant nothing untoward by it, but when I read the statement about more of everything in the city, I thought, *more fields? more farmers? more cattle and sheep? more trees? more wildlife? more nature walks? more fresh air? more quiet places?*

The lesson rightly points out that our world is a hurting place, groaning under the weight of sin.



Do we get numb to the pain, suffering, hurt? How must God feel every day? When I watch something on TV that portrays some of the evil that has been perpetrated throughout history I often think how hard it must be for God to see it, whether it is:

- The Old Testament slavery, captivity, brutality
- The Crucifixion of Christ
- The martyrs throughout history
- The Crusades
- The Witch Trials
- The Holocaust
- Or wars, gang violence, sexual predators and trafficking of people

I just get sick and think, how God's heart must ache. How God must long to bring an end. But God waits; waiting for a people to get ready, waiting for a group who actually knows Him so they can effectively take the Remedy to sin to the world.

Revelation 7 describes the angel from the East telling the four angels to hold until an event happens—until God's spokespersons are sealed in their foreheads. This represents a group of people coming to the truth about God, His methods and His design law for life, and becoming so settled into this truth both cognitively—in their understanding—but also in their character, in what they love and practice, that nothing can shake them from it. And when this happens, then the four winds are loosed, which cause the most horrible upheaval in nature and governments, which shake the sleeping world out of its slumber and God's spokespersons present the truth to them and from their witness a great multitude beyond counting responds and is saved.

So, what is God waiting for? For YOU! and for ME! For US, to become ready, settled, so that we can be His witnesses, to effectively tell the truth about Him to the world. Then the end will come!

This is also the message of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

- What is the sanctuary? You and me
- What contaminated it? Lies about God (remember Paul's description in Thessalonians that a man of sin would arise and set himself up in God's temple proclaiming himself to be God.)
- And how is it cleansed, by what? By the truth about God, revealed in Christ, which restores to trust, and in trust we open the heart and the Spirit comes in and takes all Christ achieved and reproduces in us a character like His—one that loves others more than self!

WEDNESDAY

The lesson points out that we are relational beings and that to be effective we must make it personal, we must relate and connect to others.



We have spoken a lot over the years of the law of love, the principle of giving, of other-centeredness which transcends relationships and is found in all aspects of creation, from the air we breathe, water we drink and food we eat.

But I have been thinking more about this and have come to realize that there is more yet to the power of love, the giving of ourselves, the purposeful choice to care for another, the focused, willful good intention toward another. This love of the will, the love coming from the self, the actual real conscious concern for another is not only part of God's healing plan, but vital to it. It is the avenue, the conduit through which God's healing love flows from God to us and out from us to others.

Remember what Jesus said to the woman at the well?

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." Jn 4:13,14

The water of life is a metaphor for love—when we experience God's love, being loved it changes us and overflows and fills us and we love others.

The power of love was in all Christ's healing, and only by partaking of that love, through faith, can we be instruments for His work. If we neglect to link ourselves in divine connection with Christ, the current of life-giving energy cannot flow in rich streams from us to the people. There were places where the Saviour Himself could not do many mighty works because of their unbelief. So now unbelief separates the church from her divine Helper. Her hold upon eternal realities is weak. By her lack of faith, God is disappointed and robbed of His glory. {Counsels on Health 31.3}

What do you hear? What is the power of love? Is the power of love and the current of life-giving energy the same?

Consider this quotation:

Love is power. Intellectual and moral strength are involved in this principle, and cannot be separated from it. The power of wealth has a tendency to corrupt and destroy; the power of force is strong to do hurt; **but the excellence and value of pure love consist in its efficiency to do good, and to do nothing else than good.** {Letters to Young Lovers 31.3}

Whatsoever is done out of pure love, be it ever so little or contemptible in the sight of men, **is wholly fruitful;** for God regards more with how much love one works than the amount he does. {LYL 32.1}



Love is of God. The unconverted heart cannot originate nor produce this plant of heavenly growth, which lives and flourishes only where Christ reigns.... {LYL 32.2}

Love works not for profit nor reward; yet God has ordained that great gain shall be the certain result of every labor of love. It is diffusive in its nature and quiet in its operation, yet strong and mighty in its purpose to overcome great evils. It is melting and transforming in its influence, and will take hold of the lives of the sinful and affect their hearts when every other means has proved unsuccessful. {LYL 32.3}

Wherever the power of intellect, of authority, or of force is employed, and love is not manifestly present, the affections and will of those whom we seek to reach assume a defensive, repelling position, and their strength of resistance is increased. {LYL 33.1}

Pure love is simple in its operations, and is distinct from any other principle of action. The love of influence and the desire for the esteem of others may produce a well-ordered life and frequently a blameless conversation. Self-respect may lead us to avoid the appearance of evil. A selfish heart may perform generous actions, acknowledge the present truth, and express humility and affection in an outward manner, yet the motives may be deceptive and impure; the actions that flow from such a heart may be destitute of the savor of life and the fruits of true holiness, being destitute of the principles of pure love. {LYL 33.2}

Love should be cherished and cultivated, for its influence is divine. {LYL 33.3}

What do you hear? What is being described? Is love more than sentiment?

We discussed quantum entanglement, and that all things in the universe are connected by invisible strings, and thus we can affect others at any distance, through the quantum connections. But, it seems this influence requires love and other-centered intention to be actionable.

Now is there science to support this? Remember the DNA experiments we discussed a few weeks back?

An interesting study was done by Dr. Rollin McCraty and colleagues. They had individuals trained to focus their intention with love and goodwill. They took human DNA from placentas and had the trained individuals focus with love and good will on vials containing the human DNA with the intention to either have the DNA wind itself tighter or to unwind looser. This can be measured by how much UV light the vials absorb. The more tightly wound the more light is absorbed. They were able to measure a 25% change in DNA conformation from these mental intention.

Now it gets more interesting—when the individuals would generate the same feelings of love and good will, but not focus attention on changing the DNA configuration, no change in the DNA occurred. And even more profound—when they focused intention but without love and goodwill, no DNA change occurred. It required both a focused intention AND the mobilization of love and



goodwill emotions. How could they tell if the participants were generating love and goodwill emotions? By measuring heart rate variability, love emotions produce coherence, whereas hate, anger, negative emotions produce large fluctuations.

In a follow on study, to determine if this was perhaps a general electromagnetic field effect, or something that was more focused. Researchers had three vials with the DNA placed side by side and had the participants focus on changing the DNA conformation in two of the vials, but not the third—and—only the two the participants focused on showed the DNA change. Finally, researches had five different experiments in which the DNA vials were a half mile from the participants, and the same DNA changes occurred when the participants focused with intent and love. All of these studies reached statistical significant levels of change. (McCraty, 2003 *Modulation of DNA conformation by heart-focused intention* p. 6, Boulder Creek, CA: Institute of HeartMath)

Do you find this a little too bizarre to think it could be real? Consider this quote from EGW:

The striking feature of **divine operations** is the accomplishment of the greatest work that can be done in our world by very simple means. It is God's plan that **every part of His government shall depend on every other part, the whole as a wheel within a wheel**, working with entire harmony. He moves upon human forces, causing His Spirit to touch **invisible chords, and the vibration rings to the extremity of the universe.**--Manuscript 22, 1897. {Ev 93.1}

When we think about how love works, does it require the active, willful participation of intelligent beings? And what is the result on the person who is the agent of love?

Notice this quote:

And he who seeks to give light to others will himself be blessed. "There shall be showers of blessing." "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." Proverbs 11:25. **God could have reached His object in saving sinners without our aid; but in order for us to develop a character like Christ's, we must share in His work.** In order to enter into His joy,--the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice,--we must participate in His labors for their redemption. {DA 142}

This is how we are changed—by beholding Christ we are won to trust, in trust we open the heart and partake of His love, His presence, and then this love flows out from us to others. And then we become agents for good in the world.

However, we only are effective as we are connected to Christ and the love flows outward. If we disconnect from Christ, and instead of approaching relationships with love to give, we approach relationships with fear, insecurity, in need, then we often end up taking instead of giving...



Multiple studies show that people who give of themselves—volunteer—to help others, live longer, have less disability, less depression, less dementia and stay out of nursing homes longer than those who do not volunteer. Love is the life blood, the energy upon which life is built in God’s universe. Harmony with it is healing, breaking love is destructive.

TUESDAY

Sewing and Reaping—the lesson talks about methods to effectively reach people and uses the metaphor of farming. It points out that not all “soil” is the same. Some soil needs to have trees removed, other rocks, other soil is depleted of various nutrients and needs fertilizing etc.

How do we apply this metaphor to evangelism?

In my residency I was taught the same principle with a different metaphor, the metaphor of golf. In golf there is a rule: you play the ball where it lies. What this means for the non-golfers, is that you can’t move the ball out of the rough, or the sand or from behind a tree to a better position to give yourself an easier shot. Likewise, we start with people where they are. And it is important to use the proper approach.

In golf, if the ball is in the rough or sand it is not a good idea to use a driver or putter, it is better to use the club appropriate for the situation. Likewise, when dealing with people, we must use the intervention that is best for where they are, not the intervention we are the most practiced at using.

And in golf our goal is to move the ball in a positive direction, so too with people we do have a goal to move people to bring about a change so they don’t remain in the same position as where we found them. But the most effective way to do that is to accurately assess them, their situation, their mindset, their biases, their way of thinking, the obstacles in their mind that obstructs the truth from reaching them and then approaching them with the most effective intervention available to you.

Any examples of different types of soil?

- What about a person who has never heard of God, versus a professor of theology teaching a false view of God?
- What about a person who has rejected God because of some trauma or bad experience in their life?
- What about a person who was raised in a legal religion, practices all the rules, but only found fear, insecurity and problems in life that the rules didn’t answer?
- What about those with sickness that has not gotten better despite praying for relief?
- What about those so busy with life they don’t have time for religion?
- What about those who believe in science and have concluded God doesn’t exist?



THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, “According to the Word, Christ’s death was universal: it encompassed all humanity, from Adam and Eve down and all who followed.”

What does this mean?

While they use the term universal, they seem to confine it to humanity. But, Col 1:19,20 states:

God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

So the entire universe was involved in Christ’s victory at the cross. But what does it mean that Christ’s death encompassed all humanity?

Will all be saved?

Here is Romans 5:12-19 from *The Remedy*:

¹²Therefore, the infection of distrust of God—which deformed humanity's heart and mind with selfishness and fear, and which results only in death—infected the human race when Adam accepted Satan's lies about God and broke trust with him. This infection of fear and selfishness is inherited by all human beings, so all are born infected. ¹³This is revealed by the fact that before the written law was given, the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness was already present in the world. But this infection of distrust, fear and selfishness is not diagnosable without the law. ¹⁴Nevertheless, even without being diagnosed as infected with this terminal condition, humans still died, all the way from the time of Adam to Moses—even those who did not break a specific command, like Adam did—revealing that the problem is the infected state of our minds and not a legal issue with God. Adam, the first man, being the conduit through which the infection entered humanity, also represents the one man who is the conduit of the antidote that cures all those who accept it.

¹⁵But the gift of the antidote is not like the infection. For if everyone is born infected with a terminal condition because of the choice of Adam, how incredibly effective must the antidote supplied by Christ be, since it cures all who take it! ¹⁶Again, the gift of the antidote is not like the result of the breach of trust. Adam's breach of trust infected all humanity, therefore all humanity is diagnosed as sick and dying. This occurred without each individual choosing to be infected; but the antidote, which came after humanity had been severely damaged and deformed by selfishness and sin, brought cleansing, purification, health, and complete restoration. ¹⁷If—by the choice of one man's distrust—selfishness and death permeated all



humanity, how much more will those who accept the Remedy that Christ has achieved experience restored trust and complete healing to live forever with God!

¹⁸Therefore, just as Adam's distrust infected humanity with the fatal condition of fear and selfishness, so too Christ's choice to sacrifice self achieved the life-giving Remedy for all humanity.¹⁹Just as Adam's choice infected the human race with a terminal condition, so too Christ's perfect life has brought the Remedy to heal all who accept it.

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

September 15-17: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC National Conference in Dallas, TX. For more info, see AACC.net

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Somerset West, South Africa

November 4: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Fall Summit at the Calvary Chapel in Naperville, IL.



2016 Q3 The Role of the Church in the Community Lesson 13 How Shall We Wait?

SABBATH

The bottom of the lesson states, “Our Lord is coming back, that we know. The crucial issue for us is: What are we doing while we wait? On that answer hangs the destiny of our souls.”

Are they suggesting that our salvation is dependent on what we are doing?

Or are they suggesting that our salvation depends on our attitude/relationship toward God and our attitude/relationship toward God determines the destiny of our souls and also directs what we do with our lives?

What do they mean by the “wait”? Do we often think of the Lord’s return in such terms: “Waiting for the Lord to return” “The long delay” etc.?

I know I have thought this way—but this lesson has caused me to rethink. Can you think of another way to think about this issue?

Where is the focus when we think about waiting? Does that put the focus on us, and does it suggest a certain inconvenience to us, perhaps suggest an idea of God not being considerate, or God not caring?

I think this idea of the Lord delaying His return—of the Lord waiting, subtly introduces a multiplicity of ideas that are not healthy to our minds and our relationship with God.

- Is it possible the idea of God waiting imbeds the idea that He could have come sooner if He wanted to but *HE* has chosen to delay His return?
- Such an idea suggests an arbitrary quality to God. He just hasn’t “chosen” to return yet, and whenever He gets around to choosing to, then He will come. This type of thinking is part of the entire imposed law view of God—a God who makes up rules and does what He wants because He is powerful.
- This idea is imbedded in much of the theologies who promote the sovereignty of God. Now, let’s be clear—God is absolutely sovereign—no question about that at all. However, when one promotes sovereignty through imposed law, one gets an arbitrary dictator.
- God’s sovereignty is always manifested in harmony with His own character and is worked out through His laws, design protocols for which He constructed all reality to operate.

So, if we think through design law view, then what?

If a doctor treats a person with a broken bone and puts them in a cast, does the doctor wait to take the cast off? For what is the doctor waiting? Is the wait on the doctor’s part a delay, an arbitrary decision,



or is there a reason the doctor waits? What reason? For the bone to heal...is there a lesson in this for why God waits to return today?

Remember what Peter wrote:

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 2Pet 3:9

What does this sound like? Is God determining the timeline, or are we?

God is right on schedule and will come exactly when He has always planned and known He would return.

But, then, is there some role we have in impacting the timeline of Christ's return?

Can a patient by cooperating with their doctor and following the doctor's instructions hasten the healing process? Does the patient who follows the doctor's instructions heal themselves? Can a patient who resists the doctor, is non-compliant, who doesn't follow the instructions delay the healing process?

Is there a role we have to play in hastening the day?

What is that role? What can we do specifically?

- First and foremost cooperate with God for our own healing of mind and heart—stay connected with God daily, increase your knowledge, understanding and experience with God, practice His methods
- Second, share what you know about God with others

SUNDAY

The lesson is about Matthew 24:4-31, so let's read these passages and discuss them—from *The Remedy*:

⁴ Jesus answered: "Be careful to think for yourselves so that no one fools you,⁵ for over the years, there will be many people who arise claiming they come from me, or represent me, or even claiming they are 'the Messiah, Christ returned.' And many who don't think for themselves will be taken in by their charisma.

[Remember David Koresh, Jim Jones, will there be others?]

⁶ Before the end, there will be wars and murmurings of war, but don't be afraid: such things will happen; but the end comes later.⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom will war against kingdom.



[To what is this referring? The downfall of Rome, the Crusades, the Napoleonic wars, WWI, WWII?]

Nature will suffer as famines, earthquakes, and other natural disasters occur around the world;

[Has this occurred? Do we see natural disasters increasing? What is the reason for this? Is God using His power to inflict this? Or, are the hearts of humans turning away from God and thus closing out God's Spirit? And thus God who sustains all things is slowly letting go and Satanic forces are gaining more access to the world and nature is falling apart? Could human activity also be influencing the changes in nature? Could the exploitation of nature, the use of fossil fuels, the impact of manmade chemicals, toxins, genetic manipulations, species extinctions contribute to these events?]

⁸but just as a woman in labor experiences birth pains that increase in intensity and frequency right up until delivery, so too these events are just the beginning of the labor pains.

[What does this mean? When a woman goes into labor does she typically say, "Oh no! Can't we wait another nine months before we deliver this baby?" Does the woman know the labor will be painful? But does she still want to go through it? Why? Because she knows labor results in DELIVERY! Do we have such an attitude when we see the events corresponding to the labor pains occurring in the world? Do we get excited that delivery is approaching, or do we pray for a delay? And if we are praying for a delay, why are we distraught that God is delaying?]

⁹ "You will be abused, rejected, tortured and executed, and you will be hated throughout the world because of me.

[Has this occurred, when in history? Ever since Christ was here. The Apostles and early church experienced this—many were martyred. Those true to God in the Dark Ages and Middle Ages experienced persecution like this. In the Renaissance those who brought truth to bear were persecuted, and today around the world people are still being persecuted when the truth about God is presented.]

¹⁰During the time of persecution, many will lose heart and reject me and my methods, and even betray and hate each other and their family and friends.¹¹ Many false teachers and fraudulent spokespersons of God will appear and deceive vast numbers of people.

[When has this occurred? Also throughout history, but Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians, specifically warned of "the man of sin" who would arise and would set himself up in "God's temple proclaiming himself to be God." So I think here Jesus is most specifically referring to when the Christian church accepted Imperial Rome's view of God's law, began teaching imposed law views of God and began practicing the beastly methods of coercion—the Inquisition and burning people at the stake. Families did turn against families and inform to the Inquisitor.]

¹² Because selfishness and wickedness will increase, the love of most people will grow cold, [And the result of an imposed law construct results in various legal theories of atonement and views of God that crush love out of the heart. People, under the imposed law construct, will carry out the most horrible acts of cruelty in the name of their god. And look at the history of Christianity—Catholic and Protestant alike—both burned the others followers at the stake. In Europe wars between Protestants and Catholics raged



for hundreds of years. In America the Salem witch trials etc. Christians owned slaves, how could they? Because they were operating under imposed law and their love for other human beings was cold.]

¹³ but all those who stay faithful, practicing my methods of truth and love until the end, will be saved.

[Which means what? Will be healed—will be restored in character to be like Jesus. One cannot be restored to be like Jesus, which is being saved, unless one comes back to the truth about God, trusts Him, opens the heart, and then practices God's methods of love in their life.]

¹⁴ And the good news of the kingdom of love will be preached throughout the entire world—to all peoples—to provide evidence of God's true character and methods; and then the end will come.

[What is the message to lighten the world? The truth of God's character, methods and design law of love—the good news is about God! Has Christianity embraced and promoted this view of God, or instead even today do the vast majority of Christians embrace and teach a dictator view of God? Then there is a role for us to play in hastening the day of Christ's return—and that is? Actively working to take the truth about God and His design of love to the world!]

¹⁵ "So when you see 'the abomination that causes desolation,'-spoken of by Daniel-occupying the holy place, understand this:

[What is the abomination that causes desolation? It is the abomination of lies that desolate the hearts, minds, characters of God's Spirit Temple. First embodied in pagan Rome—the system of imposed law, coercively enforcing its way upon the world. Thus Jesus is first speaking of the time with Pagan Rome's soldiers stood around Jerusalem in AD 70 and destroyed the little theater—the Temple. And this Imperial Roman system eventually infected Christianity and Christianity itself became beastly practicing the same methods of force, coercion and destruction as Pagan Rome, thereby infecting the minds of human beings—the Spirit Temple—with the false law construct, causing terrible desolation throughout the entire world. What is more abominable—the destruction of a city—buildings and even killing people—destroying their bodies, or the destruction of the image of God in the human being—destroying souls? Remember MT 10:28?]

¹⁶ Those who are in Judea should flee to the mountains.¹⁷ Don't waste time trying to gather your things, but leave immediately.¹⁸ If you're outside, flee; don't even go inside for a coat.¹⁹ It will be a horrible time, especially for pregnant women and nursing mothers!²⁰ Pray that you will not have to flee in the winter or on the Sabbath,

[To when is this referring? To AD 70 primarily, warning the Christians in Jerusalem to be ready to flee when the Roman soldiers came, which they did. But also having an application to those who recognize that Israel was a lesson book, an object lesson for eternal realities. And as the Temple in Jerusalem was a symbol of the Spirit Temple, Israel was representative of God's true people—His agents on earth. And as Israel accepted the false view of God and rejected Christ and thus were abandoned to their



fate and Rome came and destroyed Jerusalem, there is the warning to Christians that the church would become infected with the same false view of God and end up practicing the same methods and would destroy the minds of humans. Thus be watchful and be ready to flee Jerusalem when the soldiers arrive, and be ready to flee from the institutional church when pagan Rome's imperial law ideas and teachings infect and control it.]

²¹ for that time of trouble will be the worst the world has ever seen, or will ever see.²² If God didn't intervene to stop it, no one would live through it; but for the sake of those who have partaken of the Remedy, God will shorten those troubled times.

[To when is this referring? Again to both times—inside Jerusalem during the siege of AD 70 it was horrible and stands again as an object lesson to the greater application. The greater fulfillment was the 1260 years from AD 538-1798 when the Christianity was not only infected with the imposed law concept of fallen sinful human beings, but was also empowered to practice those methods of coercion. Thus just as in Jerusalem people starved for lack of physical food, in the church people starved for lack of spiritual food, just as people were slaughtered in Jerusalem, people were slaughtered in the church. Just as the Temple in Jerusalem was torn down by the assault of a pagan army, so too the Spirit Temple was torn down by the assault of pagan ideas about God, just as both Jesus and Paul foretold.]

²³ At that time in history, if anyone proclaims, 'Look, the Messiah or Savior is here!' or 'There is the Savior!'—don't believe it,²⁴ for false messiahs and false apostles will appear around the world—some even performing miraculous signs in order to deceive those who don't think for themselves. Their counterfeit will be so close to the true that it will almost dupe those who have partaken of the Remedy.²⁵ So remember that I have warned you before it happens: Be prepared!²⁶ If anyone tells you, 'The Messiah is in wilderness near Palestine,' don't go there; or 'The Savior can be found in secret meetings,' or 'His coming is a secret event'—don't believe it.

[To what is this referring? Not only in the false individuals, but what about the teachings of finding Christ in secret meetings, or that His second coming will be a secret event?]

²⁷ For the coming of the Son of Man will be visible to the entire world, just like sunlight dawns in the east and shines to the west, covering the entire planet.²⁸ You can be certain that you will not find the Son of Man where people seek to speak with the dead. Think of vultures eating corpses, for that is what's happening there.

[To what and when is this referring? To the time after 1798, Christ's return happens after the 1260 years, and there will be a rise in spiritualism and secret meetings where people seek to speak to the dead. Has this happened?]

²⁹ "As soon as those days of trouble are over,

[What days of trouble? The 1260 years which ended in 1798]

'light from the sun and moon will no longer be seen as evidence of God's creatorship, but their light will be darkened by evolutionism. The stars in heaven will be disregarded as evidence of the Creator, and the power of heaven will be shaken out of the land and out of the hearts of people.'



²This rendering is clearly interpretive, intended to cause the reader to think. Which sign would be more helpful to God's people on earth: a single day on which in one small section of the globe the sun and moon darken and some years later there is a meteor shower (as some Christian groups suggest), or a global change in the minds of people, in which God's celestial beacons marking His Creatorship are cast aside? But for those preferring a more traditional reading, this is an alternative rendering: "As soon as those events are over, 'the sun and moon will not give their normal light, stars will fall from the sky, and the power of heaven will be shaken.'"

³⁰ "At that time,

[what time? The time after the above events have occurred; and are we living in that time?]

the Son of Man will appear in the sky: Everyone will see him, and all the nations of this selfish world will be grief-stricken. They will see the Son of Man arriving amongst the clouds of the sky, with the unveiled power and splendor of infinite love and truth.³¹ And with the loud blast of a trumpet, he will direct his angels to gather all those who have partaken of the Remedy, from the entire world—from one end of the globe to the other.

Can you see how Christ wove together events for Jerusalem but also for the history of the entire planet? How was this possible? Because Israel was designed by God to be an object lesson to the entire world and the events in their history have lessons for a larger application.

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read 2 Peter 3, from *The Remedy*:

¹My dear friends, this is the second letter I have written to you. These letters are to motivate you to take control of your minds and engage in healthy thinking.

[Do we have a role to play in the healing of our minds and characters? What? We must choose—what must we choose? First to evaluate the evidence about God and choose whether we will trust Him or not—i.e. choose to open the heart in trust and invite God in. Then, in trust, we must choose to say no to temptation; or another way to say it: we must choose to do that which is right, healthy, reasonable, that which is in harmony with God's methods. It is our choice, and when we make the choice, THEN we receive divine power to succeed and carry out the choice. And this love relationship with God results in our transformation and we become conduits of His love as we give to others.]

²I want you to remember the truths recorded in the past by God's spokespersons and the instructions given you by our Lord and Savior through his ambassadors.

³First of all, understand and don't be surprised that in the last days, scoffers and doubters will arise: they will prefer the sickness of selfishness while ridiculing the cure, labeling the infection of selfishness as 'normal.' ⁴They will say, "Survival-of-the-fittest is the way the universe runs: this is why we are here—not because of divine creation. Where is this so-called God? Where is the coming he promised? Ever since human history has been recorded, the principles of evolution have governed life, and all things continue just as they always have."

⁵But these scoffers deliberately deny the truth and ignore the fact that long ago, by God's Word, the world was created out of water and with water.⁶They reject the fact that it was by



these same waters that a flood destroyed the world,⁷ and they refuse to believe that the same Word has testified that the present world, which is kept for the day of final diagnosis and the elimination of everyone and everything deviant from God's design, will be destroyed by fire.

[Have we seen this transpiring? Are we living in an age when scoffers have arisen, when people doubt the existence of God, when people doubt the Biblical account of a flood, when people teach naturalistic explanations for life and when people reject the idea that there is anything wrong with the condition of humankind? Can we have confidence that a day is coming when all deviations from God's design will be eliminated? Do you prefer final diagnosis, or judgment? Why did I choose diagnosis rather than judgment? Is a diagnosis a judgment? Yes, but upon which law system does diagnosis work? Design law, thus it leads the mind to realize God's judgment is merely His accurate diagnosis of the true condition of each person's heart/character. What do you understand the fire to be?]

⁸But don't forget the true nature of God's kingdom of love. Understand that the Lord lives outside the constraints of time, and with him a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day.⁹There is no delay on his part in keeping his promise to return: he is simply waiting for what he has always been waiting for—the Remedy to be taken to the entire world so that none who remain curable will be lost.

[If there is no delay, why do we speak of a delay and teach God has delayed? Do we undermine confidence in God by teaching He has delayed His return? And what about Satan? If God is waiting for this, what would Satan work to do? To stop it, but how? By getting people to reject God and turn to evolutionary thinking, and for those who remain motivated to take a message from God to the world to get them to take a false message—a message that actually misrepresents God as a dictator and the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death—the imperial dictator view of God.]

¹⁰But the Lord's return—coming suddenly like a thief—will surprise many people: There will be a loud roar and the sky will disappear; the very elements will melt in the intense heat, and the entire planet will be laid bare.

¹¹Since everything the world values will end in this way, what kind of people are you to be? Each person must partake of the Remedy and be healed, live a life that loves others and honors God¹² as you anticipate our Lord's return, and work to speed his coming.

[Does this mean we have a role to play? Can we speed His coming? How? By partaking of Christ and being transformed in our own beings, and then taking the true picture of God to the world!]

On that day, the atmosphere of selfishness will be consumed by fire, and the very elements contaminated by sin will melt in the intense heat.¹³But just as promised, Jesus will make a new atmosphere and an entirely new earth—free from disease and defect, free from the infection of selfishness—the eternal home of the healed.

[Is Peter weaving together the second coming and the return after the 1000 years?]

¹⁴So please, my dear friends: Since you long for the day our Lord returns, cooperate in every way with God's healing plan so that you will be found without any defect—totally cured and



restored to complete unity with him.¹⁵ Remember that our Lord's patience gives time for the Remedy to spread and healing to occur, just as our dear brother Paul explained in his letters—as God revealed it to him.¹⁶ Paul writes about God's Remedy and healing plan in all his letters, but his letters contain some technical details and intricate illustrations and thus can be difficult to understand. And those who don't understand God's healing plan distort Paul's writings—as they do the other Scriptures—to misrepresent God.

[How has this happened? By using Paul to promote an imposed law construct with penal legal theologies.]

Sadly, without the Remedy, it results in their own destruction.

¹⁷Therefore, my dear friends, since you know all of this, stay sharp and think for yourselves so that you won't be seduced into false theologies by people who deviate from God's law of love and have your minds re-infected with distortions about God.¹⁸ Instead, grow stronger every day in the grace and truth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let him be glorified now and forever! Amen.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church...” What is this in practical terms?

- What is the gospel—good news? It is the good news about God, that God is not an imperial dictator, but the Creator who constructed reality to operate in harmony with His character of love. That God is not the source of inflicted pain and death, but that death comes from breaking away from God and His design, and that God has been working throughout all human history to heal and restore human beings and prevent death.
- What are the three angels? Are these actual angelic beings, or symbolic of a movement with a message from heaven that is to go to the entire world?
- Can you state the message of the three angels?
 - That God is Creator, Designer, Builder of reality and His laws are the laws upon which reality is built. We are to give glory to Him, by being healed in our characters to be like Him and live out His law of love, because the time in human history has come for human beings to make a right judgment about God! (first angel)
 - The other churches and religions of the world are fallen into a system of imposed law, arbitrary rules and legal theology with a punishing God, just like Babylon; it is a system that doesn't make sense and is confusing. And it is this *POWER* (the power of imposed law) that changed the Sabbath. This is the issue—what God do we serve, the God who creates and whose law is design protocol, or the god who is a dictator and whose laws are no different than human laws, imposed rules coercively enforced. This is the issue of which the Sabbath is only a sign, not the specific problem. We are to come out of her. (second angel)
 - And those who reject the God who is love and His law of love, and prefer the beastly methods of human imposed law constructs, and mark themselves in their minds by believing and promoting the methods of coercion, or mark themselves by their works of



practicing the methods of coercion, will ultimately die of their terminal and unhealed selfish condition—regardless of which day they worship upon. (third angel)

- Who are the remnant? Those that keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus? What does this mean?
 - What are the commandments of God? To love the Lord with all one's being and neighbor as self
 - What is the testimony of Jesus? The same as that which inspired the prophets, which is the truth about God—that God is exactly as Jesus revealed Him to be.
 - So the remnant will be a group of people who arise in the world who love God and others more than self, and who present the same picture of God as Jesus did, teaching the same methods of design law as Jesus did.

The lesson states, “This quarter began with the concept that Jesus wants to restore His image in humanity and empower us as His followers to be instruments of wholistic [sic] restoration in our communities.”

How? How does Jesus restore His image in humanity?

- First and foremost by His incarnation, taking humanity upon Himself, confronting Satan and the devil's temptation and choosing with His human mind/brain/will to say no to temptation and to love perfectly. Thus, in the person of Jesus God's image was restored into a human being.
- Secondly, by the Holy Spirit taking what Christ achieved and reproducing this character of love in all who trust God and allow Him into their hearts.

The bottom green section states, “ ‘Faith without works is dead.’ How have you discovered the reality of how closely linked faith and works are? In what ways do works increase your faith?”

Which law lens do you look through? Through imposed law lens this causes tension, penal/legal theologians go to great lengths to emphasize that our salvation has no work from us at all, it is all 100% done by Christ. They teach that all our personal sins were placed upon Christ and punished in Christ on the cross 2000 years ago. That in taking that legal punishment atonement was full and complete. But then state that if we don't work then we haven't been saved by the work of Christ. That our works are evidences of the being saved, but do nothing to contribute or merit God saving us, because all our works are contaminated with sin and God could not accept such polluted works.

Their point is that Christ needed to be legally punished by God and be sinless so that God would accept the legal payment to pay for our sins. And since our good works are contaminated by sin they can not be offered to God to pay or sin debt. Yet, after we accept the legal payment of Jesus to the Father so the Father will declare us to be righteous, even though we are not, we then must work because if we don't then we are not saved, even though we were already declared to be righteous by the substitutionary application of Christ's legal payment to our account.



When we come back to design law all this confusion and contradiction evaporates and the truth about faith and works harmonizes beautifully. Anyone want to explain it through design law?

Hebrews tells us that faith is the *substance* of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. The word *substance* comes from the Greek *hypostasis* which has two halves:

- hypo—which means under as in hypoglycemic, or hypotension
- stasis which means standing

This was translated into a Latin based word *substance* which has two halves:

- sub—which means under as in subway, submarine, subterranean
- stance—which means standing

And we can translate that to modern English as “faith is our *understanding*”

And understanding as two definitions, which both apply:

- our cognitive comprehension of God, His methods, trustworthiness
- our agreement with God—we have an understanding with Him

Example, a person gets infected with Anthrax and is sick in the ER. A doctor examines them and diagnoses them accurately and communicates the diagnosis to them. Then tells them, “I can heal you. I have a Remedy developed that will cure you and I will provide it to you at no cost. Do you trust me? If I provide you this Remedy will you take it and follow my instructions? Do we have an understanding?”

Faith is our *understanding* with God—our intelligent appreciation of who He is and our agreement with Him and His methods and to cooperate with Him in following His instructions—thus we work, we follow His instructions.

Does the patient who takes the medicine create their own cure? Do they save themselves? No! But will they be saved if they don’t enter into agreement with the doctor and work in harmony with him?

This is design law—this is how God works. This is how we work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Through Jesus Christ *alone* the Remedy to sin has been achieved and offered free of charge to everyone, but we much choose to trust God, and we must choose to partake of what Jesus provides, and we must choose to follow His instructions for our lives. Thus Jesus says:

Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

²⁹ Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” Jn 6:28,29

Here are some quotes from one of the founders of the SDA church describing this process:

- We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one**



another and with God. The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}

- **There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies--** divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding,** but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . .** . Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}
- And he who seeks to give light to others will himself be blessed. "There shall be showers of blessing." "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." Proverbs 11:25. **God could have reached His object in saving sinners without our aid; but in order for us to develop a character like Christ's, we must share in His work.** In order to enter into His joy,--the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice,--we must participate in His labors for their redemption. {DA 142.2}

WEDNESDAY

The first paragraph speaks of the metaphor of farming and states it is a patient process—what law does farming operate upon?

What lessons about salvation do we gain from farming? Farming works upon design law, one reaps what one sows. Further when we look at a field we don't know what is planted there until it grows up. Likewise we don't know what is in another person's heart.

Further, a field that is wild, uncultivated, can be cultivated and good seed can be planted in. So too, hearts that have not had the truth of God planted in can be sewn with God's truth and love.

The lesson in the second paragraph states, "The fact is, we don't know people's hearts. We don't know how the Holy Spirit has been working in their lives."

What does it mean in day to day application? Could it mean that there are people who have rejected God and church who are actually following the leading of the Holy Spirit? How?



Could it be that there are people who have only ever heard of an arbitrary dictator-like god that induces fear and contradicts the reality of God's true character as revealed in nature and thus they reject that god? Would doing so move them away from God or closing to Him?

The last sentence states, "And thought we are to be used by God in various capacities, in the end it is God alone who can bring about the conversion of a soul."

Any concerns about how this is stated? Could wrong ideas be inadvertently drawn from this?

For instance, if it is God alone who brings about the conversion of a soul, then why isn't everyone converted? If it is truly God alone, and everyone is not saved, then that would mean that God doesn't want everyone saved. So, is it God alone that brings about conversion? Or is it, as we read above, that God saves in cooperation with the one being converted?

THURSDAY

Read the third paragraph, "The second city..." What does it mean? Two cities, Jerusalem and Babylon, represent two groups of people. What is the demarcating differences in the two groups?

- Love versus selfishness
- Truth versus lies
- Freedom versus coercion

What about the commandments and faith in Jesus? Will many who find themselves part of Babylon claim they are commandment keepers and have faith in Jesus?

Remember Jesus said,

Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' MT 7:22,23

Could this include people who worship on the seventh day Sabbath? What makes the difference? Coming into a true knowledge of God and His character, which is understanding His character of love, His design law and how He operates such that we actually *know* Him.

The next paragraph states, "By the blood of the Lamb, the church's role in compassionate restoration has changed to jubilant celebration." What does this mean?

Is this referring to a legal payment of the blood of Christ to His Father who was offended by our sin? Or, is the blood referring to the perfect life of Christ, of which we must partake? Thus Jesus said:



“I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Jn 6:53

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

September 15-17: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC National Conference in Dallas, TX. For more info, see AACC.net

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Somerset West, South Africa

November 4: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Fall Summit at the Calvary Chapel in Naperville, IL.



2016 Q4 The Book of Job Lesson 1 (Lori Atkins)

The End

We are starting a new quarterly today and will be studying the book of Job over the next 13 weeks. The story of Job is very well-known – even to those not necessarily familiar with the Bible or Christianity. We kind of use Job as a benchmark when evaluating what other folks are going through...if someone experiences 1 hardship or trial after another, we equate them to Job, or if we see someone who is particularly long-suffering we say they have the patience of Job.

What comes to mind when you think of Job – the man? His story?

This has always been a very tough Bible book and story for me...am I the only one? Some actually think that the book is fiction or a parable like the Good Samaritan. Even the chronology of when the book was written and took place versus where it is placed sequentially in the Old Testament seems odd – however, there is significant evidence that Job actually lived from 1710-1500, and archaeology has shown that all the geographical and historical details in the Book of Job are accurate and reliable.

The Book of Job is the only one written in Old Hebrew among all the biblical scrolls found at Qumran, beside the books of Moses, and Moses is believed to be the author.

http://www.academia.edu/5613976/The_Book_of_Job_Chronological_Historical_and_Archaeological_Evidence

But without the Great Controversy perspective that I have now, I completely understand how easy it might be to misunderstand or misconstrue some of the concepts portrayed in this book. In fact, I found one very interesting commentary entitled, “Is the Book of Job a Parody?” Well that title intrigued me, so listen to what this author says:

“Sometimes I really do not like certain chapters of the Bible. Two of the worst chapters for me have always been Job 1-2. They tell the story of a good and righteous man who becomes the pawn in a little game of Russian Roulette between God and Satan. Job is the unwitting butt of a cosmic wager. While I do not believe that good and righteous people who love God will always have life turn out peachy keen, I nevertheless have a big problem with a God who uses humans the way that God uses Job in these two chapters. This is divine entrapment! What would you think of a parent who conspired with a drug dealer to sell drugs to the child and threaten them with killing their parents and siblings to see if the child will stay true the parent’s instruction to “Say no to drugs”? What kind of a sick parent would do that? What would you think of a husband who conspired with a friend to try to seduce his wife just to see if she really



loved him? What kind of a husband would do this? Yet this is what God and Satan conspire to do with Job. I'm sorry. I really do not like these chapters of the Bible." He concludes that "If one reads the Prologue of Job without awareness of the author's intent to [argue] against a perennial (recurrent/persistent/lasting) but perverse notion of God, the picture that emerges is precisely the one the author attempted to confute (disprove)!" In other words, Job 1-2 is a parody of the recurrent, persistent *false* view of God. It shows a forgetful God. A power-hungry God. A God who is so desirous of proving Himself right, that He plays around with humans lives, which mean nothing to Him, just to make a point. The author of the Book of Job is making fun of this popular and pervasive (but perverted) view of God in order to show us that our God, the God of the Bible, is not like this at all."

So what insight does our Great Controversy perspective give us when evaluating Job's backstory?

A quote from the book Education gives us this insight:

"Unselfishness, the principle of God's kingdom, is the principle that Satan hates; its very existence he denies. From the beginning of the great controversy he has endeavored to prove God's principles of action to be selfish, and he deals in the same way with all who serve God. To disprove Satan's claim is the work of Christ and of all who bear His name. It was to give in His own life an illustration of unselfishness that Jesus came in the form of humanity. And all who accept this principle are to be workers together with Him in demonstrating it in practical life. To choose the right because it is right; to stand for truth at the cost of suffering and sacrifice—"this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord." Isaiah 54:17.

Very early in the history of the world is given the life record of one over whom this controversy of Satan's was waged. Of Job, the patriarch of Uz, the testimony of the Searcher of hearts was, "There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil." Against this man, Satan brought scornful charge: "Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast Thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? ... Put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath;" "touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face." The Lord said unto Satan, "All that he hath is in thy power." "Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life."

Thus permitted, Satan swept away all that Job possessed—flocks and herds, menservants and maidens, sons and daughters; and he "smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown." Job 1:8-12; 2:5-7. Still another element of bitterness was added to his cup. His friends, seeing in adversity but the retribution of sin, pressed on his bruised and burdened spirit their accusations of wrongdoing.



Seemingly forsaken of heaven and earth, yet holding fast his faith in God and his consciousness of integrity, in anguish and perplexity he cried: “My soul is weary of my life...” According to his faith, so was it unto Job. “When He hath tried me,” he said, “I shall come forth as gold.” Job 23:10. So it came to pass.

By his patient endurance he vindicated his own character, and thus the character of Him whose representative he was. And “the Lord turned the captivity of Job: ... also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.... So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning.” For those who love God, those who are “the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28), Bible biography has a yet higher lesson of the ministry of sorrow. “Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God” (Isaiah 43:12)—witnesses that He is good, and that goodness is supreme. “We are made a theater unto the world, both to angels, and to men.” (1 Cor 4:9)

Who is accused/on trial? Satan’s accusation was against God much more than it was against Job. In Romans 3:4, Paul tells us that God is the One on trial, God is the One accused, and God is the One who will be proved innocent. Paul says:

- “That You may be justified in Your words, And prevail when You are judged.” NASB
- “You must be shown to be right when you speak; you must win your case when you are being tried.” GNT
- God, may you be proved right and true in the hearts and minds of your intelligent creatures when you present yourself openly for their judgment. The Remedy

Why are we here? What is playing at the theater?

By his patient endurance he vindicated his own character, and thus the character of Him whose representative he was.

So this lesson is entitled “The End”, and although it is the first lesson in the quarterly, the focus is on the end of Job’s story...and the importance and even significance of a “happy ending”. We are taught the importance of a good ending in writing classes – whether in fiction or non-fiction, TV shows, movie scripts, the writer needs to have satisfactory closure, tie up any loose ends with characters and story lines. Even in speeches and presentations, a good, clear conclusion is critical.

But what about in real life? What about in our own stories that are hardly ever as neat and tidy?



The quarterly asks, “How could our stories end well, when they always end in death? In that sense, we never really have happy endings, do we, because when is death happy?” Ouch. I found this to be a bit of a recurring dark theme in this week’s lesson, but we are going to try to stay on the bright side since we happen to believe that this 1st death of sleep is not, in fact, the end of our stories.

SUNDAY

Happily Ever After?

What is the standard fairy tale ending? We just talked about the literary importance of happy endings, so most children’s stories and practically every fairy tale ends with, “...and they lived happily ever after”.

The quarterly says, “it’s almost a cliché”...almost??

It’s a full-blown clichéd ending where the handsome prince rescues the damsel in distress, the hero triumphs over the villain, and our lesson suggests that this is how the book of Job ends – at least at first glance – the hero and his (new) wife triumph in the end, or at least end up on a ***relatively*** positive note. But is that only part of the story? Let’s look at the final verses of the book to see how Job’s story ends:

“After Job had interceded for his friends, God restored his fortune – and then doubled it! All his brothers and sisters and friends came to his house and celebrated. They told him how sorry they were, and consoled him for ***all the trouble God had brought him***. Each of them brought generous housewarming gifts. God blessed Job’s later life even more than his earlier life. He ended up with fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand teams of oxen, and one thousand donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters...there was not a woman in that country as beautiful as Job’s daughters. Their father treated them as equals with their brothers, providing the same inheritance (which was unheard of). Job lived on another 140 years, living to see his children and grandchildren – four generations of them! Then he died – an old man, a full life.” (Job 42:10-17)

So on paper, the numbers looked really good – twice as much material wealth, 7 new sons and 3 new (apparently super attractive) daughters to replace those he lost. Job’s was apparently healed and restored to health such that he lived another 140 years, so it sounds like he was in a relatively good and happy place by the end of his life. But what about the scars – I’m guessing literal and figurative scars – that lingered on throughout his life? Tuesday’s lesson takes a look into the rest of the story, so let’s skip right over to Tuesday.



TUESDAY

The (Partial) Restoration

So we know that on paper Job ends up better off than before Satan targeted him – God restored “all that the locusts had eaten” (reference to God’s promise made in Joel), but does full healing and restoration mean there is no memory? No pain? No scars?

Have any of you ever had surgery? Even if you are completely healed, maybe you’re even better or healthier than you were before, but won’t you still carry the physical evidence of that procedure for the rest of your life?

Based on the fact that he was near death and covered head to toe with sores and such, it seems reasonable to think that he may have experienced ongoing health issues and carried the physical scars for the rest of those 140 years.

I cannot begin to imagine the pain of losing a child – some of you in this room or some of those listening may have experienced this unfathomable loss...but can you imagine what it is like to lose *10 children*?! At once?! I am sure that while Job was overjoyed to be blessed with 10 new children, but kids are not interchangeable or replaceable! I’m quite sure that he still mourned and missed his lost children throughout the rest of his life.

So even in God’s complete comfort, healing, and restoration there can still be painful memories, mourning of loss, and physical and emotional scars. I also imagine that Job became extremely sensitive and empathetic to others who were suffering pain or loss. I saw a quote this week that said, “God does not comfort us to make us comfortable, God comforts us to make us comfort-able – able to comfort others”! Has anyone found that to be true in their own experience?

The quarterly points out another reason Job’s restoration was partial is because for the most part the reasons beheld all the tragedies that befell him remained a mystery – as it does for pretty much all of us in our own lives!

We live on a planet that is literally groaning under the weight of sin, so we will all likely have a stack of questions that remain unanswered this side of eternity – or sometimes that *IS* the answer. In this world, we are promised to have trouble. To me, this is all related to that deeply ingrained idea – and I mean at the DNA level – that there has to be a reason for the tragedy, for the illness, for the defects we encounter here.



The disciples asked, “Who sinned that this man was born blind?” Job’s friends were absolutely convinced that Job had done something awful or had some hidden, unconfessed sin that caused him to be punished and admonished by God.

I have always been so impressed that Job **NEVER** thought that was the reason...he **KNEW** it wasn’t. He understood God’s character and His methods and the way he governs His universe well enough that he could not be convinced of it by either his friends or his wife.

We really have to be “transformed by the renewing of our minds” in order to drop this notion that God’s goodness or His character of love is defined or described by our earthly circumstances – perceived blessings or lack of blessings. God is love...God is good...period. God is **always** focused on changing us...and **sometimes** He changes our circumstances as well.

Based on how God described Job to Satan, what does this tell us about God’s ability to “judge” or diagnose one’s character?

I want to read you the short story of Job from The Journal of the Watcher, Tim’s book that covers the entire Great Controversy from the perspective of the “heavenly watchers”. Spoiler alert: it’s not about us...and it’s not even really about Job.

“Following the flood, while God continued to protect His faithful few and prevent Satan from eradicating them from the earth, Satan saw an opportunity to misrepresent God before the intelligences in heaven and gain access to those still loyal to God. The representative heads of all creation were gathering together in heaven, and Satan thought, If I can twist God’s actions and misrepresent His motives, then maybe I can win more sinless beings over to my cause. Satan reasoned that if he were subtle enough, maybe some of God’s loyal sons would fail to realize that God put many of His earthly children to rest in order to keep an avenue open to heal and redeem. Maybe he could deceive them into believing God was abusive and coercive and could not be trusted. And maybe he could simultaneously corner God into giving him access to destroy those few remaining [humans] loyal to Him on earth.

So Satan went to this meeting in heaven, claiming to be the rightful representative of the earth. But God was not fooled by Satan’s trickery and immediately turned the tables on the Evil One. Even though the devil claimed that the earth was his, God announced to the heavenly gathering that there was a man from Uz who rejected Satan’s methods of selfishness and who was loyal to God, loving others more than self. (remember the quote we read earlier – Unselfishness, the very principle of God’s kingdom, is the principle that Satan hates most, even denies its very existence)



Therefore all the earth was not Satan's, all its inhabitants did not recognize Satan as their leader. But Satan countered God's claim by asserting that God was now lying and that this man only pretended to be loyal because God bribed him with riches and power.

The sons of God were confused; they couldn't read the secret motives of the heart. If they could, none of the angels would have ever been deceived by Satan in the first place. Satan thought, 'If I can get Job to curse God, I can look to all the intelligent beings in the universe and say, 'See, God was wrong about Job. He is wrong about me, too. You can't trust what God Says!'

However, God did know Job, so before this great gathering of heavenly beings He said to Satan, 'Job is in your hands. Do whatever you like, but you must not kill him.' While Satan was free to bless Job with more wealth, he did what he always does – he began destroying and killing, revealing that he, not God, is the true source of disease, pain, suffering, and death. Job, though assaulted by Satan's fiercest attack, revealed the truth about God, demonstrating that God was right and Satan was wrong. God can be trusted. Satan is the destroyer, not God! Satan was bitter that his plot was foiled."

This Great Controversy, this war going on...it is Not. About. Us!

Obviously, Job started out with a very strong character – God picked him out of everyone alive on the planet. But his character continued to be refined and he continued to grow and mature through his suffering and his questioning of God. He actually *experienced* God and got to know him more intimately during his time of trial and sorrow.

Isn't this so true? In your lives, when were the times that you got to know God most intimately or felt the most dependent on him or felt his presence the closest?

He says in Chapter 42,

"I admit it. I was the one. I babbled on about things far beyond me, made small talk about wonders way over my head... I admit I once lived by rumors of you; now I have it all firsthand—from my own eyes and ears! I'm sorry—forgive me. I'll never do that again, I promise! I'll never again live on crusts of hearsay, crumbs of rumor."

Oh, don't you want to that kind of growth? To have such a mature character and to be so settled into the truth that God would call you out to be "watched"? That He would enter you into evidence as Exhibit A in His trial.



So, when God says, consider my servant Russell, or Linda, or Wendell, or Theresa – and then regardless of what this world throws at us, we glorify God by revealing His character, His methods, and His principles of unselfish love... *THAT* is how our stories can have the ultimate happy ending.

It is not about the money, or the livestock, or the property, or the children...the only restoration that matters here on this earth is the restoration of our hearts and our characters back to their original design. Job's story has a happy ending because He accurately revealed God's character and His "Law of Love".

Even if *nothing* we have lost in this life gets restored while we're here, can still "live happily ever after."

This quote is from Wednesday's lesson, but it fits better here...from Patriarchs and Prophets,

"The great plan of redemption results in fully bringing back the world into God's favor. *All* that was lost by sin is restored. Not only man but the earth is redeemed, to be the eternal abode of the obedient. For six thousand years Satan has struggled to maintain possession of the earth. Now God's original purpose in its creation is accomplished. 'The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.'"

That's the real happily ever after.

WEDNESDAY

The Final Kingdom

Wednesday's lesson points out that the Bible is not only a book about history and historical events, it also points us to the future, even to the end of time. It teaches that at the end of time God's eternal kingdom will be established, it will exist forever, and it will be the eternal home of the redeemed. And unlike worldly kingdoms that have come and gone, this one is everlasting.

Is this really what it teaches? Do we have to wait until the end of time for God's eternal kingdom to be established? And is it only eternal going forward...or if the His kingdom is truly "eternal" has it always been?

The Lord's prayer instructs us to pray for His kingdom to come to us here. (Matthew 6:10), Jesus repeatedly preached and taught, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand or has come near." (Matthew 4:17)

He said the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who are like the little children (Matthew 19:14)



According to Mark, he told a crowd

“Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.” Mark 9:1

Jesus told the Pharisees,

“I drive off demons by the power of God, and this is evidence that god’s kingdom of love has arrived.” (Luke 11:20)

When asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of god would come, Jesus replied,

“The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed. Nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is in your midst or within you.” (Luke 17:20-21).

We may not get the New Jerusalem until the end of time, but I happen to believe that we need not wait until that time to participate in and experience His kingdom of love here and now.

Further Thought - The concluding chapters in the book of Job draw on images of creation and nature. Without answering Job’s question as to the “Why?” of his suffering, God is portrayed as lovingly yet majestically ruling over His creation. Thus, eventually, Job must acknowledge God as His Creator. This recognition catalyzes the big change, or renewal, that takes place in Job’s heart. In the beginning verses of this final chapter (Job 42:2, 3), Job refers to understanding, knowledge, and counsel five times, indicating that he has come to a deeper understanding of who God is and how He relates to His creation.

Could it be that in coming to know God as the creator and designer, Job was able to determine that his design laws work differently than man’s laws and this knowledge led to a deeper understanding of who God is and a big change in his heart and mind?

THURSDAY

The Resurrection and the Life

Job says in Chapter 14,

“If we humans die, will we live again? That’s my question. All through these difficult days I keep hoping, waiting for the final change—for resurrection! Homesick with longing for the creature you made, you’ll call—and I’ll answer!”

Is anyone else here homesick with *longing* for the creature He made, instead of this one here?



Job asks if the dead will live again, and then he says that he waits for his change to come. The Hebrew word for “wait” here also implies the idea of hope. It’s not just waiting for something, it is **hoping** for it. And the Hebrew word here for “change” comes from a term that gives the idea of “renewal” or “replacement” – the change from death to life. I have always waited for this event, but to be honest, I haven’t always **hoped** for it.

When I was younger I was skeptical, I had a lot of plans and things I wanted to accomplish so I kind of hoped the timeframe predictions were off, there were certainly some theologies at play that made me afraid of it...but I can say now that I not only hope for this promised change and renewal, but there is genuine **longing** for it to happen – the sooner the better!

The box at the bottom of Thursday’s lesson asks what Jesus’ question to Martha in John 11:25 tells us about “the end”...this was when Jesus came to the family after Lazarus died and he told Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life.”

But I believe the Message translation really captures that He was NOT just talking about the end, but just like His kingdom being here and now – in us, this statement also references the present.

“You don’t have to wait for the End. I am, right now, Resurrection and Life. The one who believes in me, even though he or she dies, will live. And everyone who lives believing in me does not ultimately die at all.” John 11:25

Similar to when He says in Luke 12:4-5

“Oh my friends, I tell you plainly, don’t let fear of those who can kill the body stop you from sharing the Remedy. That’s all they can do, for they can’t damage your psyche – your soul or your individuality. But I will tell you what you should fear: Fear unremedied sin, which not only damages your body, but sears your conscience, warps your character, and has the power to throw you into a miserable hell. Yes, this you should fear.”

Further Thought - The lesson states,

“The unfolding of truth is progressive, and despite the great light we have been given now, there’s still so much more to learn. In fact, we’ve been told that “the redeemed throng will range from world to world, and much of their time will be employed in searching out the mysteries of redemption. And throughout the whole stretch of eternity, this subject will be continually opening to their minds.” ARH 03/09/1886.

So why does this not seem to be happening in most theological circles?



The Book of Job Lesson 2 4Q 2016

The Great Controversy

SABBATH

What do you think of with this title? What advantages does thinking through this lens offer to us as we read Scripture?

Is the idea of a Great Controversy taught in Scripture, or something created by the founders of the SDA church, which some people have alleged?

One of our class members received this email from a person that questions the legitimacy of the Great Controversy:

"My main issue of doubt has been EGW's TOXIC Great Controversy dogma. Her whole book is an anthology of atrocities, emphasizing Satan's EVIL, hopefully to persuade the "universe" that God is good.

She portrays a God, so obsessed and consumed with His eventual "vindication" that He uses mankind as his "Guinea pigs" in His grand "experiment" to overcome Satan.

Six thousand years (and counting) of abysmal accumulated atrocities, and an avalanche of anguish, do not seem to have persuaded God's entourage of extra-terrestrials... to vote for God nor to indict Satan.

This, despite EGW enlisting them as the jurors/deciders/arbitrators in this dispute. These extra-terrestrials must have the mental capacity of primitive primates, as depicted in the movie PLANET OF THE APES, not to have reached a definite denouncement nor an adequate arbitration, eons ago.

That we are held hostage to incompetent, inept, space aliens is terrifying. What is even more nightmarish, is if these aliens have the "street smarts" to perceive mankind's misery, but despite this, they remain in total equanimity, uncaring, uncompassionate, totally lacking in concern or commiseration. Surely then, they are complicit with Satan, if they do not clamor for God to end the carnage?

Our fate is in the hands of extra-terrestrials either incompetent, or uncaring, or both-- not a happy prospect! EGW's scenario is as BIZARRE as a STAR WARS movie with space aliens playing the major role. It invites derisive ridicule and does not "hold water"...

What would you say to such a person? What Biblical evidence could you bring to bear? Did EGW and the SDA church make up the controversy between good and evil that transcends humanity and earth,



and extends into the cosmos and in which God and God's methods are at the center, or is that idea THE central issue in Scripture?

What evidence in Scripture is there for a Great Controversy over God's character and method of governing?

- There was "war" in heaven. Michael (Jesus) and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels (Revelation 12:7)
 - Who are the combatants in this war described in Revelation? Are they human?
- What kind of war was this?
 - Would the opponents of the GC idea suggest the war between good and evil is over who is most powerful? Or would they agree God is all powerful—and if God is all powerful, then what kind of war could be waged against Him?
 - It is a war of ideas and false allegations against God. The Greek word in Revelation 12:7 translated "war" is *polemo* from which we get "polemic" or verbal argument. It was a war of words.
- What is the central issue in this war of ideas, according to Scripture?
 - For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up *against the knowledge of God*, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2Cor 10:3-5
- Where did the false ideas and lies originate?
 - Satan is the "father of lies" (John 8:44). So in the war of words Satan used lies—the primary lies always about God.
- What is the central focus of Satan's lies?
 - God's character and trustworthiness. Do we see evidence of this in Scripture?
 - "Did GOD really say...?" (Genesis 3:1).
 - What was the impact of believing the lies?
 - Lies believed break the circle of love and trust
 - Broken love and trust results in fear and selfishness
 - Fear and selfishness result in destructive actions
 - This is a terminal condition—dead in trespass and sin
 - In whom was fear and selfishness incited?
 - Adam and Eve
 - And what is the problem that believing the lies about God caused Adam and Eve?
 - Their characters were changed to be out of harmony with how God designed life
 - And, what impact on the rest of humanity and why?
 - We are born in sin conceived in iniquity because God created Adam and Eve with the ability to produce beings in their image, thus when they changed themselves, they could only pass along to their children what they possessed, which was fear and selfishness as the primary drive
- What was Satan's agenda in this "war" of words and these ideas misrepresenting God?



- To dethrone God from the hearts and minds of intelligent beings as the one most love and trusted, and enthrone Satan in their hearts
 - Which in turn would destroy the image of God in intelligent beings and put Satan's image where God's should be
- Does Scripture support we war against such non-human enemies?
 - "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*." Eph 6:12 KJV
 - The stories of:
 - the demoniacs (legion)
 - Jesus' temptations by Satan, etc. we see a controversy raging beyond human beings
 - "For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made **a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels** as well as to men." 1Cor 4:9
- And does the Bible actually say God is the one on trial?
 - "God must be true, even though every human being is a liar. As the scripture says, 'You must be shown to be right when you speak; you must win your case when you are being tried.'" Rom 3:4
- How does God win His case?
 - Can God win by use of might and power?
 - Not by might nor by power but by the way the Spirit works says the Lord, Zech 4:6
 - Which is truth and love—only truth and love can win hearts and minds, force and might cannot do this
 - So God wins His case by revealing the truth in love to win us to trust and through Christ providing us a new character, thus we can become partakers of the divine nature!
- Does Scripture include angelic beings in this war and the victories of Christ?
 - "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, **whether things on earth or things in heaven**, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." Col 1:19,20
- And in the book of Job we see the behind the scenes conflict being waged. What are the issues at stake in the book of Job?
 - Pastor Tim Mesendiek, Chairman of the Sozo Initiative sent me a paper Thursday on his thoughts on the book of Job and he has some excellent insights, which we will be revisiting throughout the quarter.
 - There are several simultaneous things happening in the book of Job: some things are happening in the hearts and minds of the non-fallen beings as they watch—which is what we have frequently emphasized and will again. But while God is winning His case before the universe, Pastor Mesendiek points out what is happening to Job. He notes that God is NOT using Job as a pawn or guinea pig, but God allowed events to transpire that would simultaneously heal and mature Job.



- Specifically, the book of Job is the Great Controversy in miniature. It is about human beings infected with fear and selfishness being restored to love and trust.
- Chapter one Job is afraid of God and how God relates to others (for his children), this is due to Job, even though trusting God, has misconceptions about God.
- Chapter two Job is afraid of God and how God relates to him, again because even though Job trusts God, he still has misconceptions about God.
- Chapter 3 through 37 Job's friends are afraid of God and have many misconceptions about God and are of no help to Job
- Chapter 38-41 God finally gets His day in court and immediately takes Job to the evidence of God's Creatorship, which is design law, and that God is not arbitrary or dictator-like. Job is finally freed from his misconceptions about God, which removes his fear, and notice that at that point, when Job's fear is removed, that Job comes boldly before the throne of grace, just as we are instructed to do.
- Job 42:1-4: *Then Job answered the LORD, and said, I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. (like fearful thoughts about God?) Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I (JOB) will demand of thee (GOD), and declare thou unto me. (What is this BOLDNESS???)*
 - **Heb 4:16** *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*
- In verse 5 Job sees and experiences God for himself, rather than just hearing about God from others.
- And in verse 6, having come boldly before God, experiences the truth of God and is brought to repentance, and genuine transformation of character—not only trusts God but is no longer afraid of God
- And having been delivered from fear to friendship, to love then the channels for restoration are opened and God restores to Job more than what was taken
- When was Satan cast out of heaven and what cast him out?
 - Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³² But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all to myself.” John 12:31,32
 - From *The Remedy*: **Now is the time for the infection of selfishness and sin in this world to be fully diagnosed and revealed as destructive; now, Satan—the prince of this selfish world—will be driven out into the open, out of the shadows, out from behind his lies and distortions about God and God's methods, out where all can see him as the murderer he truly is, and thus out of the hearts of all who love me.** ³² **When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all intelligences throughout the universe to me.”**
 - What does this mean? When did Satan get bound to earth? At the time of Christ's crucifixion—before, during the time of Job, Satan is still going into heaven. So, what bound him to the earth? Did God erect a force field that keeps



Satan here? No, what kept Satan bound here is that the truth about God was fully revealed by Christ such that Satan's lies had no power over any intelligences anywhere in the universe except here on earth. Thus, no intelligent creature will listen to Satan any more!

- Are the angels slow to understand?
 - What has taken so long?
 - The more subtle the lie and the better the liar, the longer it takes to expose them
 - It wasn't until the Cross that Satan's full malignity and the full truth about God's character was revealed

So, is there Biblical evidence for a Great Controversy? Absolutely! All of this evidence is just a small sample of the evidence found in Scripture, not from other writers or sources. The Bible is filled with the truth about a war over God's trustworthiness that began before this earth was created. To deny this is to fail to see the real issue in the war and to misunderstand God, the problem of sin, and God's solution for it.

And if we misunderstand the problem, we misunderstand the solution, and often end up promoting ideas (gospels) that do not work to heal and transform people!

We have demonstrated from Scripture that the central issue in the war focuses on the knowledge of God. What is the central idea that Satan uses to undermine people's trust and confidence in God? God's law, Satan distorts God's law in the minds of beings alleging God's law is no different in quality than the laws made by sinful beings, imposed rules requiring external policing and enforcement. This view of God's law puts God in the position of being the source of inflicted, pain, suffering and death, and thus theologies focus on protecting us from God rather than healing us from sin—deviations from God's design.

Those who see through the level four and below lenses struggle with the question of the Great Controversy, because God is strong and sovereign so how can anyone call Him to question. This is imperialism and human thinking. But design law understands how love actually operates, elevates our understanding to see that God can only win the hearts of His children by truth presented in love and leaving us free!

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, "Job certainly seems..." What is happening in the opening of this book?

- Is God making a judgment about Job?
 - This is a microcosm of the final judgment.
- What determined God's judgment of Job?
- Was a being interceding with God to beg God to give a good ruling?
- Was evidence presented?



- Was there an accuser?
- Who defended Job to the accuser?
- What caused God to give the verdict about Job that He gave?
 - It was the actual condition of Job's character, heart, mind! Thus, this was a diagnosis, a right revealing of the actual condition of the man himself.
- This is what the final judgment is! The final judgment is nothing more than the final diagnosis of the condition of each person's character/ heart/mind/soul. Have we been won to trust Jesus, such that we open the heart and let in the Spirit which heals and transforms us back into God's image OR have we closed out the Spirit and hardened ourselves in selfishness? This is the question and Job reveals this process.

When God said Job was perfect, what was meant?

- Did it mean Job was sinless?
- Did it mean Job understood all things accurately?
- Did it mean Job had no fear?
- What does it mean Job was perfect?
 - I believe it means, even though Job didn't understand everything, even though he still had growing to do, Job had been converted from distrust to trust—he completely trusted God and had love for others, even though he still had some misunderstandings about God.
 - Do you know a person you trust, but sometimes misunderstand things about them? Are you able to still trust that person?
 - So, just like Abraham, who trusted God, yet still had misunderstandings and maturing to do, Job trusted God and would not be shaken from his trust.
 - When we genuinely trust God we are recognized as being right with God, or being set right, or righteous, which is also called justified. Being justified is not a legal action, it is an actual change in the state of being, from distrust to genuine trust in God. This is what God said about Job.

Of course, after God pronounces the judgment of Job, what does Satan do? He accuses, he makes allegations, which are not primarily about Job, but are about God, that God is lying, that Job really isn't righteous, but acts that way because God is bribing Job to act that way.

This scenario is evidence of the type of war being waged for the minds of heavenly beings. What can we learn from this scenario?

- Angels can't read the secrets of hearts and minds, if they could then Satan could not lie to any of them and Job's condition would be obvious for all the heavenly beings to see and comprehend
- That God's judgments are merely the accurate diagnoses of what is the real condition of each heart
- That Satan doesn't care about reality, but will lie and distort to try and undermine God and trust in God, no matter who is hurt in the process



Read fourth paragraph, “Amid the festivities...” thoughts? How do you read it? Is this a description of what God required and what God is like, or is this a description of Job, what he thought of his children and what he thought about God and what he thought God required?

This is important, when Job later said, “The Lord gives and the Lord takes away,” was Job understanding accurately who was taking away from him? No! Job did not understand accurately all that was happening. Then what did God mean when He said earlier that Job was blameless?

God meant, what EGW meant, that Job’s heart was motivated by love for others, and that Job would sacrifice for the benefit of others, not that God required Job to sacrifice for others. Thus, Job, sacrificed his wealth for concern for His children, this is the right heart, a heart that loves others more than self.

God did not say that Job had all knowledge, understood all mysteries, had all answers, only that he was righteous and blameless, i.e. had a heart no longer controlled by selfishness and that he loved others more than self. This proved to be true.

HUGE distinction to realize, and one many in the penal legal camp miss, because they are often more concerned with right definitions and right rules, than having a heart right with God!

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read Job 1:6-12, this is from the GNT:

When the day came for the heavenly beings to appear before the Lord, Satan was there among them. ⁷The Lord asked him, “What have you been doing?”

Satan answered, “I have been walking here and there, roaming round the earth.”

⁸ “Did you notice my servant Job?” the Lord asked. “There is no one on earth as faithful and good as he is. He worships me and is careful not to do anything evil.”

⁹ Satan replied, “Would Job worship you if he got nothing out of it? You have always protected him and his family and everything he owns. You bless everything he does, and you have given him enough cattle to fill the whole country. But now suppose you take away everything he has—he will curse you to your face!”

¹² “All right,” the Lord said to Satan, “everything he has is in your power, but you must not hurt Job himself.” So Satan left.

This version uses the phrase “heavenly beings,” NIV states “angels,” KJV states “sons of God.” Do you know what the Hebrew is? It is *ben Elohim*.

Do you remember the movie Ben Hur? *Ben* means son of so the movie is Son of Hur? So *ben Elohim* means more literally sons of God. Why do you think the translators have changed this to angels or



heavenly beings? Do some translators have difficulty with the possibility that there are worlds out in the universe that have intelligent beings, not angels, but some other intelligent life, that are still loyal to God?

What might we lose with that translation? What could be implied by the sons of God translation?

In the genealogy of Christ it says son of, son of, son of, going all the way back to “son of Seth, son of Adam, son of God.” In the genealogy of Christ, who is the only one listed as a son of God? Adam...what *could* be implied by the reference in Job *the sons of God* came before him and Satan came from the earth?

That God has many worlds where He has created life, and the first intelligent being created by God on each of those worlds are the representative heads of those worlds in God’s great heavenly counsel. From earth Adam was supposed to be the one in that heavenly counsel, but Adam forfeited his place and Satan comes claiming Adam’s place, but God says, not so fast. You don’t represent earth. Consider Job, he doesn’t recognize you. And of course, Jesus later comes to earth as the second Adam and becomes the true Head of the race and occupies the place Adam was to have occupied in God’s great counsel, and more than that, Jesus sits on the throne ruling the entire universe.

What does Satan say to the judgment by God of Job’s character? Satan says God is lying. What does God do in response? God allows evidence to demonstrate what is true.

Why does God simply not declare Satan a liar? Why does God give Satan access to Job?

What is revealed by this? Did God restrict the kinds of behaviors Satan could do to Job? Did God limit Satan to do only harm to Job? Was Satan free to bring more praise, wealth, power upon Job? Why didn’t he? What kind of character does Satan reveal in this?

What do we learn about how God wins? God wins by evidence, not by declaration and claims!

Read last part of third paragraph and fourth paragraph, “It’s hard to imagine someone...” Then jump to **THURSDAY’s** lesson:

The lesson points out that we find answers at the cross and that the cross is central to defeating Satan, evil, and sin. How? Why is the cross necessary? What was the purpose of the cross? What did Christ achieve for us and the rest of the universe at the cross? How would you describe what Jesus accomplished for us at the cross?

1. Revealed the truth about the nature of the Father and Himself (Jn 12:32, 17:1-5, Col 1:20)
2. Exposed Satan as a liar and fraud (Heb 2:14)
3. Revealed what humanity is designed by God to be (1Cor 15:47)
4. Christ’s victory in humanity proved that there was no “manufacturer’s defect” in Adam, i.e. Adam’s fall was not because God created Adam defectively



5. Revealed what happens to a being when severed from God (Rom 1:18, 24,26,28, 4:25)
6. Revealed what obedience to the “rules” results in when the heart is not renewed in love (Jews wanted Christ down by sunset to keep the Sabbath rules)
7. Revealed that power does not corrupt God and thus God is safe with all power
8. Revealed that God and Christ are truly selfless (Jn 3:16, 1Jn 3:16)
9. Revealed that God does not execute and kill the sinner, but sin severs from God (the source of life) and results in death. (Mt 27:46)
10. By the exercise of his human brain Christ overcame the temptation to “save self” and restored God’s “law of love” into the human species. In Christ, humanity became what God originally designed it, in Adam, to be. (Mt 26:39, 2Tim 1:9,10, Heb 5:8,9)
11. Christ developed a perfect human nature/character and offers this perfection to all who will accept it. “once he was made perfect he *became* the source of salvation for all who obey him. (Heb 5:8,9) Christ thus becomes the remedy for us. As we see the truth, we surrender in trust and the Holy Spirit takes what Christ achieved and reproduces it in us. (Jn 16:14) Thus we become partakers of the divine nature and it is no longer “I” but Christ lives in us. (2Pet 1:4, Gal 2:20) He actually writes his law of love, his character of love, upon our hearts and minds. (Heb 8:10, 10:16) This is how we are reconciled to God. All through the achievements of Christ!
12. Heb 2:14 By revealing the truth He destroyed the lies of Satan, thus destroying Satan’s power and overthrowing Satan in the minds of all who love truth
13. 2Tim 1:10, By destroying the infection of selfishness and restoring love into humanity He destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light
14. 1John 3:8 by voluntarily surrendering to death and giving His life in love He destroyed Satan’s work (which was trying to implant Satan’s image where God’s should be and effacing the image of God in man), and restored God’s image in humanity
15. Col 1:20 through all of this He reconciles to Himself all things at the cross

The last paragraphs quotes Romans 3 and states “Because of His death on our behalf, Christ could be ‘just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.’ That is, at the cross He refuted the devil’s charges that God could not uphold His law (be just) and still, at the same time, save those who have broken the law (justifier).” thoughts?

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read a series of texts to demonstrate a conflict between God and Satan:

- Gen 3:1-4 Satan tempting Eve
- Zech 3:1-3: “In another vision the Lord showed me the High Priest Joshua standing before the angel of the Lord. And there beside Joshua stood Satan, ready to bring an accusation against him. The angel of the Lord said to Satan, “May the Lord condemn you, Satan! May the Lord, who loves Jerusalem, condemn you. This man is like a stick snatched from the fire.”
- Matthew 4: the temptations of Christ
- 1Pet 5:8: “Be alert, be on the watch! Your enemy, the Devil, roams round like a roaring lion,



looking for someone to devour.”

- 1John 3:8: “He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.”
- Rev 12:9: War in heaven

From these texts what type of war is being waged? What type of weapons does Satan use? What is Satan’s number one weapon and where is the battle fought?

Satan is the father of lies, and his primary weapon is lies, and the battle is fought in the mind to get us to distrust God and believe any lies. This is how Satan gets power over us, this is how he distorts the character, and this is how he works to destroy the image of God in man and put his image in the mind of man—by getting us to believe his methods and ways.

What does this mean in how we fight the devil?

WEDNESDAY

Read last two paragraphs “Ellen G. White...” The lesson says, when one understands “how closely tied God’s law is to the foundation of His government” that we can make sense of the mystery of lawlessness.

How would you explain that close tie? Why is it tied so closely? What would it mean to change the law of God?

It would mean the destruction of the universe and life as we know it, why? Because God’s law is the protocol upon which the universe is built.

This understanding completely rules out major ideas and theologies taught in Christianity, and even in the SDA church, primarily the idea of a penal legal religion and atonement models.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase**—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Somerset West, South Africa

November 4: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Fall Summit at the Calvary Chapel in Naperville, IL.



Lesson 3 Q4 2016

Does Job Fear God for Naught?

SABBATH

“But he said to her, ‘You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?’ In all this Job did not sin with his lips” (Job 2:10, NKJV).

From the Teacher’s Lesson:

“Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: The dialogue between Satan and God in the heavenly court showcases the big issue at stake in the great controversy, namely, the character of God. Is God a tyrant who manipulates human beings, either by fear or bribery, into submission and obedience—as Satan wants to make Him out to be—or is He a loving Father who sends His own Son to die on the cross in order to pay the price for our sins? ***Your image of God will determine your stand in this cosmic battle and your reaction toward pain and suffering.***” (emphasis added).

Yes, indeed our image of God will determine our stand in the cosmic battle for hearts & minds.

SUNDAY

God’s Servant, Job.

From the lesson:

“ ‘Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land’ ” (Job 1:10, NKJV). The book of Job opens by referencing not only Job’s righteousness and good character but also his material blessings and fruitful household. These were the specific things that helped make Job revered as “the greatest of all the men of the east” (Job 1:3, NASB). And these, too, are the specific things that Satan hurls in God’s face, saying basically, “Only because You have done this for him does he serve You.”

What, then, is implied in Satan’s charge that if God were to take these things away from Job, Job would “ ‘surely curse You to Your face’ ” (Job 1:11, NKJV)?

The attack, really, is an attack against God Himself. (This is what the whole great controversy is about anyway.) If God were so wonderful, so good, then Job would obey and fear and worship Him out of love and appreciation alone. After all, who wouldn’t love a God who had done so much for him?

In a sense, Satan was saying that God had all but bribed Job into being faithful to Him. Thus, he claimed, Job served God not out of love for God but out of his own selfish motives.



This is a great summation of Satan's allegations.

Unselfishness, the principle of God's kingdom, is the principle that Satan hates; its very existence he denies. From the beginning of the great controversy he has endeavored to prove God's principles of action to be selfish, and he deals in the same way with all who serve God. To disprove Satan's claim is the work of Christ and of all who bear His name. Ed 154.3.

MONDAY

Skin for Skin

Round II. Back to the Heavenly meeting of the "Sons of God." Satan has, thus far been proved wrong about Job. He now states that if Job's own person were threatened/injured, he would curse his Creator.

3 Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause."

4 So Satan answered the Lord and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5 But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

6 And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life."

7 So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. Job 2: 3-7.

Note that in verse 4, Satan states "... all that a man has he will give for his life." And verse 5, "But stretch out Your hand, now..." In the midst of all of the Sons of God, Satan tries to make it appear that God is the source of destruction/pain.

Who's hand was stretched out? Verses 6, 7.

TUESDAY

Blessed be the Name of The Lord

20 Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped.

21 And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1: 20, 21.

The lesson asks us to consider Job's response to the initial onset of calamities.

Also from the lesson:

"Central to God's government, *a government based on love, is freedom of choice*. God wants



us to serve Him because we love Him, not because we are forced to serve Him. “Satan insinuated that Job served God from selfish motives. . . . He attempted to deny that true religion springs from love and an intelligent appreciation of God’s character, that true worshipers love religion for its own sake—not for reward; that they serve God because such service is right in itself, and not merely because heaven is full of glory; and that they love God because He is worthy of their affection and confidence, and not merely because He blesses them.”—The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 3, p. 500.” Emphasis added.

I believe that the Law of Liberty is the most misunderstood and misapplied of all of God’s Natural Laws.

We are, also, encouraged to compare/contrast Job’s dealings with temptation with that of Adam & Eve and the relationship to “free will.”

What about Lucifer’s fall?

WEDNESDAY

Job’s Wife

What, if any, significance is given to the phrase “hold fast to your integrity”? Do God and Job’s wife use the phrase with the same intent?

Our memory text is Job’s response to his wife’s question “Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die.” Job 2: 9 NKJV

This is one of the very few recorded instances in Scripture, where a man said “NO” to his wife/Mother/daughter. Consider what would have happened if Abraham, Lot, Jacob, Samson, Herod, and Adam had followed in Job’s footsteps ...

“No, Sara. I will NOT take your handmaid, Hagar as a wife.” No Islam as we know it.

“No, girls. I don’t want any wine.” No Moabites. No Ammonites.

“No, mother. I will not participate in your deception of my father, Isaac.” No dueling sister wives for Jacob. No estrangement from Esau. Rebecca would have seen her son again.

“No, Delilah. I will not tell you the secret of my strength. Stop asking.” Who knows?

“No, Herodius. I will NOT give you the head of John the Baptist on a plate.” Who knows?

“No, Eve. I will NOT take that fruit. I’m sorry you did. Good Luck.” No sinful world as we know it.

Learn to say “NO”. And let your NO mean NO. Anything else is from the devil, according to our Savior.

From the memory text, we can conclude that Job wasn’t used to hearing foolish advice from his wife, and I credit him for recognizing foolish advice even in the position of pain/impaired health.



THURSDAY

Obedience Unto Death.

What does the phrase “obedience unto death” mean?

Is this moving any gears in your brains? Revelation 12: 11, or all of the Gospel’s accounts of the Crucifixion, perhaps? Any others?

How was Job “obedient unto death”?

Did he have such a deep relationship with God that he trusted God to do what is right, even if it meant Job needed to die?

The teacher’s lesson describes a vague parallel between Job’s experience and that of Christ. What similarities/differences can we note?

Also ponder Satan’s access to Heaven during the time of the Old Testament. Did anything limit his access after Christ’s death/resurrection? What was it?



The Book of Job Lesson 4 4Q 2016

God and Human Suffering

SABBATH

Thoughts about the title? Have you ever had questions about this? Have you ever had to answer someone else's questions about this?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Despite the hype..." Let's examine some cases:

- A drunk driver runs across the line hits an 18 y/o and the teen dies, the drunk is not harmed. Why?
 - Did God kill the teen?
 - What does it mean that God didn't use divine power to save the teen?
- Two people have cancer, one survives the other doesn't, what does it mean?
 - Did God love one more than the other?
 - Did one have more faith than the other?

Have you ever had the critic, the skeptic of God, bring this up as evidence that there is no God?

Perhaps the classic argument was presented by Epicurus (341-270 BCE):

- Is God willing to prevent evil but *unable* to do so? In that case God is not omnipotent.
- Is God able to prevent evil but *unwilling* to do so? If so, God must be malevolent
- Is God both willing and able to prevent evil? Then why is there evil in the world?

Epicurus goes on to say:

God is either willing to remove evil and cannot, or he can and is unwilling; or he is neither willing nor able to do so; or else he is both willing and able. If he is willing and not able, he must be weak, which cannot be affirmed of God. If he is able and not willing, he must be envious, which is also contrary to the nature of God. If he is neither willing nor able, he must be both envious and weak, and consequently not be God. If he is both willing and able—the only possibility that agrees with the nature of God—then where does evil come from? Or why does he not eliminate it?

How do you answer these questions? How would Martin Luther answer such a question?

This is the highest degree of faith, to believe him [God] merciful when he saves so few and damns so many, and to believe him righteous when by his own will he makes us necessarily damnable, so that he seems, according to Erasmus, to delight in the torments of the wretched



and to be worthy of hatred rather than love. If, then, I could by any means comprehend how this God can be merciful and just who displays so much wrath and iniquity, there would be no need of faith. (Luther, *Bondage of the Will* p. 62)

Do you hear Luther's position? God is not understandable, in fact we shouldn't even try. Faith is believing God is good when all the evidence says He is not good. Sadly, this distorted view of God and this distorted view of faith continues to infect Christianity to this day and many people live with their minds darkened with such beliefs.

What are the elements that Epicurus and Luther are missing?

First and foremost—they don't have a clue about God's law—God's design parameters upon which reality is constructed to operate.

They are viewing the entire question through the lens of human law, imposed law, imperialism. Thus, for both of them it is merely a question of power—for Epicurus if God is good then He uses power to impose His will to eradicate evil. And for Luther, God is assumed to be good and to be powerful and we are to accept that on faith and not ask questions—God is sovereign who are we to question it.

So, how do you answer the critics, what key truths are foundational to understanding the question of suffering and evil in the world?

First we must understand God's design, His laws, His original intent for life and humanity; then we must understand the nature and character of sin, what it actually is, and finally the solution for it.

All of those who struggle with this do so because on some level they don't see and understand what is actually happening, and are most often trying to understand through the false imposed law lens.

What are God's design laws? (Here are a few)

- Law of love—principle of giving (Air, water, food etc.)
- Law of liberty—love can only exist in atmosphere of freedom
- Law of worship—by beholding we become changed
- Law of exertion—strength requires exertion

With these in mind what was God's original design for humankind?

- Was it not an existence of love and perfection?
- Can computers love? No, what is required to love?
- Free sentient beings
- Can love grow and exist without freedom?
- Did God create humankind in His image? Would that include the ability to love? Would that mean genuine freedom? Would genuine freedom mean freedom to disobey—to deviate from God's design?



- Now—the big question—what law lens to you look at disobedience through?
- What happened when humankind deviated from God’s design? Did humankind get into legal trouble with an imperial dictator, or did humankind alter their state and now suffer with a condition of being that is terminal and without divine intervention would suffer and die?

Do we believe God is love?

- Does love inflict harm (not discipline but actually seek to injure and harm)?
- Is love the source of harm, the source of pain, suffering, death?
- No, but when we take this position, people immediately point to suffering in the world around them and then to Old Testament stories such as the first born of Egypt, Korah et al, the platoons that came to arrest Elijah and link the two and conclude God is the source of evil and pain and suffering.
- This linkage causes some to reject God and others to operate like Luther and become thoughtless, mindless, believers. Both are operating on flawed premises.

So, how would you answer the critics or the unthinking believers?

We need to add another piece—What do we understand death to be?

When Jesus said at the funeral of the little girl, “she is not dead” was Jesus lying? Was Jesus trying to deceive? What was Jesus doing by saying this?

When Jesus told His disciples “Lazarus is asleep I need to go wake him.” What was Jesus trying to communicate? Why did the disciples say if he is sleeping it is good he will recover?

When Jesus said that those who believe in Him will never die, what did He mean? What happened to James, John and Peter?

Does the term “death” have more than one meaning? Do we mean one thing by that term and God mean something else?

How do we understand it?

- Body—soma—hardware
- Soul—psyche—software
- Spirit—pneuma—energy source

We are tripartite, just like a computer. To be operational must have all three components—if a computer runs out of power what state does it go into? But is your computer dead? No! It sleeps, just like the Bible describes those who “die,” they sleep, but they are not dead. We often say, about our computer, “my battery died” but we know it is not dead, it can be recharged, and the computer itself is not dead, it is merely asleep waiting for more energy. And if you have your computer backed up on the cloud and someone destroys your machine, what do you do?



Jesus said in MT 10:28, don't be afraid of the one who can destroy the body (soma, hardware) but can't destroy the soul (psyche, software).

Note Paul's Description to the Thessalonians:

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall **asleep**, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that **God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him**. The Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and **the dead in Christ will rise first**. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 1Thessalonians 4:13-18

Do you see in one verse we have the dead in Christ coming down from heaven and also arising out of the grave? How? Because when we die:

- the body/hardware (soma) disintegrates to dust
- the spirit/energy (pneuma) returns to God
- the soul/software (psyche) is safe and secure with Christ in heaven stored on the heavenly servers—the Lamb's book of life

Here is an updated version:

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those whose hardware have shut down, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus had a hardware shut down and then rebooted and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus the software/individualities of those who trusted in him when their hardware shut down. The Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and those whose hardware have disintegrated will arise with upgraded perfect bodies. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 1Thessalonians 4:13-18

What we call death then, is not the death from sin, but an artificial state of suspended animation occurring because God is battling sin in this world.

So, with all of this in mind, how do we understand why bad things happen, why suffering occurs?

All suffering has its roots in the fact that this planet is out of harmony with God's design and His life giving presence. The specific reasons why suffering and death occur are as follows:



- Entropy, the slow gradual decay of order that occurs because we are disconnected from God's constant full presence and care. "in the day you eat of the Tree of Knowledge, dying you will die." (Gen 2:17) Aging and the sleep death occur because of slow decay
- Genetic defects and disease because of entropy and the slow decay of our original design
- Toxins and poisons because of mutations and alterations to God's design—the changes in nature and the manufacture of chemicals and products not original to God's creation
- Evil/selfish actions originating in people who are selfish—Cain killing Abel
- Evil/selfish actions inspired by Satan upon people to hurt others—Judas betraying Christ
- Satan and his agencies affecting nature and causing problems—first chapter of Job
- Good people acting to defend and protect—Abraham rescuing Lot
- Good people acting selfishly and doing bad things—David murdering Uriah—which occurs because of sin in the heart not yet removed
- People, whether good or evil, making mistakes with no intent to help or harm, slipping and falling, auto accident because of ice etc.
- Humans acting on God's orders—kill all the people, women, children, cattle, etc. Why would God give such orders?
 - Remember it was God's original plan to have the hornet and pestilence go before Israel and as the inhabitants abandoned the land the Israelites would have slowly occupied it with no killing. But the people chose to do it their way and so God gave the instructions, if you are going to kill then in order to minimize suffering, death, and traumatize the least number of people and bring peace in a world, wipe them all out and get it over with. Instead, we have had 4000 years of continual fighting, violence and war scaring every generation living in that part of the world.
- God acting to protect, lance, cauterize, keep open the avenue for Messiah—putting people in the grave/asleep, but they will arise again: Flood, first born of Egypt, Platoons that came to arrest Elijah Etc.

SUNDAY

The lessons cites Romans 1:18-20:

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Then read first paragraph, "What a powerful..." Do you notice the imposed law slant put on this? Sad, very sad...

Paul is not saying that they can be justly condemned in a cosmic judicial proceeding, but that they have no excuse for their terminal condition—that God's divine nature of love and how He built reality



6



Then why do so many thinking people continue to choose accident and chance? Because accident and chance are *BETTER* and more appealing than a god who uses imposed law and runs his universe like a dictator runs Rome!

Teaching God is the source of inflicted pain and suffering, a judicial magistrate that says love me or I will torture and kill you, is actually a violation of God's design law, and on some level many people realize this and reject this distorted view of God and thus prefer accident and chance to a life of cosmic slavery.

It is the false law of imperial Rome that infected Christianity and led to horrible abuses to our fellow human beings in the name of Christ and the gross misrepresentation of God in our theologies creating non-sense that has caused thinking people to prefer accident and chance!

We have a message, prophesied in Scripture, to take to the world about the Creator God, whose laws are the very protocols upon which reality is built and which will free people from such distortions!

Sadly, those who oppose our message, do so because they prefer a god who is the source of inflicted pain and suffering. This week one of our friends emailed me a conversation with a conference president who doesn't want our materials distributed in the churches in his conference. He said it is because he believes I teach Moral Influence Theory and to dispute that he referenced an article by the Biblical Research Institute which included the following:

One of the fundamental problems of the moral influence view is that it rejects the substitutionary nature of Christ's death. ***The idea that God had to kill the innocent*** instead of the guilty in order to save us is considered a violation of justice. (emphasis mine)

This is level four thinking, all based on accepting the lie that God's law functions no different than those sinful human beings make and therefore justice requires the ruling authority to inflict the death penalty. Thus, incredible as it seems, our own church teaches God killed Jesus—could anything be more offensive than this?

God is not the source of death! God is the source of life. Satan and sin, deviations from God's design cause death. Jesus said, Satan was a murderer from the beginning—but now many Christians teach that God is the originator of death—it is a lie! God, was in Christ healing the world from sin and restoring us back to unity with Himself!

The last paragraph states, "Though, especially in its fallen state, nature doesn't reveal the full character of God, it certainly reveals His creative power, and aspects of His goodness, as well."

Is power the question? Is power what Paul was referring to? No, Paul is referring to design, how God built reality to function and the results of rejecting that design for another design.



From *Hard Sayings of the Bible*:

The human condition, which Paul describes in Romans 1:18-32, is not something caused by God. The phrase “revealed from heaven” (where “heaven” is a typical Jewish substitute word for “God”) does not depict some kind of divine intervention, but rather the *inevitability of human debasement* which results when God’s will, built into the created order, is violated. Since the created order has its origin in God, Paul can say that the wrath of God is now (constantly) being revealed “from heaven.” It is revealed in the fact that the rejection of God’s truth (Rom 1:18-20), that is, the truth about God’s nature and will, leads to futile thinking (Rom 1:21-22), idolatry (Rom 1:23), perversion of God-intended sexuality (Rom 1:24-27) and relational-moral brokenness (Rom 1:28-32). P 543

The expression “God gave them over” (or “handed them over”), which appears three times in this passage (Rom 1:24,26,28), supports the idea that the sinful perversion of human existence, though resulting from human decisions, is to be understood ultimately as God’s punishment which we, in freedom, bring upon ourselves. P 543

In light of these reflections, the common notion that God punishes or blesses in direct proportion to our sinful or good deeds cannot be maintained... God loves us with an everlasting love. But the rejection of that love separates us from its life-giving power. The result is disintegration and death. P 543

Kaiser, W., et al., *Hard Saying of the Bible*, Intervarsity Press, 1996,

This is where we started the lesson, human suffering occurs because we are deviant from God’s design, God is not the author of suffering or death!

MONDAY

The title for the day: Nothing Came From Itself. What do you think of the title?

The idea that everything that exists came from nothing is the core to the big bang theory—which in itself doesn’t make sense.

From Nancy Pearcey’s book, page 62:

Secular people often accuse Christians of having “faith,” while claiming that they themselves base their convictions purely on facts and reason. Not so. If you press any set of ideas back far enough, eventually you reach an ultimate starting point—something that is taken as the self-existent reality on which everything depends. This starting assumption cannot be based on prior reasoning, because if it were, you could ask where *that* reasoning starts—and so on, in an



infinite regress. At some point, every system of thought has to say, This is my starting point. There is no reason for it to exist. It just “is.”

If starting premises do not rest on reasons, how can they be tested? Although you cannot argue *backward* to their prior reason, you can argue *forward* by spelling out their implications, then testing those implications using both logic and experience...

We can do this with godless theories and consistently demonstrate that those theories are not as reasonable, not as evidence based, as believing in a God of love. For instance:

While we cannot test the moment of creation nor can we test the big bang in a lab, the premises each view rests upon are testable:

BIG BANG	CREATION
Something came from something	Something came from nothing
Complexity came from chaos without intelligent input	Complexity came from chaos with intelligent input
Life came from living matter	Life came from non-living matter

Notice, in the world in which we live, the premises that support creation are all supported by science, experiment and experience, while science, experiment and experience disprove the Big Bang theory.

WEDNESDAY

Read Job 6:4-9:

The arrows of the Almighty are in me,
my spirit drinks in their poison;
God's terrors are marshaled against me.
⁵ Does a wild donkey bray when it has grass,
or an ox bellow when it has fodder?
⁶ Is tasteless food eaten without salt,
or is there flavor in the white of an egg?
⁷ I refuse to touch it;
such food makes me ill.
⁸ “Oh, that I might have my request,
that God would grant what I hope for,
⁹ that God would be willing to crush me,
to let loose his hand and cut me off!

What do you hear? What is Job saying? What is the core problem?



Job doesn't truly understand God, nor the Great Controversy, nor the problem with sin, nor the true cause of pain and suffering.

- Is God the one inflicting pain on Job? No
- Does God terrorize Job? No
- Does God cause Job's experiences to be bland, tasteless, without pleasure? No
- What is Job's state of mind? Job is depressed, grief stricken, and lost joy in life. He wants someone to be responsible and he lays this at God's feet. He has become despondent and hopeless and longs to die to relieve himself from his pain.

Would realizing God did not do this to him mean the pain of losing his children, estate, employees, etc. would be less? No—but what might it do? It might open Job's heart and mind to a source of comfort and hope which his current mindset prevents.

Remember the song *It Is Well With My Soul*?

This hymn was written after traumatic events in Horatio Spafford's life. The first was the death of his son at the age of 2 and the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, which ruined him financially (he had been a successful lawyer and had invested significantly in property in the area of Chicago that was extensively damaged by the great fire). His business interests were further hit by the economic downturn of 1873, at which time he had planned to travel to Europe with his family on the *SS Ville du Havre*. In a late change of plan, he sent the family ahead while he was delayed on business concerning zoning problems following the Great Chicago Fire. While crossing the Atlantic, the ship sank rapidly after a collision with a sea vessel, the *Loch Earn*, and all four of Spafford's daughters died. His wife Anna survived and sent him the now famous telegram, "Saved alone ...". Shortly afterwards, as Spafford traveled to meet his grieving wife, he was inspired to write these words as his ship passed near where his daughters had died.^[3] Bliss called his tune *Ville du Havre*, from the name of the stricken vessel.^[4]

The Spaffords later had three more children. On February 11, 1880, their son, Horatio Goertner Spafford, died at the age of four, of scarlet fever. Their daughters were Bertha Hedges Spafford (born March 24, 1878) and Grace Spafford (born January 18, 1881). Their Presbyterian church regarded their tragedy as divine punishment. In response, the Spaffords formed their own Messianic sect, dubbed "the Overcomers" by American press. In 1881, the Spaffords, including baby Bertha and newborn Grace, set sail for Ottoman-Turkish Palestine. The Spaffords settled in Jerusalem and helped found a group called the American Colony. Colony members, later joined by Swedish Christians, engaged in philanthropic work among the people of Jerusalem regardless of their religious affiliation and without proselytizing motives—thereby gaining the trust of the local Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities. During and immediately after World War I, the American Colony played a critical role in supporting these communities through the great suffering and deprivations by running soup kitchens, hospitals, orphanages and other charitable ventures. The colony later became the subject of *Jerusalem* by the Nobel prize-winning author, Swedish novelist Selma Lagerlöf.^[3]



THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Quoting Psalms 51:4...” Is this what Paul was referring to—understanding the goodness of God in the face of evil? Was there evil occurring throughout the universe when Lucifer rebelled? When Lucifer raised questions about God was there evil happening in the lives of the angels in heaven?

Paul is speaking of something more than this, but it includes this. Paul is speaking of God being judged to be true over the lies Satan has told about Him, all the lies, even before any beings were suffering.

Read bottom pink section, thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website: http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase**—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Somerset West, South Africa

November 4: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Fall Summit at the Calvary Chapel in Naperville, IL.

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



The Book of Job Lesson 5 4Q 2016

Curse the Day

A Preface: Depression

- a. Dr. Wendell Moses is an orthopaedic surgeon, not a member of the mental health community – He is a poor spokesman for mental health treatment indications, recommendations or results
- b. Mental health should be treated like any other illness
 - Like any other organ system, there are structural, chemical and functional impairments that occur
- c. Historically many Christians avoid mental health care
 - Especially true of my heritage in the Seventh-day Adventist church
- d. There are organizations that can refer you to a Christian mental health professional should you need care

Texts for the Week:

- Job 3:1 - 10 Curse the day I was born, it isn't for rejoicing
- John 11:11 - 14 Lazarus is asleep (dead)
- Job 6:1 - 3 My life is miserable, I wish I could die (I need compassion)
- Job 7:1 - 11 My life drags slowly on without benefit, it is misery
- James 4:14 Your life is like a puff of smoke, here & then disappears
- Job 7:17 - 21 Why does God pay attention to me
- Psalms 8:4 - 6 What is man that God thinks of him? Pays him a lot of attention.

SABBATH

Memory Text: Revelation 4:11

"Our Lord and God! You are worthy to receive glory, honor, and power. For you created all things, and by your will they were given existence and life." GNT

- Glory
 - 1. high renown or honor won by notable achievements.
 - "to fight and die for the glory of one's nation"
 - synonyms: renown, fame, prestige, honor, distinction, kudos, eminence, acclaim, praise
 - magnificence; great beauty.
 - "the train has been restored to all its former glory"
 - synonyms: magnificence, splendor, resplendence, grandeur, majesty, greatness, nobility
- Honor
 - High respect



- Power
 - That is the scariest attribute in the wrong hands
- We have two advantages that Job did not have:
 - Knowing how it ends
 - Knowing the background, the cosmic conflict operating behind the scenes.

Did Adam know of the conflict? Did he share it with anyone?

Bottom of the page:

“who among us, born of human flesh in a fallen world, doesn’t know something of the perplexity that tragedy and suffering brings, **especially** when we seek to serve the Lord faithfully and do what is right in His sight?”

Is it better in this life to be a Christian or not?

What are the advantages? What are the disadvantages?

Cosmically we know how it ends; the real question is personal... Will it end well for me?

- Jacob’s time of trouble?
- “Be careful lest ye fall”
- Luke 11:34 “Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness.”
- 2 Peter 3:17 “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.”
- Philippians 4:6 KJV “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”
- Philippians 4:7 KJV “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”
- GNT : Philippians 4:6, 7 “Don’t worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. And God’s peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus.”
- 2 Peter 3:17, 18 “But you, my friends, already know this. Be on your guard, then, so that you will not be led away by the errors of lawless people and fall from your safe position. But continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory, now and forever! Amen.”

We have forgotten, don’t believe, or misread Romans 8: All three members of the Godhead are working on our behalf

- The word with
 - Opposition, against (fight with his brother)
 - Participant (works with his father)



Romans 8:23 (GNT) “But it is not just creation alone which groans; we who have the Spirit as the first of God's gifts also groan within ourselves as we wait for God to make us his children and set our whole being free.

Romans 8:31 - 35 “If God is for us, who can be against us? Certainly not God, who did not even keep back his own Son, but offered him for us all! He gave us his Son—will he not also freely give us all things? Who will accuse God's chosen people? God himself declares them not guilty! Who, then, will condemn them? Not Christ Jesus, who died, or rather, who was raised to life and is at the right side of God, pleading with him for us! Who, then, can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble do it, or hardship or persecution or hunger or poverty or danger or death?”

SUNDAY

Let the Day Perish

John Denver's song: I'm Sorry

It's cold here in the city
It always seems that way
And I've been thinking about you almost everyday
Thinking about the good times
Thinking about the rain
Thinking about how bad it feels alone again
I'm sorry for the way things are in China
I'm sorry things ain't what they used to be
But more than anything else
I'm sorry for myself
'Cause you're not here with me
Our friends all ask about you
I say you're doing fine
And I expect to hear from you almost anytime
But they all know I'm crying
And I can't sleep at night
They all know I'm dying down deep inside
I'm sorry for all the lies I told you
I'm sorry...

Job 3:1 -10

Third paragraph:

“The world has no meaning. As we have seen, though, this answer doesn't work for the believer in God. And for Job, a faithful follower of the lord, this answer didn't work either.



But what was the answer, what was the explanation? Job didn't have one. All he had was his extreme grief and all the questions that inevitably accompanied it."

Can anyone know unless the "curtain" is pulled away?

4th Paragraph (right after the Read the Text section)

- Life, of course, is a gift from God. **We exist only because God has created us (Acts 17:28; Rev 4:11).**"
- God created life and gave this as a give of creatorship to man.
 - You were created by –
 - Act of love
 - Selfish indulgence
 - Rape / incest
 - Your genetic makeup was determined by inheritance

Bottom pink section:

"Have you ever felt the way Job felt here, that is, wishing you had never been born? Eventually, though, what happened? Of course, you felt better. How important it is for us to remember that, even in our worst moments, **we have the hope, the prospect, of things improving.**"

Often, not in this lifetime. Many of my patients and families will not have it any better until their bodies are made new in Heaven.

Many of the people living in devastatingly poor countries such as Haiti have little hope of things improving. Especially this is true after the recent hurricane.

I see little of "things improving" listed in Christ's sermon on the mount with His description of the beatitudes.

Christ said the life of the genetically blind was for the praise of God

- John 9:3 (GNT) "Jesus answered, "His blindness has nothing to do with his sins or his parents sins. He is blind so that God's power might be seen at work in him."
- 2 Corinthians 12:9 "But his answer was: "My grace is all you need, for my power is greatest when you are weak." I am most happy, then, to be proud of my weaknesses, in order to feel the protection of Christ's power over me."



MONDAY

Rest in the Grave

Job 3:11 - 26

1st paragraph

“Job lost all his children. All of them. It’s hard enough to imagine the pain of losing one child. Job lost them all. And he had ten! No wonder he wished that he were dead. And again, Job had no idea of the background behind it all, **not that it would have made him feel better had he know, would it.**”

Did Job know any idea behind it all? Does knowing the background help us?

“Our Friends, we want you to know the truth about those who have died, so that you will not be sad, as are those who have no hope.” 1 Thessalonians 4:13

Does knowing the future always help us? In what way? Why do we have prophecy? To know what is going to happen?

No, to know that God is the kind of person HE truly is when things are fulfilled as HE has said.

- John 8:28
- Ezekiel 32:15
- Ezekiel 6:13
- Luke 21:28 (encouragement)
- Luke 21:31 (encouragement)
- John 13:19 (that Jesus is the Messiah)
- John 14:29 (that we may believe in Him)

Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6 and John 11:11 - 14 The state of the dead

We usually don’t quote the clinically depressed with the maxims of life. Job’s descriptions of his demise is a poor basis for deep spiritual insights. The tired old king Solomon (author of Ecclesiastes) was discouraged after a life that was largely wasted with poor choices. He, also, is an unlikely leader of thought for all things spiritual.

It is not just one proof text which is the basis for my understanding on what happens with human “death”

- The beginning of creation of man
- The way the kings of Judah are described as sleeping in death
- The statements of Job and Solomon
- In the book of Isaiah, the dead do not praise God. Isaiah 26, 38, 41, 57
- The benediction by the angel to Daniel at the close of his book is for a reward for faithful



service at the resurrection and a meeting of Daniel with God then, no before.

- The description throughout the book of Psalms talks about the difference between praising God while alive, and absence of praise in death.
- All but one of Christ's statements on death describe the reward at the resurrection, not upon death.
- Christ's promise of eternal life in John 3:16 tells us that without this gift, we will not live forever.
- Peter describes David as still present in his tomb with the people of his day in Acts 2:29 & 34
- When Stephen was stoned he "fell asleep"
- Paul's reference to the church members dying as falling asleep.
- Paul's discussion regarding death and resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4 do not make any sense if there is immediate transport to heaven at death.
- In Philippians 3 Paul is looking forward to the resurrection from the dead, not meeting Christ before then.
- In Colossians 3:4 it is when Christ appears that we will appear with Him in glory. It is after the resurrection.
- In 1 Timothy 6 Paul states that only God is immortal.
- 2 Timothy 1:9, 10 It is through the gospel that immortality is revealed. We do not have the ability to live forever without it.
- In Hebrews 11, it is the resurrection that was the reward for the martyrs, not the immediate presence of God. "None of them received their reward." It will be given to them at the same time as the rest of us. Heb 11:39, 40
- Jude 6, 14, 15 There is a judgment and reward at the end of earth's history.
- Revelation 20:12, 13 Everyone is judged after the resurrection

Negro Spiritual: Soon-a Will Be Done

"No more weeping and a wailing
I am going to live with God"

TUESDAY

Other People's Pain

Third paragraph:

"We don't suffer in groups. We don't suffer anyone's pain but our own. We know only our own pain, only our own suffering."

And then the last sentence of the next paragraph: "every fallen being who has ever lived can know only his or her own pain and no more."

Bottom Highlighted area:



“Dwell more on this idea that human suffering is limited to each individual. How does this help you (if it does) to look at the troubling issue of human suffering in a somewhat different light?”

The string theory of human interaction is a bit bizarre to me, but to be human is to share in other people’s grief and troubles.

- “Bear one another’s burdens”

In the teachers comments on page 65:

“How can I maintain empathy in the face of nonstop news images that document human suffering around the world?”

- Desensitization
 - One of the ways we survive emotionally in the medical field is to make varying degrees of separation between ourselves and our patients
- We have to guard against a complete loss of human connection and sympathy
 - 2 Corinthians 3:18 “All of us, then, reflect the glory of the Lord with uncovered faces; and that same glory, coming from the Lord, who is the Spirit, transforms us into his likeness in an ever greater degree of glory.”
 - This works in both good ways and bad
 - This is how we are made
 - It is a natural law that we become like to what we pay attention.

WEDNESDAY

The Weaver’s Shuttle

Job 7:1 - 11

“I give up; I am tired of living. Leave me alone. My life makes no sense.” Job 7:16:

“How short you have made my life! In your sight my lifetime seems nothing. Indeed every living being is no more than a puff of wind” Psalms 39:5 (GNT)

“You don’t even know what our life tomorrow will be! You are like a puff of smoke, which appears for a moment and then disappears.” James 4:14 (GNT)

The lesson emphasizes the brevity of life from these texts. Read paragraph 5 “A Seventh-day Adventist woman wrote an article about. . .”

“Sometimes, amid our pain, reason and rationality go by the wayside, and all we know is our hurt and fear, and we see no hope.”



Highlighted area:

“How should your understanding of the Fall, of death, and of the promise of the resurrection help you to put into perspective the whole question of how fast life goes by?”

I do not think this is about understanding. This is about experiential living. Since we do not have an awareness of the future, all we have to see relatively clearly is the past. It is difficult to drive if all we look at is the rear view mirror.

THURSDAY

“Mah Enosh?” (What is Man?)

Read the first paragraph. Job didn’t know what was happening. We don’t either

“Why are people so important to you? Why pay attention to what they do? You inspect them every morning and test them every minute.” Job 7:17 - 21 (GNT)

- Mah Enosh - What is man?
- Who are we?
- Why are we here?

- Job’s perspective:
- Why are bad things happening to him?
- What purpose to his life?

Full Definition of love (From Miriam-Webster Dictionary)

1. strong affection for another arising out of kinship or personal ties <maternal love for a child>
2. attraction based on sexual desire : affection and tenderness felt by lovers
3. affection based on admiration, benevolence, or common interests <love for his old schoolmates>
an assurance of affection <give her my love>
warm attachment, enthusiasm, or devotion <love of the sea>
the object of attachment, devotion, or admiration <baseball was his first love>
a beloved person : darling —often used as a term of endearment (2) British —used as an informal term of address

unselfish loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another: as (1) : the fatherly concern of God for humankind (2) : brotherly concern for others

- a person's adoration of God
- a god or personification of love
- an amorous episode : love affair
- the sexual embrace : copulation
- a score of zero (as in tennis)
- capitalized Christian Science : god

John 3:16 & 1 John 3:1



Read last paragraph

Beholding God's love

- That is the best thing ever.
- That is endless
- That is the basis for God's government

Additional Notes:

Life and Death or the State of Man

The Biblical definition of death is different than what we typically understand death to be. Both in the old and new testament the concept of death is not portrayed as it is in our current culture and media.

John 8:51; 11:25, 26 - Christ's followers will never die

John 11:11 - 14 Lazarus was asleep

Mark 5:22 - 43 Dead child was 'asleep'

Obviously, Christ's understandings of what constituted death is not the physical "death" of the human body.

Genesis 2:7 - body+breath of life = living being

Genesis 3:1-10 (serpent/devil said you will not die) The lie by the serpent/devil in Gen 3:4 of "you will not die" has been believed by many. It is not the truth.

Deut 18:10 - 12 You are not to 'practice black magic, be a fortuneteller, witch, or sorcerer,' "cast spells, ask ghosts or spirits for help, or consult the dead."

Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10 The living know what is going on in the world but not the dead

Isaiah 26:14

"They are now dead, they live no more;

those departed spirits do not rise.

You punished them and brought them to ruin;

you wiped out all memory of them." What happens to the wicked in the end (at the end of this world/age). They are no more. Their spirits do not rise a second time. They are completely forgotten.

Isaiah 26:19-21

"But your dead will live;

their bodies will rise.

You who dwell in the dust,

wake up and shout for joy.

Your dew is like the dew of the morning;

the earth will give birth to her dead.

Go, my people, enter your rooms



and shut the doors behind you;
hide yourselves for a little while
until his wrath has passed by.

See, the Lord is coming out of his dwelling
to punish the people of the earth for their sins.

The earth will disclose the blood shed upon her;
she will conceal her slain no longer." The righteous dead are asleep and will live again in the future, at the close of time of Christ's coming.

Isaiah 38:10-20 describes living vs dead, dead do not praise God. They are not in His presence singing Hallelujah or any other praise.

Isaiah 41:11, 12 the wicked. dead disappear from the earth and cannot be found, the wicked will no longer exist

Isaiah 57:1, 2 The righteous person lies in rest in his deathbed asleep in peace (spared of evil - NIV)

Job 7:7-10 The dead do not come back again to the land of the living or to be recognized. They don't interact with the living. (verses 4 - 8 talk about his impending death) (think about this the next time you hear a ghost story; who or what are we seeing?)

Job 14:10 - 14, 12, 20, 21 Until the end of time, the dead will not know about earth's happenings. (I'll discuss verses 22 in section 3)

Job 19:25, 26, 27a - after my body is destroyed by worms I shall see God in the flesh, at the last day when my Savior shall stand on the earth. When does Job expect to see God? His expectation is for seeing God in the flesh at the last day, not as a spirit being upon his death.

Jobs hope and confidence was for the resurrection. He, like Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4, placed his trust in God and was encouraged by the hope of the resurrection. If he believed he would be instantly with God at death, the resurrection would not have been his focus.

Job 34:14, 15 - When God takes back the breath of life we die (perish)

Psalms 6:5 - in the world of the dead, no one remembers God or praises Him. We do not go to heaven immediately!

Psalms 9:5, 6 - when the wicked are destroyed they will not be remembered and even their names will be forgotten. (They are not writhing in pain forever somewhere.)

Psalms 30:9 - in death we neither give God thanks or praise Him (The implied answer to the question is no.)

Psalms 37:10, 20 - soon the wicked will disappear & can't be found. They will disappear like smoke.(They are not in hell.)



Psalms 88:10 - 13 - while alive I will praise the Lord since I can't do that after I'm dead

Psalms 104 - Describes Gods support of all creatures. In v. 29 it describes death as when God removes their breath and (in v. 30) life as when He gives of his Spirit (breath). (At the end of the chapter the wicked are "consumed" and "are no more." They aren't in Hell.)

Psalms 115:17 - "The dead do not praise the Lord, Nor do any who go down into silence;" - those who are dead do not praise the Lord, the grave is silent. Those who die do not go the heaven and then praise God.

Psalms 146:1 - 4 - "When they breathe their last breath, they return to the ground. On that day their plans come to an end."

Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10 - Whatever presents itself for you to do, do it with all your might, because there is no work, planning, knowledge, or skill in the grave where you are going."

Ecclesiastes 12:6, 7 - "Then the dust of mortals goes back to the ground as it was before, and the breath of life goes back to God"

Daniel 12:1 - 3 - at some day in the future those in the dust (ground) will wake up and arise" They are not awake and doing anything now. That will happen in the future.

Daniel 12:13 - Daniel was told that he would "rest" until the end of time, and then he would rise for his reward (he is not getting his reward in heaven now)

Malachi 4:1 - 3 - "It won't leave a single root or branch." Hell is all-consuming. Nothing will be left after the flames have burned up everything that will burn. "The wicked will be ashes beneath your feet." (They are not going to be burning after the fire is finished with its work.)

Matthew 25:21, 31, 41 - 46 - After a future judgment those will receive according to the judgment rendered. (The wicked do not receive their reward/judgment at the point of death.)

Matthew 27:51-53 - "At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people." Have there been anyone resurrected? Yes. Are there a few righteous people in heaven? Yes. Enoch, Elijah, and these that were 'first fruits' of the saved who witnessed to the truth of the resurrection after the resurrection of Christ. (It doesn't say this, but they were undoubtedly taken back to heaven when he ascended and their testimony of Christ was no longer needed on earth.) See Hebrews 11:35 regarding a "better" resurrection with eternal life rather than the resurrection to this mortal life as demonstrated by Elijah/Elisha and the little boy. (1 Kings 17 & 2 Kings 4)



Luke 14:14 (14:12-14) Luke 14:14 "God will repay you on the day the good people rise from death." Jesus says you will receive your reward when the dead come back to life (resurrection of the righteous). Not at death. Here and elsewhere, the rewards of the righteous are given at the end of time following the resurrection, but not upon death.

John 3:16 Christ was given to mankind to give us eternal life (this implies that our souls / spirits do not already have eternal life)

John 5:25-29 - Those in the tombs/graves will hear His voice and come back to life (a time in the future, up to that time they have not heard His voice) That means that those who were dying then, were not going to heaven or hell. They are not hearing Christ's voice in heaven after they die. Heaven and hell were in the future.

John 6:39, 40, 44, 54 - When the righteous will come back to life will be on the last day (not immediately when they die; they are asleep like Lazarus & Jairus' daughter were)

The righteous will be given eternal life. They do not already possess it.

John 6:53, 63 - God (not humans) possess eternal life. It is by partaking of Him on a daily basis that we have eternal life.

- He will bring them back to life on the last day, not when we die. We do not continue on living, but are restored on the last day.

John 8:51 - Christ's followers will never see death. Christ must be talking about something else. A different kind of 'death.' It seems his disciples will experience 'sleep' but not 'death.'

John 14:1-3 - The assurance that Christ gave his disciples. He will bring the righteous into his presence when He comes back to earth again, not at their death.

Acts 2:29, 34 - David died but did not go to heaven ----- In discussing the scriptural supports for Jesus as the Messiah, Peter states that since David was not in heaven at the time, the prophecy had to be about Christ. Why was David not in heaven? He was 'asleep' in his tomb awaiting for the resurrection.

Acts 7:60 - when Stephen was stoned he 'koimao' (fell asleep)

Acts 17:31 - (judgment) there is a time in the future in which God will judge the world. It doesn't make sense for heaven or hell to be administered until after the judgment.

Romans 2:6, 7 - "For God will reward every person according to what he has done. Some people keep on doing good, and seek glory, honor, and immortal life; to them God will give eternal life." A person does not have eternal life unless given by God. We will not live forever unless we are saved by God. The wicked will not burn in hell forever. God 'rewards righteous' with eternal life, they do not have eternal life already.

The reward of the righteous. Is The. resurrections in a new body (Romans 8::8-11)



1 Corinthians 11:30 - "That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep." Paul referred to death as sleep even when talking to the New Testament church. Many modern translations go ahead and change the word to 'died' since sleep is understood to be death in this situation.

1 Corinthians 15:16 - 18 "For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. 17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished." If there is immediate transport to heaven, this discussion would make no sense.

1 Corinthians 15:52-54 "52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." At 'the last trumpet' death will be vanquished for the righteous, not before. We currently do not possess immortality. That is going to happen in the future.

At the resurrection of those that sleep in Christ will be raised with new bodies. Note that in both of these passages from 1 Corinthians 15, it is not until the second coming of Christ that the saints will be CHANGED INTO something that will not die. They do not have the immortality until this change.

Philippians 3:8-11 - "What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead." Paul's goal was to achieve the resurrection, not completion of his life. Paul did not expect to see God until his resurrection.

Colossians 2:4-5 - "I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine- sounding arguments. For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is." Paul was absent in body but present in spirit with the Colossians. Here he uses the very same terminology he uses elsewhere to discuss his desires. He has not gone somewhere else yet.

Colossians 3:4 - "When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." 'When' Christ is revealed, 'then' we will be with Christ. It is after the resurrection.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 - 18 - "13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. [Hope in what or whom?] 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of The Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming



of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet The Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words." It is the resurrection to which Paul & 1st century Christians looked forward. Not immediate transport to heaven @ death. This comforting passage would make no sense if the righteous were already in heaven with their Lord and Saviour. It is the corpses that will be made live again. If Paul was talking about a spirit he would not have needed to reassure believers in this way. (compare this passage with Isaiah 26:14, 19)

1 Thessalonians 5:10-11 - "He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." Here Paul speaks of death as a sleep (just as Christ did). If he believed in believers going immediately to heaven, he would not have expressed his encouragement in this way.

1 Timothy 6:15-16 - "God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen." Only God has immortality, not humans. Compare this with Satan's lie in Genesis 3:4.

2 Timothy 1:9-10 - "This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." Immortality is revealed by the gospel, we do not have it inherently.

2 Timothy 2:15-18 Two believers are here described as disruptive and lost their way due to the belief that those that had died have come back to life. Life after death does not occur until the resurrection at the end of the world.

Hebrews 11:35 "Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;" When the children of God looked forward to their reward, they did not look forward to their death, but to their resurrection. If they were to be united with Christ / God / their fellow family and saints at their death, they would not be described as looking forward to their resurrection. It is at the resurrection that the righteous are brought to their Lord and Saviour and reunited with family and friends.

Hebrews 11:39-40 - "These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect." The righteous will not receive their reward until we do at Christ's second coming. All these men and women of faith listed in Hebrews 11, have not gone to heaven and received what God has promised. They are awaiting their reward until the second coming.

Jude 6, 14, 15 There is a judgment and subsequent administration of judgment at the last day of this earth. People do not receive their reward (by going to heaven or hell) now, but only after the judgment



which will be at the end of the earth's history.

Revelation 16:14,16 - "They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty. . . .

Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon." Who are these spirits that we see doing real things in the 'land of the living.' They are spirits of the devil (fallen angels) who are trying to misguide the whole earth.

Revelation 20:12, 13 Revelation 20:12-13 (NASB Strong's) "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Everyone is judged at the end of time according to their deeds. The land and the sea give up the dead to be judged." This appears to happen before the rewarding the righteous eternal life and the wicked eternal obliteration.

In the Bible death is often characterized as sleep: Job 14:12; Psalms 13:3; Jeremiah 51:39, 57;

This misunderstanding all began with the serpent's lie in Genesis 3:4 "you will not surely die." What will happen to the wicked? Are they burning somewhere now in hell?

Obadiah 1:16

"Because just as you drank on My holy mountain,
All the nations will drink continually.
They will drink and swallow
And become as if they had never existed."

1 Samuel 28 vs Hebrews 11:39, 40 (1 Chron 10:1,13) This is the story of Saul consulting with a medium trying to talk to Samuel regarding plans for battle. Yet we are told that the dead do not talk to us. Bible heroes will receive their reward when we do (they are not in Heaven now). So how did this happen? If we apply what we read in Revelation 16, then this was probably a fallen angel/demon that was impersonating the prophet for the purpose of deception.

John 11 -- The story. Of Lazarus death and resurrection

-- Jesus said "Come out", not down, not up

- no mention is made of what wonderful things Lazarus saw when he was dead - there was nothing to tell

- resurrection was something good, not bad (if you truly loved someone, would you want them to leave God and heaven)

What will happen to the unrighteous?

Matthew 8:29 - there is a time in the future when the wicked, demons & Satan will be punished.



Hebrews 9:27 everyone dies once, and then they are judged.

John 5:25-29 reward of life or death is when we come from the graves in response to Christ's voice (see 1 Thess 4:13-18)

2 Peter 3:7, 10-12 ungodly to be destroyed at the end of the world. (Destroyed, not dangled in a non-consuming fire. The fire will completely destroy the wicked.) See also Matthew 8:29 & Mark 5:7)

Revelation 5:13 "And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." (there is no one in hell crying and no discordant voices)

Isaiah 26:14 The dead will not live again, all remembrance of them will be gone. (these chapters from Isaiah 26 through 27 are about the end of time with the reward of the righteous and the wicked)

Isaiah 34:2 "For the Lord's indignation is against all the nations, And His wrath against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to slaughter" The Lord will destroy the wicked. (destroy completely)

Ezekiel 18:4, 20 - "the sinner, he shall die" (he/she won't live forever in agony - he will die.)

Ezekiel 33:11 "As I live, declares the Almighty Lord, I don't want wicked people to die. Rather, I want them to turn from their ways and live. Change the way you think and act! turn from your wicked ways!"

Malachi 4:1 they shall be stubble. "It won't leave a single root or branch."

2 Peter 3:10 the earth will melt

Psalms 11:6 fire and brimstone from God will consume them.

What about other passages that seem to say there are spirits or that there is 'life after death' other than at the resurrection?

Job 14:22 (NIV1984)

He feels but the pain of his own body

and mourns only for himself." The whole chapter up to this point is of how the person ceases to exist in this life once death occurs, but then ends with this verse. This appears to be poetic language similar to Judges 9:8 - 15 where inanimate objects (trees and bushes) speak lessons or ideas. We see this in other areas of scripture as well.

2 Corinthians 5:6-8 (NASBStr)

"Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are



absent from the Lord — for we walk by faith, not by sight — we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord." A quick reading of this passage sounds like a spirit like life after death as is often taught. However, a reasoned approach to this passage would lead one otherwise. In 2 Corinthians 5:1 Paul talks about the earthly body as a tent (temporary dwelling) and a heavenly body (permanent dwelling). In verse 2, he goes on to say he (we) would rather be in our permanent/eternal heavenly body, and in verse 3, not in a state of nakedness (without our earthly or heavenly bodies). In verse 4 he expresses a desire not to be naked (dead) and to be clothed with our heavenly bodies. If he was going to be with God in this body-less state, he would not object and wish so strongly to be clothed with his heavenly body. In verse 6, he acknowledges that for as long as we are in our earthly body, we are away from our heavenly body. In verse 8, he expresses the wish to be away from this earthly body and present with The Lord in his heavenly body. In verse 9, Paul goes on to say that whether we are at home with God (in our heavenly body) or absent from Him (in our earthly body) we are to be pleasing to God. Paul is expressing his desire to be translated without seeing death (being naked). He yearned to be with God, which from this passage (verses 2 - 4) was not possible until he was clothed with his heavenly body. This is echoed in Paul's statements in Romans 8:22, 23 in which he states our redemption is when we have redemption of our bodies. This is also stated in similar language in Philippians 1:20-24 with Paul's need to remain in his mortal body/flesh for the benefit of the infant Christian church, but his desire to be in heaven in his heavenly body.

In another passage, 1 Corinthians 5:3, Paul talks about being absent in body, but present with the believers in Corinth. He clearly does not imply that he is out of his earthly body, but rather his heart and mind are thinking of his Christian children and yearning to be with them to assist them in their administrative needs.

If Paul really believed that a believer was transported to heaven at death, he would not have answered the Thessalonians concerns as he did in 1 Thessalonians 4:13 - 18. There he gives as encouragement the hope of Christ's return and the joyful resurrection. He terms those who have passed away as "asleep in Jesus" (v 14). He does not teach as the many current preachers that we are instantly in heaven, but await the return of our Lord to awaken his children.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 (NASBStr)

"so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints." Some have portrayed that this shows Christ's second coming is portrayed as accompanied by disembodied spirits. Rather, Paul is wishing for the Thessalonian Christians to be holy at the time of Christ's coming, just like all the other of Christ's followers will be at His coming. This is a time of reckoning and judgment and Paul's fervent wish is for his spiritual children to be ready.

Philippians 1:21-26 (NASBStr) "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, so that your proud



confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again." As we have seen in the discussion of 2 Corinthians 5, this is another expression of Paul's desire to glorify God. If God would be glorified by his life and work, so be it. But if his martyrdom would be to God's glory then that would be OK, too. He is hemmed in with the two possibilities, to live for Christ or die for Him. In his other statements he has clearly described death as sleep for the saints (1 Corinthians 15:51, 1 Thess 4:13 - 15, and Christ's statements in Mark 5:39 & John 11:11). The tired apostle is torn between the desire to serve and the desire for rest.

Luke 23:43 (NASBStr)

And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise." This was stated by Christ to the thief on the cross. Christ promised the thief that he would be with him in heaven. In John 20:17, Christ says that he has not been to heaven yet, so if this statement is as transcribed, there was something wrong with one of these two statements. In the original scripts, there is no punctuation. Punctuation was not inserted until the 13th - 15th centuries. It is placed to assist the reader and is dependent on the understanding of the transcriptionist.

Here are two examples of how comma placement makes an extreme difference in meaning.

Example #1:

Dear John:

I want a man who knows what love is all about. You are generous, kind, thoughtful. People who are not like you admit to being useless and inferior. You have ruined me for other men. I yearn for you. I have no feelings whatsoever when we're apart. I can be forever happy--will you let me be yours?

Jane

vs

Dear John:

I want a man who knows what love is. All about you are generous, kind, thoughtful people, who are not like you. Admit to being useless and inferior. You have ruined me. For other men, I yearn. For you, I have no feelings whatsoever. When we're apart, I can be forever happy. Will you let me be?

Yours,

Jane

The second common illustration is:

An English professor wrote the words, "Woman without her man is nothing" on the blackboard and directed his students to punctuate it correctly. The men wrote: "Woman, without her man, is nothing." The women wrote: "Woman: Without her, man is nothing."

A third illustration:

Originally posted by Silence Dogood:

Someone in czarist Russia was given a prison sentence. He happened to come upon the sentence written: "Pardon impossible, to be sent to Siberia." The man stealthily erased the comma and put



another one in: "Pardon, impossible to be sent to Siberia." He was freed.

Getting back to the original text from Luke 23:43 And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise." could also legitimately be written And He said to him, "Truly I say to you today, you shall be with Me in Paradise." This would provide no conflict between this text in which Christ promises the thief eternal life, and John 20:17 where He states he has not been to the Father yet. He was laid in the tomb, and like other humans rested until his Father called Him.

Matthew 25:46 (NASBStr)

These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." Here the extent of the punishment is eternal. The results last for eternity. Just like the extent of the life for the redeemed is eternal. There is not a time of retribution after which the person will inherit eternal life. There is no second chance or signs of a purification process whereby the lost can then be saved. It is eternal death.

Luke 16:19 - 31 The story of the rich man and his beggar Lazarus.

Matthew 13:34 (NASBStr)

"All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable." Christ used parables to teach us and reveal to us things of the kingdom of God. Only to the disciples did he speak directly without the use of parables. (John 16:29, Mark 4:33,34) In parables, the object lessons were to be made from the familiar to the reveal that which was unknown. The central lesson was truth with the details of the parable used to illustrate something that was understood by those that were listening. In this parable, Christ is warning His listeners that "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead." Luke 16:31 To believe every detail of this story as Biblical truth would have us to believe that when we die we are not transported to heaven as many believe, but we will be 'transported by angels to Abraham's bosom,' and that Abraham will talk to those in torment despite a 'great chasm fixed' between the two entities. Christ had just emphasized the importance and permanence of the Old Testament (Luke 16:16 - 17). He here continues the importance of heeding it's instruction. If we were to take everything in Biblical parables at face value, we would promote dishonest bookkeeping (Luke 16:1-9), that slavery was valued in heaven (Mark 12:4), or that trees talk to each other (Judges 9:7-15). The whole of scripture speaks to the state of the dead and to the resurrection of the righteous being the goal of the redeemed of God, and the eternity of life with the Saviour. Clearly, we are to listen to the Word of God and have 'Ears that hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.'

The confusion over the true nature of man, the state of the dead, and the misunderstanding of about the end of sin and sinners has many people under a great delusion. It has led many to doubt in a loving God and a misunderstanding of the ultimate reality: that God is Love. He wants the best for His children. And he is returning to bring back to Him those who trust in Him and are His friends.



2016 Q4 The Book of Job - Lesson 6

The Curse Causeless?

- Memory Text: “Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his maker?” Job 4:17
- This week’s lesson stresses the importance of putting ourselves both in Job’s position, and in the position of his friends who came to mourn and grieve with Job. Who here hasn’t sought to comfort and console a friend or loved one in their pain and loss? Who here has not needed the comfort and consolation of others in their own time of pain and loss? Who here doesn’t know what it’s like to try and find the right words to speak to those whose grief cuts at our own hearts as well?
- It’s difficult isn’t it? To know what to say when there really isn’t anything you can say to make it better. It’s tough to know what to do that will really *help* someone who is hurting. I think most of us tend to go with a casserole – it seems like food tends to be our default position when dealing with grief and loss. What would you have said to Job if you were his friend? What do you say to a friend who had lost 10 children, all his property, all his livestock, all his financial assets, and finally his good health?
- The last paragraph in Saturday’s lesson reads, “In fact, so much of the book of Job is taken up with the dialogue between Job and these men, as they all try to make sense of what so often seems to make no sense: the endless parade of human suffering and tragedy in a world created by a loving, powerful, and caring God...I’m not sure exactly what point they are trying to make here, but it appears referencing some of the questions answered back in Lesson 4 a couple of weeks ago when we studied about “God and Human Suffering”. ..and whether a loving God is unwilling or unable or either or both... to remove our pain and suffering, and if he did what would that mean for us and what would that say about God. This was such an amazing and powerful class taught by Dr. Jennings 2 weeks ago...if you have not seen it I highly recommend that you view the archive and we will review some points from that lesson later today.
- A quote from the book Education gives us this insight: “Unselfishness, the principle of God's kingdom, is the principle that Satan hates; its very existence he denies. From the beginning of the great controversy he has endeavored to prove God's principles of action to be selfish, and he deals in the same way with all who serve God. To disprove Satan's claim is the work of Christ and of all who bear His name. It was to give in His own life an illustration of unselfishness that Jesus came in the form of humanity. And all who accept this principle are to be workers together with Him in demonstrating it in practical life. To choose the right because it is right; to stand for truth at the cost of suffering and sacrifice—“this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord.” Isaiah 54:17... by **his patient endurance he vindicated his own character, and thus the character of Him whose representative he was. For those who love God, those who are “called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28), Bible biography has a yet higher lesson of the ministry of sorrow. “Ye are My witnesses, saith the**



Lord, that I am God” (Isaiah 43:12)—witnesses that He is good, and that goodness is supreme.

SUNDAY

The Big Questions

- Sunday’s lesson again emphasizes the incredibly important great controversy perspective revealed in the book of Job – giving us some incredible insight into this aspect of our reality and pulling back the veil to remind us just how closely connected our earthly world is with the supernatural world and the war going on all around us.
- So after the first 2 chapters of Job, we have a bunch of “talking heads” or dialogue going on between Job, his three friends, and his wife. And they are discussing the big questions...the heavy issues of life and death, pain and suffering, why do bad things happen to good people, theology, philosophy, the character of God, etc. The lesson says, “There is nothing like a calamity, either our own or that of others, to shake us out of our spiritual lethargy and get us to start asking the important questions.” Any thoughts on this? Have you found this to be true in your own lives?
- Several Bible authors seemed to grasp this concept and provided some advice about how to view tragedy and trials.
 - 1 Peter 1:6-7 – In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. Pure gold put in the fire comes out of it *proved* pure; genuine faith put through this suffering comes out *proved* genuine (MSG). Rejoice greatly in this reality, even though now, for a little while, you may suffer pain, grief, and trials of all kinds.⁷ These transient difficulties are allowed to come so that your confidence and trust in God— which is infinitely more valuable than gold, for even gold purified by fire will be destroyed—may be permanently established in your character, and result in praise, glory and honor to God when Jesus Christ comes again (REM).
 - James 1:2-4 – Consider it a pure gift or count it all joy, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don’t try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way (MSG). My brothers and sisters in God’s family, I want you to rejoice and keep a positive attitude whenever you face troubles of various kinds,³ because every trial exercises your trust in God—which overcomes fear and selfishness—and builds a confident, steadfast application of the Remedy.⁴ And this steadfast engagement in God’s treatment must be completed so that you may be fully healed, mature, and like Christ in character—not lacking anything (REM).
 - James 1:12 – Anyone who meets a testing challenge head-on and manages to stick it out is mighty fortunate. For such persons loyally in love with God, the reward is life and more life (MSG). But the person who steadfastly continues in God’s treatment despite trials, difficulties or



discomfort, will be healed and receive eternal life—as promised by God to those who love and trust him. (Remedy)

- Psalm 119:72-73 My troubles turned out all for the best – they forced me to learn from your textbook. Your teaching has taught me what is true and right (MSG).
- Thoughts about these texts...does the instruction to rejoice in trials take some getting used to...seem counterproductive? Who here has experienced that refining fire, and had their faith strengthened, their capacity for love/compassion/empathy grown, their characters matured in ways that would not have happened...***could not*** have happened if not for the trial? These events...the ones that shake us out of our spiritual lethargy and hone in our focus on the things that really matter...there's more of them coming. Isn't this what we believe is going to happen at the beginning of the time of trouble? Events so significant and so catastrophic that even the most inattentive are suddenly paying attention and asking questions. I believe these trials will provide critical opportunities for every person alive to make a judgment about God – is He trustworthy, and about themselves – do they love others more than self (they do not love their lives so much as to shrink from death, Rev. 12:11)
- One of the founders of our church refers to this as a “shaking”. Remember, how many groups will there be at the end of time? Only 2. “The Lord has faithful servants who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view. There are precious ones now hidden who have not bowed the knee to Baal. They have not had the light which has been shining in a concentrated blaze upon you. But it may be under a rough and uninviting exterior the pure brightness of a genuine Christian character will be revealed. In the daytime we look toward heaven but do not see the stars. They are there, fixed in the firmament, but the eye cannot distinguish them. In the night we behold their genuine luster.—Testimonies for the Church 5:80, 81 (1882). {LDE 181.1} **On every occasion that persecution takes place, the witnesses make decisions, either for Christ or against Him. Those who show sympathy for the men wrongly condemned, who are not bitter against them, show their attachment for Christ.**—The Signs of the Times, February 20, 1901. {LDE 181.2} So she says: “Let opposition arise, let bigotry and intolerance again bear sway (hello election season), let persecution be kindled, and the half-hearted and hypocritical will waver and yield the faith; but the true Christian will stand firm as a rock, his faith stronger, his hope brighter than in days of prosperity.—The Great Controversy, 602 (1911).
- The broken ranks will be filled up by those represented by Christ as coming in at the eleventh hour. There are many with whom the Spirit of God is striving. **The time of God's destructive judgments** (dark language – what does it mean?) is the time of mercy for those who [now] have no opportunity to learn what is truth. Tenderly will the Lord look upon them. His heart of mercy is touched, His hand is still stretched out to save...large numbers will be admitted who in these last days hear the truth for the first time.—Letter 103, 1903



- Soon the last test is to come to all inhabitants of the earth. At that time prompt decisions will be made. Those who have been convicted under the presentation of the Word will range themselves under the bloodstained banner of Prince Emmanuel.—Testimonies for the Church 9:149
- [Optional] The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church.
- The pink box at the bottom of Sunday's lesson says, "Have you been able to look back at former trials and seen the good that has come out of them? How do you deal with those trials that have brought nothing good?" Thoughts? My Bible says "And we know that **ALL** things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28 NKJV or in the Remedy "And we know that in **ALL** things, at **ALL** times, in **ALL** circumstances, God works for the good of his creation and for the good of all who love him. Those who have accepted God's call—to work with him according to his purpose—experience the good things that God has for them." So are there some tragedies and trials that appear to have brought nothing good? Are there things we can do to turn that scenario around?

- **MONDAY**

- **When Have the Innocent Perished?**

- Job 2:11-13 describes how Job's friends viewed his situation: Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, each one came from his own place—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. For they had made an appointment together to come and mourn with him, and to comfort him.¹² And when they raised their eyes from afar, and did not recognize him, they lifted their voices and wept; and each one tore his robe and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven. ¹³ So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that *his* grief was very great.
- They made an appointment, they planned to come together to comfort their friend. And they were obviously stunned by what they saw as Job was unrecognizable. Then they sat silently with him, for seven days, never saying a word. This practice likely originated with the Jewish mourning ritual called "sitting *shiva* (*seven*)", – seven days of empathy and compassion marked by mourners sitting on low stools or on the ground. The first instance mentioned in the Bible is in Genesis 7:10, where it says "And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth." This is after Noah, his family, and all the animals were already in the ark...and the Rabbis of the Talmud say that these seven days were a period of mourning for Methuselah, the oldest man who ever lived. (Thanks google)



- So they sat silently, comforting Job and mourning with him for seven days, but once Job began to speak and utter his complaints, we find out these three friends had plenty to say. Eliphaz's initial response is found in Job 4:1-11: Then Eliphaz from Teman spoke up: "Would you mind if I said something to you? Under the circumstances it's hard to keep quiet. You yourself have done this plenty of times, spoken words that clarify, encouraged those who were about to quit. Your words have put stumbling people on their feet, put fresh hope in people about to collapse. But now *you're* the one in trouble—you're hurting! You've been hit hard and you're reeling from the blow. But shouldn't your devout life give you confidence now? Shouldn't your exemplary life give you hope?"⁷⁻¹¹ "Think! Has a truly innocent person ever ended up on the scrap heap? Do genuinely upright people ever lose out in the end? It's my observation that those who plow evil and sow trouble reap evil and trouble. One breath from God and they fall apart, one blast of his anger and there's nothing left of them. The mighty lion, king of the beasts, roars mightily, but when he's toothless he's useless—No teeth, no prey—and the cubs wander off to fend for themselves. (MSG)
- As the quarterly states, if you were writing a book on grief counseling you could use the friends' initial actions in the chapter "How to Help a Grieving Soul", and then you could feature Eliphaz in the chapter titled "What NOT to Say to a Grieving Soul." The lessons says, "It's hard to imagine someone coming up to a person going through all that Job was going through and saying, basically, '*Well, you must have deserved it, because God is just, and only the wicked suffer like this.*'" Sadly, is this actually so hard to imagine?
- Eliphaz is spouting straight retribution theology here. Lots of folks still believe that if bad stuff happens to you, then you must have done something wrong...and if a *bunch* of bad stuff happens to you, then you must have done something *really* wrong! But don't forget that many of these same folks also believe that if you do everything right and check all the behavioral boxes, then prosperity will follow. The other side of the retributive justice coin is the prosperity gospel. In my experience, both of these ideas are completely flawed.
- The pink box at the bottom of Monday's lesson says "Think about a time people comforted you amid loss and pain. What did they say? How did they say it? What did you learn from that experience that could help you when you are in the position of having to comfort someone else?"

TUESDAY

A Man and His Maker

- So while Eliphaz is likely not in the running for the "Best Sympathy and Tact" award, did you notice that he did use a common personnel management technique when responding to Job's complaints. When managers have to reprimand or provide constructive criticism to employees, they often camouflage the criticism by sandwiching it between compliments. So Eliphaz gives Job props for his past ability to be an encouragement, a light, and a counselor to others...at least when



things were going well for Job. But his tone changes pretty quickly in verse 5 and it goes down from there. He also seems to read into and respond to a lot of things Job never even said.

- Eliphaz said that God is just, and so the evil that comes upon us is deserved. This belief is still shared by many – Christians and non-Christians alike. Isn't this the underlying thread of karma...and even the natural law of sowing and reaping? How is it different from those?
- One difference is found in our study of Lesson 4 from two weeks ago. In that lesson, and again I encourage you to watch the recording and read the notes, we talked about some of the many reasons why suffering, pain, and death occur on this earth...and many have no connection at all between what is sown and what is reaped.
- **Entropy**, the slow gradual decay of order that occurs because we are disconnected from God's constant full presence and care. "in the day you eat of the Tree of Knowledge, dying you will die." (Gen 2:17) Aging and the sleep death occur because of slow decay
- **Genetic defects** and disease because of entropy and the slow decay of our original design
- **Toxins and poisons** because of mutations and alterations to God's design—the changes in nature and the manufacture of chemicals and products not original to God's creation
- **Evil/selfish actions originating in people** who are selfish—Cain killing Abel
- **Evil/selfish actions inspired by Satan** upon people to hurt others—Judas betraying Christ
- **Satan and his agencies** affecting nature and causing problems—first chapter of Job
- **Good people acting to defend and protect**—Abraham rescuing Lot
- **Good people acting selfishly** and doing bad things—David murdering Uriah—which occurs because of sin in the heart not yet removed
- **People, whether good or evil, making mistakes** with no intent to help or harm, slipping and falling, auto accident because of ice etc.
- **Humans acting on God's orders**—kill all the people, women, children, cattle, etc. Why would God give such orders? Remember it was God's original plan to have the hornet and pestilence go before Israel and as the inhabitants abandoned the land the Israelites would have slowly occupied it with no killing. But the people chose to do it their way and so God gave the instructions, if you are going to kill then in order to minimize suffering, death, and traumatize the least number of people and bring peace in a world, wipe them all out and get it over with. Instead, we have had 4000 years of continual fighting, violence and war scarring every generation living in that part of the world.
- **God acting to protect**, lance, cauterize, keep open the avenue for Messiah—putting people in the grave/asleep, but they will arise again: Flood, first born of Egypt, Platoons that came to arrest Elijah
- It is fascinating how these men – Job and his friends – understood the nature and character of the true God, even before the rise of the nation of Israel. These folks were obviously meticulous writers, historians, documenters – even if no one had compiled it all into books like Moses did, they clearly were very good at passing along stories and information from one generation to the



next, and there were definitely others besides the patriarchs who knew something of the Lord, and here we see Eliphaz seeking to defend his view of the character of God, distorted though it was.

WEDNESDAY

The Foolish Taking Root

- As far as I can tell, Wednesday's lesson is saying that Eliphaz is not entirely wrong in his theology and in what he is saying that evil happens only to evil people...and then offers several Bible text examples that supposedly echo those same thoughts. So let's look at these texts and see if they reflect Eliphaz's sentiments from Job 5:
- Psalm 37:10-11: A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found. But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy peace and prosperity. (NIV)
- Proverbs 26:2: Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest.
- Luke 1:52: He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.
- 1 Cor 3:19-21: For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness" and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile." So then, no more boasting about human leaders!
- Psalm 34:6: This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.
- Hebrews 12:5: My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.
- Hosea 6:1: Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds.
- Psalm 33:18-19: But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine.

THURSDAY

Rush to Judgment

- The lesson states, "Much of what Eliphaz said to Job was correct...the problem wasn't so much with what he said; the problem was more the context in which he said it...the truths he was uttering just didn't apply to the specific situation."
- Quote from Education p. 146: "No truth does the Bible more clearly teach than that what we do is the result of what we are. To a great degree the experiences of life are the fruition of our own thoughts and deeds."
- MH p. 163: "Many think that they are representing the justice of God while they wholly fail of representing His tenderness and His great love. Often the ones whom they meet with sternness and



severity are under the stress of temptation. Satan is wrestling with these souls, and harsh, unsympathetic words discourage them and cause them to fall a prey to the tempter's power."

- Even if Eliphaz had been right, and Job brought this suffering upon himself, his words were imprudent and ill-timed. Job stands as a symbol for all humanity, for we all have been caught up in the great controversy, and we all suffer in it. And we all, at some point, need compassion and sympathy, not sermonizing. Sure, there's a time and place for getting lectured. But when a man is sitting on a pile of ashes, his life ruined, his children dead, and his body full of sores—that is not the time.

The Book of Job Lesson 7 4Q 2016

Retributive Punishment

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

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

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

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

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

What does **retributive** mean?

1. Characterized or involving retribution.

What does **retribution** mean?

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

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

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

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

This is also known as coercion, or compelling power.

Is this how God's government works?



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

How does love work?

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

Notice this description from EGW:

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

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



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

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

SABBATH

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

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

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

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

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

What did Jesus say?

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

SUNDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Hosea 6:6

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

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

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

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

What did Jesus say?

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

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

TUESDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

WEDNESDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

Remember what Jesus said:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

THURSDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the questions.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

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

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

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

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church

12702 9th Street

Garden Grove, CA 92840

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

Phone: (714) 534-1987

Fax: (714) 534-3877

Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



The Book of Job Lesson 8 4Q 2016

Innocent Blood

SABBATH

What comes to mind from the title? In Scripture, whose blood is the innocent blood?

When Scripture refers to the blood of the lamb, or the blood of the sacrificial offering, is this to be taken literally? Is it talking about literal red corpuscles?

To what is the blood referring? The life of the creature is in the blood Lev 17:11—so the blood is a metaphor, a symbol of the life.

In this case, then, the life of Jesus, and was Jesus life a sinful or sinless life? A sinless life! So the blood of Jesus is symbolic of the sinless life of Jesus.

Why is this important? How was the blood of the sacrificial animal to be utilized? It was to be applied to various points in the sanctuary. Consider what the implications of that are—the sinless life being taken throughout.

Did the blood of the sacrificial animal have any impact on saving sinners? Why or why not?

I was listening to Christian radio the week before Easter 2016 when someone called in and asked the two guest theologians to discuss the purpose of animal sacrifices in the Old Testament Jewish system. Sadly there answer is revealed how deeply the infection of imposed law has penetrated Christianity:

First theologian: The reason in Leviticus 17 is that there has to be punishment with death for sin, and so in Leviticus 17 when the animal sacrificial system is being established it says this, Leviticus 17:10 “Any Israelite or any alien living among them who eats any blood—I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from his people. For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.” See blood represents life and there has to be the punishment of death for sin, so therefore an animal had to take the punishment and give its life—it’s blood—so that the offerer could live. That was the substitution. What my former professor here at Moody used to call, the exchange of life. Louis Goldberg called it that, the exchange of life. The animal dies, the person lives. And so that’s the reason for the Old Testament sacrifice for atonement.”

Second theologian: “A couple of things in the New Testament. In Luke’s gospel it talks about how on the night that he was betrayed and Jesus was having the Passover meal “And in the same way *He took* the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you



is the new covenant in My blood.” That is it's the death of Jesus that comes about because of his blood loss among other things, his blood loss as well is the thing whereby he was our atoning sacrifice. His death is required for us as well in order to save us. Paul talks about in Romans 5:9 “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.” And so it's very much the same principle. In the Old Testament, the death of an animal was required to take care of the human sin problem and now we have not the death of an animal but of the very Son of God who dies for us. And so his loss of blood is the thing whereby he succumbed on our behalf.¹

Are these theologians correct? Was the blood of the animal necessary for sinners to be saved?

The writer of Hebrews tried to help the New Testament church break out of such thinking by reminding them that “the gifts and sacrifices being offered were *not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper*. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order... But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because *it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins*.” (Heb 9:9,10; 10:3,4 emphasis mine)

Animal sacrifices could never—at any time in human history—take care of the sin problem, because they could not cleanse the conscience, transform the heart, or renew the character, which is required to save sinners. God has had his spokespersons telling humans this throughout our entire history:

- “The multitude of your sacrifices— what are they to me?” says the LORD. “I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats... wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.” (Isa 1:11,16,17)
- With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?
Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Mic 6:6-8)

But perhaps Hosea puts what God wants, what he has always wanted and been working to achieve, most succinctly: “I want your constant love, not your animal sacrifices. I would rather have my people know me than burn offerings to me.” (Hos 6:6 GNT)¹

¹ Chris Fabry Live March 23, 2016, moody broadcasting
<http://www.moodyradio.org/Chris-Fabry-Live/2016/03-2016/2016-03-23---The-Centurion---Bible-Q---A/> The second hour beginning at minute 12:25, guests quoted Michael Vanlaningham and Michael Rydelnik.



What is God saying through His prophets He wants? He wants transformation of the hearts, minds, and characters of His children. He wants love restored in them as the way of living. He wants them to be reunited in heart with Him. This is seeing blood as life, and the blood circles in the animal which is object lesson for the circle of love, the principle of giving.

But there is a problem in what the theologians on the radio described and what many Christians think about the innocent blood. What is the problem, and why do good people think this way?

- The problem is they don't see the blood as representative of sinless life, they see the blood as representative of death, the death of the sinless life. Why?
- They are operating through the wrong law lens, thinking that God's law functions like human law and wrongly believe sin must be punished, and thus a life has to be taken.

What did Jesus say regarding His blood?

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. ⁵⁶ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. John 6:53-57

Was Jesus talking cannibalism? Then what was Jesus talking about? Did Jesus here have in mind any connection to the blood of the sacrificial system? When John the Baptist referred to Jesus as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, was he connecting Jesus to the symbolic system?

Was Jesus suggesting in His metaphorical use of ingesting His blood that we should be ingesting death? Or that we should be partakers of the divine nature?

- Are we the temple of God?
- Does this connect to the OT sanctuary?
- Was the OT system designed to teach us about how the life of Christ gets restored back into God's Spirit Temple?
- Is it a problem if we instead teach the blood represents death?

If a person views the sin problem as a legal problem, then they wrongly conclude that justice requires the infliction of the death penalty by the ruling authority upon the guilty. But, God instead inflicts the death penalty upon His innocent Son whose death is legally accepted as the proper payment either to God or the law for our just punishment. The blood then becomes symbolic of death, the death of the innocent Son of God, that pays the death penalty.

All of this is wrong and is based on the wrong law concept.



Under design law, we realize that sin is a condition of being, which is out of harmony with God and His design for life. This condition is terminal unless remedied. No human being, born of a sinful mother and father, could cure the condition and develop a perfect sinless character and restore God's design back into humanity. So Jesus came, and took upon Himself the terminal condition, through being incarnate—the humanity that He received from His mother—but Jesus also, because His Father was the Holy Spirit had a sinless mind which He could exercise overcome the infection of fear and selfishness and develop a perfect character thus restoring God's design back into the species human.

Thus the blood is really symbolic of the sinless life of Jesus, the perfect character He developed as a human being living in a sinful world!

What does it mean to ingest His flesh and blood? As meat is made of molecules which are nutritional building blocks to the body, so Jesus is the truth, the living Word of God and it is the truth, the ideas, the reality of Jesus which becomes the building blocks of our thoughts, ideas and ultimately our beliefs which restore us to trust in God. In trust we open the heart to God and via the Holy Spirit God pours His perfect character of love into our hearts and this is what the blood symbolizes, the life of God, the nature and character of God is love and thus we become partakers of the divine nature when we die to self and live to love! This is partaking of the flesh and blood of Jesus. This is design law, how things are created to function and has nothing to do with any legal penalties being paid.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Eliphaz, Bildad..." What do you think when the lesson authors use people that God specifically chastises for saying the wrong thing about Him, as having good points? What is the specific, so called, good point the lesson authors use these people to try and make? That God is the source of inflicted punishment.

What does this reveal?

It sadly reveals that the authors are operating upon the wrong law construct, viewing reality through the lens that God's laws function like the laws that sinful human beings make, therefore they wrongly conclude God must punish.

If sin is punished by God, and Christ became sin who knew no sin, then who killed Christ? There are those in Christianity who teach, because they have the wrong concept of the law, that God, not Satan, is the one who killed Jesus at the cross.

But does any inspired source teach that? No! All the inspired sources teach that God didn't lay a hand on Jesus, but that Jesus died from the combination of physical abuse and His Father letting go and not intervening to prevent what was happening to Jesus.



Read second paragraph, “At times of great...” Any concerns with the assumptions in the questions?

What is the assumption in this question, “Why, Lord, did You bother to create me at all?”

- That individual human beings are created directly by God, by God’s direct creative power and action—is this true?
- Did God create the human species? Yes, where? In Eden.
- What was the condition of Adam and Eve when God created them? Perfect and sinless.
- Does inspiration teach that God had a direct hand in the creation of any other individual human? Yes, who? Jesus, and what was the condition of Jesus—sinless!
- Does the Bible teach that God gave Adam and Eve an ability, in perfection before sin, the ability to pro-create, to create beings in their image?
- Did God take that ability away from them when they sinned?
- The Bible teaches we are born in sin, conceived in iniquity. (Ps 51:5) Does God create sin and iniquity? No, then why are we born this way? Because Adam and Eve corrupted themselves and human beings possess the ability to create beings in their image.
- When a man rapes a woman and she becomes pregnant—is that an act of God? No, it is an abuse of an ability God gave mankind.
- So, who decided, that each of us as individuals would be here? Our parents—if my parents would have chosen to skip intimate relations the month I was conceived, I would not exist. My mother had one ovum and my father had one sperm that could combine to make me. Any other combination would be one of my siblings—I have two siblings and they are not me!

Does this idea make anyone uncomfortable? Or does it free us from some terrible ideas being taught about God—like God creates sinners, or God creates diseased and defective beings—persons born with various congenital defects? And if God is the one creating then a person born with congenital defects means that God wants that person born with the various defects to be that way? Such an idea is distorted, wrong, and makes God out to be a being unworthy of our trust. This is based on the lie, the distortion that God creates each individual personally, directly from heaven, like He created Adam and Eve. Such a view demonstrates ignorance of how reality works.

What is the assumption in this question, “Why are You doing this to me?”

- That God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering, tribulations, trials
- That God, as Sovereign, directly causes all things to happen as they do
- That it is God’s will for things to be this way

What is the problem with this type of thinking? What kind of God would such a being be?

Job 10:7 states, “Although You know that I am not wicked, and there is not one who can deliver from Your hand.”

What falsehood is Job struggling with in this passage? That God is the One we must be delivered from—is that true? Who wants us to think we must seek to be delivered or saved from God?



What theologies are currently being taught in Christianity that teach this same idea?

- Jesus died to pay the Father so the Father won't kill us
- Covered by the robe of righteousness so the Father won't see us
- Covered by the blood so the Father will see the blood and realize payment has been made and relent His angry wrath
- The blood applied to record books to erase the record of sins so the Father won't find the record and have to punish us
- Having Jesus, by Himself or along with Mary and the saints, plead to the Father to turn Him away from hurting us

Notice, many theologies are designed to protect us from God rather than reconcile us to God—who wants us to believe we need to be protected from God? Satan wants us to think this, thus he has infected humanity and Christianity with the false imposed law construct and we end up teaching that God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death, and ultimately create theologies that separate us from God.

Read the fourth paragraph, “There’s a difficult irony...” Why didn’t Job know?

- Didn’t God reveal to Adam and Eve a conflict over His character with an enemy who is the source of sin and death?
- What prevented Job from knowing this?
- Was God hiding the information?
- Was God restrictive with the truth?
- Or is Job’s very struggle to understand the truth evidence of the depths of Satan’s lies and distortions about God?
- Does this give us insight into New Testament passages like:
 - Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the **proclamation of Jesus Christ**, according to **the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past**,²⁶ but **now** revealed and made known **through the prophetic writings** by the command of the eternal God... Rom 16:25,26 **what is the mystery? When is it being made known? Now, Paul’s day, through what? The prophetic writings, when were they available? Then why was the mystery being made know in Paul’s day if the writings were available for centuries before? Because Jesus had come to make clear God’s true nature and character and refute the falsehoods of Satan and thus the Scriptures can be understood in their true meaning. So what caused the mystery, the obscuring of truth, difficulty in seeing God’s true character? Satan’s lies about God!**
 - No, we speak of **God’s secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden** [hidden by whom?] and that **God destined for our glory before time began**. [If God intended this wisdom for our glory, was He the one hiding it? No! What wisdom would this be? The truth of God’s character of love!] ⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. [Why didn’t they understand



it? Because they accepted the lie that God's laws function like human laws and therefore God is a god who inflicts punishment, i.e. rules like the worldly rulers rule. And adopting such a view of God prevents people from being glorified, or transformed in character to be like God. Why? By beholding we become changed—the law of worship, we become like the God we worship—design law.] 2Cor 2:7,8

- Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles **the unsearchable riches of Christ,**⁹ and to make plain to everyone **the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God,** who created all things. [What was the mystery hidden that is to be administered now? The truth about God as revealed in Christ. What kept this hidden? Did God hide it? No Satan's lies about God obscured the truth until Christ came and revealed it.]¹⁰ **His intent** was that now, through the church, **the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,**¹¹ according to his **eternal purpose** which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. Eph 3:8-11 [What wisdom is the church to make known? The truth of God's character and nature of love—which will enlighten the rulers and authorities in the universe! This is God's ETERNAL purpose, does this connect with another passage of Scripture? Revelation 14—I saw another angel flying through heaven with the ETERNAL GOSPEL, what is the eternal good news? The truth of God's character of love which has been hidden by the lies of Satan! And the end-time church is to reveal that character—sadly the church instead is infected with Satan's view of God's law and has taken a dictator view of God to the world.]

What was the mystery that was hidden? Who hid it? Who obscured this truth? And what reveals it?

Do you think that had Job understood the Great Controversy elements going on he would have been more bitter and felt worse?

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, "On the other hand..." thoughts? What do you hear?

What level of moral development is being presented? This is at best level four legal thinking of the human law construct paradigm.

If an HIV infected man and woman got together and had an HIV infected baby, what did the baby do wrong? Is the baby innocent of any wrong doing? Yes, but does the baby still have a condition that the baby did not personally choose, that if not remedy will result in death?

This is the condition of sin. Adam and Eve chose to change their very nature, their condition, and we are born with this condition that we did not choose. Thus we are born dead in trespass and sin—i.e.



terminal—but Jesus came to remedy the condition. Thus we as individuals are innocent of having the condition, i.e. it is not our individual fault, but we are not innocent of rejecting the remedy—if we refuse to partake of Christ and what He provides!

The last paragraph states “Job knew that what was happening to him was not something that he deserved.”

What level of moral development is this? This is level 1-4:

- level 1—reward and punishment—get punished for doing something wrong, so bad outcomes are not fair unless one does something wrong. Level one—Job didn’t deserve this because he didn’t do wrong.
- level 2—market place exchange—punishment here is only appropriate if one didn’t keep their part of the bargain. Job did his part, even offered extra sacrifices, so what happened wasn’t deserved.
- level 3—social conformity—punishment is appropriate when one deviates from group rules, but Job didn’t so he didn’t deserve what was happening.
- Level 4—law and order—punishment is proper when one breaks the law and the punishment inflicted is appropriate to the crime. Job didn’t break the law so he didn’t deserve to be punished.

This idea that Job didn’t deserve what happened is based on level 1-4 thinking, which is based on misunderstanding God’s law and how reality functions.

- level 5—love for others—love only exists in an atmosphere of freedom, and therefore one who loves grants others genuine freedom—even it is freedom to not love in return. In a world where love is not supreme pain and suffering happens to innocent people who do love others because they are willing to sacrifice self for the good of others—even their enemies. A movie *Hacksaw Ridge* came out this weekend, it is about the true story of Desmond Doss. Did Desmond Doss deserve the right to love others more than self? And what transpired by his love for God and others in this world where love does not reign supreme in all hearts? Did Desmond Doss lose out because he loved? Or did his faithfulness to God’s methods ultimately not only win for him personally, in his development of character, but won many others over from selfishness to love, and continues to do so?
- level 6—principle based living—understanding the design protocols for life—suffering happens when deviations from design happen, whether one chooses to deviate themselves or not. So, if a tree falls on your house and crushes your leg, the broken leg and pain are what is deserved when a tree falls on you. Or, if one drinks water contaminated with toxins and later develops cancer, cancer is what is deserved when such toxins are ingested.
 - Does the worm deserve to be eaten by the bird?
 - Does the bird deserve to be eaten by the cat?
 - Why does it happen? Because the law of sin and death has infected God’s design.



- Does the truth deserve to be revealed so sentient beings can make intelligent choices of which method they prefer?
- level 7—Understanding Friend of God—not only love for others and understanding design, but understanding and participating in God’s purposes.
 - God is working to resolve the problem of sin, to eradicate deviations from His design and restore the universe to perfection—but always in harmony with His character and methods—which means via the principles of truth, love and liberty.
 - Did Joseph get what he deserved? Did Joseph stay loyal to God and did God allow events to happen for a larger purpose? Yes, the saving of Joseph’s family and the protection of the avenue through which Messiah would come, and thus saving of the human species. Further, through this story the object lesson and teaching which has inspired millions through time, thus working to save untold numbers. And in Joseph’s life personally, did Joseph benefit from the way things unfolded both here and eternally? So, Joseph trusted God and experienced what? Healing of mind and character, which is what is deserved i.e. what happens when one trusts God, not deserved in the imposed law sense of what one earns and has arbitrarily bestowed, but deserved in the design law sense as in what happens when one is reconciled to God!
 - Thus in the life of Job, God had a greater purpose in mind than just Job’s personal health and welfare, God is concerned with the millions of people through history who have needed the lessons that Job’s life brings to help them not be duped into a false system of thinking
 - Further—let’s look at Tuesday’s lesson which brings in another point about death

TUESDAY

What do you think of the last paragraph “We face similar...” How do we understand it?

What of the assumption that the earthquake was a punishment for sin? Was it? Why would the authors assume that death in an earthquake was a punishment for sin? And if it wasn’t a punishment for sin, why was there death not fair?

This is based on such a severe warped understanding of reality.

God’s reality is that He created humans to live eternally, to never die, but sin infected His creation causing pain, suffering and eternal death, and without the remedy achieved by Christ all humans would die eternally.

If someone experiences the first death, what Jesus and the Bible authors called the sleep death—is that the punishment for sin? No! Why does it exist? Because of God’s grace, this first—sleep—death is an artificial state of being that is not the natural result of sin, but permitted to reduce the pain and suffering caused by sin while the plan of salvation is being carried out.



Further, from God's perspective, everyone who dies the first (sleep) death dies young, whether at 969 or at age 1—all die young.

Consider a rope from here to our sun, which is 93 million miles long. This is still finite, a true analogy would be an infinite rope with no end, but we cannot comprehend that. So, a rope 93 million miles long, and every inch on that rope represents one year of life. Is there a significant difference between 1 inch and 969 inches on a rope 93 million miles long? No, all humans die young. God is not primarily interested in how long one lives this life on earth; His primary interest is in healing the hearts and minds of people so they live eternally!

Thus this idea of it not being fair to die in an earthquake is quite distorted. This is a passage from EGW, one of the founders of the SDA church. Here she describes a vision she had:

I was shown the saints' reward, the immortal inheritance. Then I was shown **how much God's people had endured for the truth's sake**, and that they would count heaven cheap enough. **They reckoned that the sufferings of this present time were not worthy to be compared with the glory which should be revealed in them.** The people of God in these last days will be tried. But soon their last trial will come, and then they will receive the gift of eternal life. {1T 432.2}

Or if you prefer the same idea from Scripture:

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 2Cor 4:16,17

WEDNESDAY

Read the third paragraph, "In the Sermon on the Mount..." They quoted the KJV of MT 6:34, here it is from the NIV:

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

What does it mean?

The title of the day's lesson is "Sufficient for the Day" what do you think of with this title?

"And as thy days, *so shall thy strength be.*" Dt 33:25

Or Jesus prayed: "Give us each day our daily bread." Luke 11:3



This is a principle of how God works—we get the strength for today, today. We don't get the strength for tomorrow today. Many people worry about future events and burden themselves with tomorrow's problems today and thus feel overwhelmed and exhausted, why? Because they are not given the strength for tomorrow, or next week, or next month today, they are only given the strength for today!

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, "Still, it's hard..." What is the point the lesson is trying to get us to accept? Are they trying to suggest that when things don't make sense we should simply believe and not think?

But, shouldn't trials and difficulties causes us to step back and reevaluate our current understanding and seek greater wisdom and insight?

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. James 1:2-5

It has been said that pain is fertilizer for the soul—it is during times of difficulty that people are open to the most growth and change. It is during trials and hardships that people are open to reevaluate and mature.

What of the person who pays a faithful tithe, attends church regularly, eats the right foods, doesn't look at objectionable material, yet has their wife divorce them—is it opportunity to evaluate why? What if they discover they governed their home with an authoritarian hand: rules, intimidation, restriction of liberty, and they discovered that such methods destroy love and incite rebellion and they come to a new way of living? Was the pain, the suffering, the heart break of divorce a punishment by God?

Why, in that circumstance, did the trial come?

What would happen if the man simply said, "I have faith in God. I didn't cheat on my wife. She is the sinner not me." and doesn't seek to learn from the problem?

The lesson states we need to learn to trust in the goodness of God—but what if the God construct one has isn't good?

I have many patients who are told they need to trust God, and they say, "I know it's bad that I don't trust Him." I challenge that, and ask them to describe the God they believe in and they invariably describe a God who:



- threatens to kill them if they don't love him
- threatens to burn them in hell
- who must punish wrong-doing
- who they seek to be protected from
- who doesn't make any sense to them

Thus, their inability to trust God is directly related to the multitude of distorted ideas they have been taught about God, yet they are told they should simply trust in His goodness, when in their heart they don't believe God is good.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the question



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

We need HELP! With what? Well, after 10 years of ministry, this website has collected a huge number of articles, blogs, videos, podcasts, and notes that need to be categorized and indexed, so YOU can easily find all that's been said on a particular topic. The problem is, we don't have hundreds of eyes and ears on staff to search, read, listen, and find all these nuggets of truth. So, Come And Reason is calling on you, our faithful supporters, to help us with this task.

What do we need from you? Easy. Whenever you come across an article, blog, video, audio, or note that talks about a specific topic (like wrath, punishment, sanctuary, temple, mind, character, sin, death, etc., etc.), simply go to About > Contact Us and send us a note telling us where you found the information (page # in a document/note, time index in a video or audio file, the exact web address where you found the material, and the TOPIC the citation is talking about). We'll take those TOPICS and arrange them into categories and build a new menu entry to index all these resources.

Thank you, all, ahead of time for your participation and help in this rather significant endeavor!

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

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

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

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

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church

12702 9th Street

Garden Grove, CA 92840

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

Phone: (714) 534-1987

Fax: (714) 534-3877

Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



The Book of Job Lesson 9 4Q 2016

Intimations of Hope

SABBATH

Read memory text, “He also shall be my salvation, for a hypocrite could not come before Him.” Job 13:16

What does the memory text mean? Is it to be taken literally? Do we read this and say, “Well the Bible said it, so I believe it!” Or do we think about it?

Is this verse a statement of cosmic reality—eternal truth, or is it a statement that merely reveals Job’s understanding and Job’s perspective, i.e. the way Job was thinking?

Have intelligent beings who were hypocrites come before God?

- How many hypocrites came before Jesus and Jesus Himself identified them as hypocrites? Is Jesus God? So at least in that setting we know hypocrites can come before God.
- What about in heaven, the eternal glory of God? Can hypocrites come before God in heaven?
- Did Lucifer in heaven, at some point become a hypocrite, claiming he wanted the good of others but in reality was sewing rebellion?
- Did Satan come before God in heaven after walking around on the earth? Did Satan continue to make claims that he wanted a better way than God?

Is every passage of Scripture a revelation of eternal truth, or are there many passages of Scripture that are merely the record of what a person was thinking, their ideas, their struggles, their beliefs?

If this is so, what does it mean for how we understand Scripture? Should we take the approach that Scripture should be followed blindly; or that Scripture should be read, understood for what it was intended, and inquire if any principle applies to us today, but NOT simply quote a text and follow it blindly?

Example:

Now about virgins: **I have no command from the Lord**, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy. ²⁶ Because of the present crisis, **I think** that it is good for you to remain as you are. ²⁷ Are you married? Do not seek a divorce. Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife. ²⁸ But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this. ²⁹ What I mean, brothers, **is that the time is short**. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; ³⁰ those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; ³¹ those who use the things



of the world, as if not engrossed in them. **For this world in its present form is passing away.**
1Cor 7:25-31

Is this passage a directive from God?

Paul himself says that it is not, that it is merely Paul's perspective or judgment on the issue. Was Paul correct? Was time short? Was the world about to end? Was it wise counsel for all Christians who were single to stay single and not have Christian families? What would have happened? Is this passage then, merely reflecting what Paul thought was happening?

If Paul was incorrect on this topic, does that mean Paul was not inspired by God? No, it does not mean that! It means that Paul was a finite human being, who received inspired insights into *some issues*, but did not receive inspired insight into others. Thus, he could be wrong on certain topics—just as Peter was wrong about who he associated with and Paul had to confront and correct him—but this didn't mean Peter was not inspired by God.

What about others who have been gifted with the gift of prophecy, could they also be wrong on certain topics or perspectives? Could they write things with good motives and good intentions, but actually not be accurate in their own understanding of what is happening?

Does this make anyone uncomfortable? Why? When we are young we experience a sense of security and safety when we trust someone else to take care of the problems, to tell us the answers. Children feel safe when a parent, grandparent, teacher, some authority figure gives them the answers they seek.

Sadly, however, some people never grow up and learn to think for themselves, instead they continue to look for some authority to tell them the answer without thinking. They often defer to church authority, pastor, priest, committee, Biblical Research Institute, Catechism, Fundamental Beliefs or Creeds. These are the ones who use Scripture and other writings as proof texts and often as spiritual clubs, thoughtlessly taking passages and using them as blunt instruments to smash others into submission to their way of thinking. Sadly this approach is not consistent with how God functions or what Scripture teaches and ends up causing damage in their own lives and the lives of others.

What is the primary purpose of Scripture? Scripture is a revelation of God to man, it is a recorded history of the battle between God and His methods of truth, love and freedom against Satan and his methods of lies, selfishness and coercion. It is a history documenting how deviations from God's design destroy and God through Christ heals.

Scripture is intended, not as a rule book of deeds to be done and sins to be shunned, but a window into history to help us look and see how the two methods work and the outcomes that occur when the two methods are applied so we can determine who to trust and which methods to apply to our lives!



SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Whatever one wants to say...” What is the “truth” and the “error” to which the lesson refers? The lesson last week said that the error from Job’s friends was their alleging he was being punished by God, the truth, according the lesson, is that God does inflict punishment for sin. Is this the truth? Or has the lesson authors been caught up in a lie?

In the opening of the great controversy, **Satan had declared** that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. {DA 761.4}

Whose argument is it that God must punish sin? Why is this argument made? What is the underlying rationale for such an idea? It is an attack on God’s law—the idea that God’s law functions like the laws that created beings make, rules without inherent consequence; thus God is required to use His power to inflict pain, suffering and punishment. This argument causes the natural fear of disobeying God’s law (design protocols) to shift away from the destructive action—the sin itself—to instead lead one to be afraid of a god who is described as being the source of inflicted punishment. This undermines trust in God. Further, it casts God as a being not worthy of our trust, a being who functions no differently that we do.

Understanding this EGW wrote explicitly that God is not to be regarded as waiting to punish sinners, but sin brings its own punishment, just as Scripture teaches—the wages of sin is death, sin when full grown brings forth death...

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. **Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner,** works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, **men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.** {1SM 235.2}

This is design law, God doesn’t have to act to inflict punishment, God has to act to stop the destruction that unremedied sin brings and to heal and restore His creatures, lest if He doesn’t sin will destroy that which God loves—you and me!

Thus God acted, “For God so loved the world He sent His only Son...” Yes, God didn’t sit by idly when man sinned—God took action, but His actions have always been the actions of love judged best to slow the spread of sin and ultimately heal and restore.

Here is a historic view that I think says it beautifully:



For centuries God looked with patience and forbearance upon the cruel treatment given to his ambassadors, at his holy law prostrate, despised, trampled underfoot. He swept away the inhabitants of the Noachian world with a flood. But when the earth was again peopled, men drew away from God, and renewed their hostility to him, manifesting bold defiance. Those whom God rescued from Egyptian bondage followed in the footsteps of those who had preceded them. Cause was followed by effect; the earth was being corrupted.

A crisis had arrived in the government of God. The earth was filled with transgression. The voices of those who had been sacrificed to human envy and hatred were crying beneath the altar for retribution. **All heaven was prepared at the word of God to move to the help of his elect. One word from him, and the bolts of heaven would have fallen upon the earth, filling it with fire and flame.** God had but to speak, and there would have been thunderings and lightnings and earthquakes and destruction.

The heavenly intelligences were prepared for a fearful manifestation of Almighty power. Every move was watched with intense anxiety. **The exercise of justice was expected.** [what was the angelic view of justice at that time? what is described? where did that idea originate? Earlier with Lucifer who declared God must punish.] **The angels looked for God to punish the inhabitants of the earth. But "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "I will send my beloved Son," he said... Amazing grace! Christ came not to condemn the world, but to save the world. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."**

The heavenly universe was amazed at God's patience and love. [Why was the heavenly universe amazed? Because they misunderstood God's law due to Satan's lies and therefore misunderstood what true justice is.] **To save fallen humanity the Son of God took humanity upon himself...** [Save fallen humanity from what? At whose direction did the Son of God become incarnate? At Gods! Jesus was carrying out God's will to save the fallen race—from what? From what happens when a being deviates from God's design for life!] {RH, July 17, 1900 par. 6}

Sadly, the lesson authors, as many in Christian leadership, are so deceived as to the nature of God's law that they argue that God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death. It is time in human history for Christians all over the world to stand up and say NO! It is not so. God is not like Satan has made Him out to be. God is trustworthy and is not the enemy we need to be protected from.

Read last paragraph, "Notice also:..." Yes, it is ironic that men could think they are defending God when in fact they are misrepresenting Him. It still happens today!

What about the idea that it would be better not to speak than to say things that are wrong?



Doesn't it depend on the attitude? If one has the attitude that they are teachable, that they are willing to be persuaded by the evidence, that they are willing to listen and understand, then is it okay to share one's understandings even if they are wrong? Didn't Nicodemus do this?

Who would want us to think it is better to stay silent in error than to seek to discuss our ideas in order to remove error and come to the truth?

Don't buy into the lie that it is better to stay silent than speak an error, if one has a willingness to learn and follow truth. Yes, if one is closed minded, has no desire to learn, believes they are right and won't examine evidence or consider ideas different from their own, then it is better for them not to speak.

I love this quote:

Those who cannot impartially examine the evidences of a position that differs from theirs, are not fit to teach in any department of God's cause. {ISM 411.2}

MONDAY

What do you think of the title? How can this idea, "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him;" Job 13:15, be understood?

It can be understood in the sense of God is the source of inflicted punishment and death, but who am I but a worm and He is all powerful, so I choose to be on His side anyway because there is only one chance for me and that is being on the side of the One most powerful.

I don't find such an approach to be very mature or helpful, and in fact it suggests a very immature understanding of God.

However, there is another way to understand it—like a soldier in combat with a wise and trusted commander. One could say, "Even though my commander sends me on a mission that will result in my death, I will trust him, because I know my commander would never do that unless it were for some cause that I would gladly sacrifice myself for. I don't need to know the entire battle strategy, I only need to know my commander and know he is wise and absolutely trustworthy. Lord, send me, if my life serves you, send me into the breach."

Which way do you think Job meant it?

The lesson says in the second paragraph, "Job didn't have the advantage of knowing how things would turn out."

In what ways is this true, and in what ways is this not true?



It is most likely true that Job didn't have knowledge of what would happen in his temporal life, that his health and wealth would be restored and he would have more children. But, could he have known how it would turn out eternally? Was there information given by God that a redeemer would come and ultimately defeat sin and death? Could he have had an eternal hope?

Read the fourth and fifth paragraphs, "Even if He will kill me..." What is the basis of trust?

Is this different than the trust the Branch Davidians had in David Koresh, or the People's Temple followers had in Jim Jones? These people were willing to die for their faith in their leaders—is their trust different than the trust we are to have in Jesus?

Actually, no, trust is trust, and these cult leaders exploited the capacity to trust and lead people to trust the untrustworthy and this demonstrates that persons can die for causes that are not worthy of trust.

This is why it is so important we learn to discern, we learn to think, we learn to examine evidence and be able to tell the difference between God's true methods and those of the liar.

One of the keys to discernment is understanding God's law—God's law is design law, Satan's fraud is imposed law, imperial rule, coercive power. Thus, when we read in Christian literature descriptions of God using Satan's methods we know lies have entered. We must reject these lies and come back to the truth, lest we end up trusting what we should not—including putting trust in the church institution, i.e. the general conference, rather than trust in Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father.

Consider the methods the beast of Revelation uses? It uses the methods of coercion, no one can buy or sell and the beast seeks to kill all who won't submit. How many Christians teach God does the same? It is beastly!

How many Christians today are willing to use the methods of coercion to achieve their goals? We cannot win God's cause by using Satan's methods—why not?

What does God want? He wants love and trust which results in actual renewal and transformation of the character of the person. Can love and trust be achieved by force, by threat, by coercion? What do such methods achieve? Conformity but hidden rebellion. This is what Satan achieve through religious groups that use coercive methods.

As Martin Luther King Jr. said:

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.



TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “What an interesting line...” Any questions? Any thought disconnects in this paragraph?

Is salvation liberation from death? To be sure those who experience salvation will not die eternally, and Christ died to free those who live enslaved by their fear of death (Heb 2:14) but is the primary meaning of salvation the same as avoiding death?

Did Jesus said, “This is life eternal that you will not die?” No, He said life eternal was knowing God. Is there a difference? What is the difference? There is a definite connection between not knowing God and dying, and knowing God and living—what is that connection?

What is the plan of salvation saving us from? Is it primarily from death, or something that results in death? What is it that results in death? Sin, which is what? Deviations from God’s design, i.e. transgressing His law—and what is it that causes breaking of God’s law? Believing lies about God!

“Eve believed the words of Satan, and the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors...” E.G. White, Review & Herald 1/9/1886

Lies believed break the circle of love and trust...

Thus, life eternal is knowing God, restoring us to a right knowledge and experience with God, which results in trust in God, which results in removal of fear and experiencing love and the restoration of Christlikeness within. **Thus we are saved from a state of being that is out of harmony with God and that results in death.**

But to state salvation is liberation from death it moves the focus to avoiding punishment, and this is the way the false legal view sees it.

Would it be good news if we got to live eternally with God if God runs His universe like Satan alleges, rules imposed and threats to kill those who disobey?

Next concern from the paragraph, “After all, what is salvation other than liberation from death? And what is death, at least for the saved, other than a quick moment of rest, and instant of sleep, followed by the resurrection to eternal life?”

Is salvation liberation from a quick sleep-like death, or from eternal non-existence? In fact, isn’t the quick sleep-like death a mercy until the full restoration?



WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph, “The world has been...”

Last Sabbath afternoon, I had an opportunity for Bible discussion with some friends at Cirsten’s home. It was very enlightening. I was reminded how our assumptions set us up to form concepts, beliefs and constructs that lead us to conclusions about God. If our assumptions about God’s design and law are incorrect we view God as more like Satan alleges than He truly is.

One of the ideas put forth by a very intelligent and passionate gentleman was the idea that Satan was the ruler of earth and that Christ had to overcome Satan’s legal status and rights. The argument was that God had to be fair to Satan as the ruler of earth and had to respond to Satan’s claims etc. etc.

It was suggested that Satan is the ruler of the earth and has a legal claim because of passages like this one:

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. Eph 2:1-2

It was argued that Jesus calls Satan the “ruler of this world” therefore Satan is the ruler, and that it was claimed that Satan offering Jesus the kingdoms of the world was proof of Satan’s legal status.

All of this legal perspective is based on multiple false assumptions.

If we check what Jesus actually said:

Now is the time for judgment on this world; now **the prince of this world** will be driven out.
³² But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” Jn 12:31,32

Satan is the prince of this world, which means what? That he has some legal right to rule here, or was Jesus referencing that Satan is the prince of selfishness, this world of sin, death, decay? When Jesus used the term world was He referring to territory or to a method of operating? When Jesus said He has overcome the world, to what was He referring, physical territory, or the deceptive and selfish methods of the world?

Also, when Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world was that evidence that Satan had a legal right to make such an offer and therefore was the owner of the kingdoms? No, it was evidence of Satan’s delusional egomaniacal beliefs, not reality.

This is from the book *The Desire of Ages*:



When Satan declared to Christ, The kingdom and glory of the world are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it, he stated what was true only in part, and he declared it to serve his own purpose of deception. **Satan's dominion was that wrested from Adam, but Adam was the vicegerent of the Creator. His was not an independent rule. The earth is God's,** and He has committed all things to His Son. **Adam was to reign subject to Christ.** When Adam betrayed his sovereignty into Satan's hands, Christ still remained the rightful King. Thus the Lord had said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "**The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.**" Daniel 4:17. Satan can exercise his usurped authority only as God permits. {DA 129.4}

When the tempter offered to Christ the kingdom and glory of the world, he was proposing that Christ should yield up the real kingship of the world, and hold dominion subject to Satan. This was the same dominion upon which the hopes of the Jews were set. They desired the kingdom of this world. If Christ had consented to offer them such a kingdom, they would gladly have received Him. But the curse of sin, with all its woe, rested upon it. Christ declared to the tempter, "Get thee behind Me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." {DA 130.1}

This idea that Satan has some legal right to earth and that God had to operate upon Satan's view of things is wrong. Satan never had a legal right. He had tricked Adam into giving up Adam's rule, but that did not remove Christ from His rulership over Adam. Christ had no need to legally remove Satan from any position because Satan didn't occupy any legally held position. Christ had to remove Satan from the perceived position he held in the minds of intelligent beings. We are still working to remove Satan from his false position in the minds of men.

In fact, the entire argument of Satan having some legal status, ownership, rights is an argument that rests entirely upon Satan's false view of God's law. If we merely return to design law, we understand instantly that Satan cannot have any legal status because Satan cannot hold reality together. Satan cannot control gravity, nuclear forces, laws of physics, create life, etc. etc. Only the Creator can and this is why Adam's rule was vicegerent to Christ because Christ was still holding all things together!

Thus Scripture says:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and **in him all things hold together.** Col 1:15-17

It is very difficult to teach people who have formed a system of beliefs on multiple false assumptions!



THURSDAY

The lesson lists a number of texts and asks us to review the hope found there.

- Gen 3:15: And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”
 - What is the hope? In Jesus who would come to overcome what we could not.
 - Is there anything that sounds legal here or does it sound as if the serpent enemy will be literally destroyed?
 - Does Scripture support this? Heb 2:14
- Gen 22:8: Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.
 - What is the hope and what does it mean?
 - God so loved the world... As John the Baptist said, Jesus is the Lamb of God that does what? Takes away the sin of the world, in other words, the one who cleanses, removes deviations from God’s design, restores to God’s original ideal!
- Lev 17:11: For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.
 - What is the hope? What law lens do you hear this through?
 - Atonement means—at-one-ment or reconciliation—what was causing the unity God designed for Him to experience with His creatures to be fractured? Was it something in God? No, it was a change in the nature and character of humanity—distrust, fear and selfishness, which all are founded on believing lies about God.
 - So, what does the blood represent? The life of Jesus which is a life which not only revealed the truth to destroy lies and win to trust, but was a life lived out in human flesh that developed a perfect sinless character restoring humanity back to at-one-ment with God!
- John 1:29: “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”
 - What is the hope?
 - Again, what did Jesus take away? Not the punishment for sin, but sinfulness itself!
- Gal 2:16: know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.
 - What is the hope?
 - What does it mean to be justified? To be set right—what is wrong, that sin caused, that needs to be set right?
 - Is it a legal status or an actual state of being that is out of harmony with God?
 - Thus Abraham’s natural heart, which is enmity to God, was set right and Abraham trusted God, and then God recognized him as righteous—why? Because he was actually, genuinely, truly, set right or justified with God in his heart!
 - **There is nothing legal about justification—all the legal constructs are predicted on first accepting Satan’s lies about God’s law, thus the entire penal/legal view of salvation is a lie that traps good people into a form of godliness but with no power to overcome!**
- Phil 1:6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.
 - What is the hope?
 - Who is the one who began and completes the healing and restoration to righteousness in you?



- 1 Cor 10:13: No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.
 - What is the hope?
 - You will never be placed in a situation that is beyond your ability to overcome as long as you trust God.
- Dan 7:22:
 - From the NIV: until the Ancient of Days came and **pronounced judgment in favor of the saints** of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.
 - From the King James: Until the Ancient of days came, and **judgment was given to the saints** of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.
 - What is the hope?
 - Is it that you get a legal declaration in a heavenly court, or that you get the ability to discern truth from error?
 - The good news is that we get judgment, discernment, the ability to determine the right from the wrong and our minds are cleansed of the lies of Satan about God and God's laws and methods.
- Dan 12:1-2: "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. ² Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.
 - What is the hope?
 - A future life eternal without pain, suffering or death!
- Mt 24:27
 - For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. NIV
 - For the coming of the Son of Man will be visible to the entire world, just like sunlight dawns in the east and shines to the west, covering the entire planet. *The Remedy*
 - What is the hope?
 - That Christ is coming back again, literally for real!
- Dan 2:44: "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever."
 - What is the hope?
 - A kingdom of love that will never end!

FRIDAY

What doctrines give you hope?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

We need HELP! With what? Well, after 10 years of ministry, this website has collected a huge number of articles, blogs, videos, podcasts, and notes that need to be categorized and indexed, so YOU can easily find all that's been said on a particular topic. The problem is, we don't have hundreds of eyes and ears on staff to search, read, listen, and find all these nuggets of truth. So, Come And Reason is calling on you, our faithful supporters, to help us with this task.

What do we need from you? Easy. Whenever you come across an article, blog, video, audio, or note that talks about a specific topic (like wrath, punishment, sanctuary, temple, mind, character, sin, death, etc., etc.), simply go to About > Contact Us and send us a note telling us where you found the information (page # in a document/note, time index in a video or audio file, the exact web address where you found the material, and the TOPIC the citation is talking about). We'll take those TOPICS and arrange them into categories and build a new menu entry to index all these resources.

Thank you, all, ahead of time for your participation and help in this rather significant endeavor!

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

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

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

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

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church

12702 9th Street

Garden Grove, CA 92840

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

Phone: (714) 534-1987

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October 27, 28, 2017: Dr. Jennings will speaking at the Arlington SDA church in Arlington, TX. For



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The Book of Job Lesson 10 4Q 2016

The Wrath of Elihu

SABBATH

Before we get into this week's lesson, we found a post online Wednesday that voiced concerns about one of our previous lessons. The post stated:

"Very good Timothy - you found a text the NT theologians missed [Innocent Blood]. However there is another reasonable possibility. You have missed the clear meaning of that text because your predetermined focus doesn't allow you to see another point of view. You really cannot 'come and reason' with others with that attitude you know."

Francesca replied to this post with:

"Hi, if you have a question or topic you'd like to discuss, we'd be happy to evaluate it. What text are you referring to and what is the clear meaning?"

The person responded with:

"The Hebrew text is quoted along with the OT texts. It is reasonable to assume these points - Were the sacrifices necessary? As required by the Levitical Law yes! Why? As an outward sign of an inward conviction, not unlike baptism. Would the inward conviction be obvious? Yes; in the actions of justice and humility and mercy etc., The texts simply express God's disappointment in the lack of comprehension, not that the sacrificial system was wrong, but the human heart lacked the sacrificial spirit. Just another point of view maybe."

This was in response to the question about the purpose of the animal sacrifices in the OT and the answers given by the two theologians.

The person who posted their concerns makes the point that the sacrifices were necessary according the Levitical Law; and he suggests as an outward sign of conviction like baptism.

What was our point?

That the sacrifices of animals were NOT necessary for salvation—even though required by Levitical Law, it sounds like he may agree as he says it was merely for an outward sign. In other words, it was the inward transformation of character, the renewal of heart that was necessary, not the outward sign. Yet, it was what the Levitical law required. So, that leads to the question: was observance of Levitical law necessary for salvation?



A simple way to answer that question is to observe—can people be eternally saved without observing the Levitical law?

Enoch did not observe Levitical law, because it had not been given, and he was clearly saved.

Not only to we have the evidence of Enoch and the Patriarchs, but the following, after the Levitical law was given at Sinai:

- Naaman
- Shunnamite woman
- Nebuchadnezzar
- Daniel and his three friends after captivity
- Esther and Mordicai and all the Jews who stayed

Concerns like the one raised by this gentleman arise because of failure to understand the larger reality and the purpose of some of God's instructions in the past.

The larger reality is God is love. He built His universe to operate upon the design law of love, the principles of giving. All God's laws are design laws, protocols upon which reality operate. And all deviations are damaging to those who break the design protocols.

Satan alleged God's laws are not design laws, but arbitrary rules requiring enforcement by the infliction of punishment.

Trust in God was broken, fear and selfishness replaced love in the hearts of angels and then in Adam and Eve.

God, began intervening, interceding immediately upon Adam's infection with lies and fear and selfishness. God intervenes/intercedes where?

- In the hearts and minds of human beings "I will put enmity..."
- With the powers of darkness holding back evil
- With the natural result of what sin does—it results in death, Christ though he knew no sin became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God! 2Cor 5:21.

Understanding the problem is a change in the state of being, then we understand that God had to restore, heal, fix *in humankind* what Adam's sin did to the nature of humankind. This is the purpose of all God has been doing through Christ.

Thus what is the purpose of the Levitical law? Was the observance of Levitical law necessary to fix what sin did to the species human? No! Then why? To teach the people of their condition and of their need for healing and restoration, also known as—salvation.



The Levitical law was nothing more than theater, a grand play, an enactment designed to teach the spiritually immature the plan to heal and restore. Unfortunately, the people kept going off script and God at one point allowed the stage to be torn down, and then when it was rebuilt they went so far off script that when the One to which all the symbols pointed came—they killed Him. So, God again allowed the stage to be torn down.

One of the founders of the SDA church understood this and wrote in *Patriarchs and Prophets*:

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, **there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision.** And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been **no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone.** And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been **no need of the additional directions given to Moses.** {PP 364.2} [What are the additional directions given to Moses? The Levitical law!]

All of these additional directions, from the sacrifices given to Adam after his fall, to circumcision, to the 10 Commandments, to the Levitical law—ALL of them were ADDED, i.e. were not previously in existence, but were given because of the need of human beings who were sick, out of harmony with God's design; and all of it was designed to lead them back to God and His original design for humankind—a life of love in harmony with God's design law for life.

Another online listener emailed with this quote from EGW:

The sacrificial offerings were ordained by God to be **to man a perpetual reminder** and a penitential **acknowledgment** of his sin and a confession of his faith in the promised Redeemer. **They were intended to impress upon the fallen race the solemn truth that it was sin that caused death.** PP 68

What was there purpose? A teaching tool, no ability to heal and restore and not necessary for salvation, but pointed toward what was necessary for salvation—Jesus and partaking of Him!

Read memory text, Isaiah 55:9:

“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

What does this mean? How are God's ways higher than our ways?



What are our ways? What methods do sinful human beings and earthly governments use for governing? What type of law do we use? What type of justice do we implement?

Is God saying that He does NOT operate His government like we operate earthly governments? Is God saying in this passage that He does not inflict punishment for sin?

Some might be concerned that such an idea from our memory text would be abusing the text; some might be concerned that we are reading such an idea into this verse which is not actually there. So let's back up a couple of verses in the same chapter and see what God was saying through Isaiah. Reading in Isa 55:7-9:

Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, **for he will freely pardon**. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

What is the context of God's ways not being like our ways? Is it not the subject of how God deals with those who have sinned and done evil, i.e. salvation and justice? And notice what God says—If we turn away from sin, wickedness, evil—God will FREELY pardon, no payment, no legal debt, no judicial process why? Because all this legal, judicial, payment concept is the way human law works, but God's ways are higher, God's ways, His methods, His law, are NOT like ours. We impose rules and inflict punishment, but God is Creator and deviations from His law is inherently destructive. So what needs to happen for our salvation is that we turn away from evil and back to God and God freely pardons and also heals and restores us to be like Him in character!

This is mature thinking, something the infants are not acquainted with, those still on milk as described in Hebrews 5, they are not acquainted with righteousness—why? Because they focus on acts that lead to death, they focus on the behaviors, the dos and don'ts etc.

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to examine some texts and determine the truths contained there:

Job 15:14-16: "What is man, that he could be pure, or one born of woman, that he could be righteous? ¹⁵ If God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes, ¹⁶ how much less man, who is vile and corrupt, who drinks up evil like water!

Is there truth in this text? What is the truth?

- What about the first question: What is man that he could be pure, or one born of woman, that he could be righteous? NIV



What is the implication of the question? That no human can be pure and none can be right with God—is that not the implied question? Is it true?

What about Jesus? Was Jesus fully human? Was Jesus born of a woman? Was Jesus right with God? And through Jesus can we all also be set right with God?

So, is the question designed to bring hope or discouragement? Then is the question a question God's Spirit would lead one to ask?

- What about the second statement: If God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes, ¹⁶ how much less man, who is vile and corrupt, who drinks up evil like water! NIV

Is it true that God does not trust his angels? Whose voice do you hear in this argument? Who is complaining, "Even in heaven, God didn't trust me!"

Who did God send to watch over Jesus? Who did God send to provide the law to Moses? Who held back armies at God's direction, and are ministers to God's people? Does God trust his angels? Yes!

So, is this passage a revelation of cosmic reality, or Elihu's understanding?

Who is it that God does not trust? Those who are untrustworthy! God can read all hearts and minds, do you think He really doesn't know who He can trust? Do you really think He doesn't trust His loyal angels?

Read Job 19:25-27:

I know that my Redeemer (Defender) lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. ²⁶ And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; ²⁷ I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me! NIV

What truth do you hear in this verse? Who is our Redeemer/Defender?

This is a critical issue to think through. What law lens do you use? What is the problem that sin caused that the plan of salvation is designed to fix?

How many automatically, without real thought, immediately have images of Jesus standing as their Defender in a heavenly court to defend them against the legal judgment against them. Satan is the accuser, Jesus the defender and God is the judge to make a judgment. And Jesus is defending against the allegations of Satan AND the judgment of God particularly the required legal punishment. This is often depicted as Jesus pleading to the Judge (Father), "My blood, my blood..."



But some protest our assertion that Jesus does not have to defend us like an attorney in a heavenly courtroom. Some insist that we do have Jesus in heaven acting as an advocate to the Father in our behalf and they quote 1John 2:1,2, from the KJV:

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, **we have an advocate with the Father**, Jesus Christ the righteous: ² And he is the **propitiation** for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.

What does this text mean? What law lens do you look through? If we fall into the trap of thinking God's ways are no higher than our ways, that God's law functions like ours, then we automatically hear this as a legal advocate in a court. However, if we understand God's design law, we realize that God doesn't need convincing or appeasing, but that we are the ones who need convincing that God can be trusted.

What did Jesus say about pleading to His Father for us? John 16:25-29:

Notice Jesus says this is plain talk, no symbols, no metaphor, but how cosmic reality works, to which the disciples also say this is the way it really is, not symbolic:

“Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. ²⁶ In that day you will ask in my name. **I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf.** ²⁷ **No, the Father himself loves you** because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸ I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.” ²⁹ Then Jesus' disciples said, “**Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech.**”

What is the true cosmic reality?

What, then, shall we say in response to this? **If God is for us**, who can be against us? ³² **He who did not spare his own Son**, but gave him up for us all—**how will he** not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom **God has chosen**? It is **God who justifies**. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is **also** interceding for us. Rom 8:31-34

So, how do we harmonize all these texts? Jesus is at the right hand of God, and acting as God's agent to fulfill God's purpose in advocating for us—but to whom is Jesus advocating? Well, who needs persuading? Who has believed lies that has broken the trust relationship? Who has adopted methods that are destructive? Who has been wallowing in darkness?



Does God need truth brought to Him? Does God need intercession to improve, change, influence, Him? No! Who does? We do, thus Jesus is at God's right hand and is acting as our intercessor, our advocate, but He is advocating with us, interceding with us, working to convince us that God is trustworthy, and that the ways of Satan and the selfish world are destructive and pleading with us to let Him into our hearts so He can heal and restore us!

Jesus said: "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. **He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears**, and he will tell you what is yet to come." Jn 16:14

To whom is the Holy Spirit listening? And to whom is the Holy Spirit speaking?

So note what one of the founders of the SDA church wrote:

While Jesus, our Intercessor, pleads for us in heaven, the Holy Spirit works in us, to will and to do of His good pleasure. All heaven is interested in the salvation of the soul. Then what reason have we to doubt that the Lord will not and does not help us? We who teach the people must ourselves have a vital connection with God. In spirit and work we should be to the people a wellspring; **because Christ in us is a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.** Sickness and pain may test and try our patience and our faith, but the brightness of the Presence of the universe is with us and we must hide self behind Jesus. . . . {2MR 37.1}

Jesus is in heaven pleading for us—but all heaven is interested in our salvation, so do heavenly beings need to be persuaded to help? No! Who needs to be persuaded? Who is in darkness and misunderstanding about God? Who is infected with fear and selfishness and needs to be healed? Who is the Spirit listening to in order to speak to us? Thus Jesus is in heaven pleading, but He is pleading to you and me "Let me in, please let me heal you, why will you die when I can save you!" and the Spirit takes these pleas and communicates them to us!

Read Job 28:28: And he said to man, 'The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.' "

What does this mean? Fear—does this mean terror, dread, stress, anxiety? Or does this mean awe, reverence, admiration?

Well, what does "Perfect love casts out all fear" mean? When we come to truly know God do we love Him more? And does that love drive out fear or increase fear? So, if fear of the Lord is wisdom, it must be the type that grows with the knowledge of the Lord, which is awe, admiration, and respect, not terror!

To shun evil is understanding—thoughts? This is quite true, but this would mean understanding design law, how things actually work! It is not shunning rule breaking—in some cases rules were broken in order to keep the law—examples?



- David given the showbread to his men: David broke the Levitical law, the rules, the stage play drama, but David kept the law of love, care and concern for his men. He also kept the law of health providing nutrition for their wellbeing.
- Picking heads of grain on Sabbath—man made rules were broken, but living in harmony with God’s design law was not
- Healing on Sabbath—Jesus specifically chose to heal chronic medical problems on Sabbath—purposely breaking their rules, yet living out the law of love, the law of giving which restores life and health.

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “Again, Job represents much...” Why do some people suffer from no volitional choice of their own? Is there one reason or multiple reasons?

What are some of the reasons?

- Rom 8—all nature groans under the weight of sin—the entire planet is suffering—why? Because there is an antagonistic element, an infection, a principle at war with God’s design which causes pain and suffering, even to nature itself.
- Evil people perpetrate harm upon others—what does this reveal and mean?
- Evil angels perpetrate harm—see first chapter of Job, what does this mean?
- Accidents happen, why?
- What does it mean about God that He permits such things to happen? Why doesn’t God use His power to stop and prevent evil?
- What action would God have to take in order to stop a person from choosing evil?
 - He would have to override that person’s choice
 - That doesn’t mean God doesn’t warn, try to alert, send messages of alternate options—how does God do this?
 - Evidence in science and nature (Romans 1:20) of how God’s law really works
 - Messaged from people—written in form of Scripture, or letters from friends, or other non-Scripture sources of wisdom, or people directly bringing counsel or insight
 - Holy Spirit convicting the conscience—John 16:8
 - Miraculous signs
 - Consider Pharaoh—he had evidence in nature, messages from Moses, conviction of the Holy Spirit and miraculous signs—did this result in Pharaoh choosing to turn away from evil? What else could God have done?
 - Consider those who arrested Christ—they evidence in science and nature, the OT Scriptures, John the Baptist, the opportunity to hear Jesus speak, miracles performed by Jesus, including divinity flashing through knocking them to the ground and then Jesus restoring an ear—and what did they do? What else could God have done?



- What do these examples and others like them tell us? Does it give us some insight into God's methods? What God will not do? Why? God wants our love and trust, can love and trust be obtained by force, coercion, control, or programming?
- What are the protocols upon which God built life to operate?
- Is the planet currently operating in harmony with God's original design?
- If God did nothing after Adam's fall, if God took no action and made no intervention what is the outcome for all life on planet earth? Would that include all babies born? Why?
- How can God fix it, to prevent all life from extermination? What is necessary?
- What methods are required by God to achieve this goal?

So what do we say to a person who has been mugged, or raped, or whose house burns down in a wildfire?

Do we say it was God's will? Never! God's will was for humankind to live eternally in love, in sinless perfection, never to experience pain, suffering and death!

After Adam and Eve's sinned, could they have children that were free of sin and born in perfect harmony with God's design? No—so what was their only choice? To have children infected with sin, or to not have children at all. What is the better choice?

If humans, infected with sin, choose to have children, what will result from that choice?

Will some children partake of God's Remedy provided through Christ and experience healing and maturity of character? Will other children reject the Remedy and their selfish condition get worse?

Would it be a better result, from God's perspective, for Adam and Eve, after sin to have no children? Why or why not? If they had no children, then all the pain, suffering, exploitation, murder, rape, etc. which has transpired on earth would not have happened. Would that have been better, why or why not?

TUESDAY

What is the basic argument of Elihu? That God is doing this and that God only does what is right, so Job must deserve it.

What is the problem with the argument?

Has the Bible in other places actually said God does things that God didn't actually do?

Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an **evil spirit from the LORD tormented him.** ¹⁵ Saul's attendants said to him, "See, an **evil spirit from God is tormenting**



you. ¹⁶ Let our lord command his servants here to search for someone who can play the harp. He will play when **the evil spirit from God comes upon you**, and you will feel better.” 1Sam 16:14-16

But an evil spirit from the Lord came upon Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand. While David was playing the harp, ¹⁰ Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, but David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall. That night David made good his escape. 1Sam 19:9,10

Did God send an evil spirit upon Saul? Did God inspire Saul to throw a spear at David?

What does the SDA Bible commentary say about this description of an evil spirit from God?

The Scriptures sometimes represent God as doing that which He does not specifically prevent. In giving Satan an opportunity to demonstrate his principles, God, in effect, would limit His own power. Of course, there were limits beyond which Satan could not go (see Job 1:12; 2:6), but within his limited sphere he did have divine permission to act. Thus, although his acts are contrary to the divine will, he can do nothing except what God permits him to do, and whatever he and his evil spirits may do, is done with God’s permission. Therefore when God withdrew His own Spirit from Saul (see on 1 Sam. 16:13, 14), Satan was free to have his way.¹

This is quite correct—God is often described as causing that which He permits. Is that the same thing? Why or why not?

So, in the case of Job, God permitted Satan to have access to Job, but is that the same as God causing Satan to torment Job?

WEDNESDAY

Read paragraphs 2-5: Ellen G. White offers...” Do you accept the reasoning of the lesson, that “there is a good reason that Job and his friends can’t make sense of it: evil itself doesn’t make sense. If we could understand it, if it made sense, if it fit into some logical and rational plan, then it wouldn’t be that evil...”?

Did EGW say that, or did she say that “to explain the ORIGIN of sin” is not possible because there is no reason for the ORIGIN of sin? Why not? Because sin originated in a *perfect universe*, thus there is no explanation that makes sense for evil occurring in a universe of perfection. However, do we live in

¹ Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1976). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 531). Review and Herald Publishing Association.



a perfect sinless world? No! Therefore, in a world which is deviant from God's design there are many reasonable and understandable explanations for why evil and sin happen in this world. Such as:

- Selfishness dominating someone's motives
- Lies someone believes about another
- Being born into a culture which promotes evil as good
- Consequences of sin passing down 3-4 generations
- Being in a spiritual war zone with evil intelligences seeking to cause harm

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "Certainly the primary..." What contributes to obscuring reality and seeing through a dark glass? What helps us see more clearly? Does the way we understand God's design, law, methods affect how clearly we can understand and comprehend?

Read second paragraph, "With the opening chapters..." What does the term "guinea pig" suggest? Experimentation, that God was experimenting to see what would transpire—was God experimenting on Job?

Or did God know exactly what Job would do before Job did it? Then what was transpiring if not experimentation? Demonstration—for whom? Did God need demonstration for Himself? What was demonstrated?

- Satan's nature and character as the destroyer
- That God can read hearts and minds
- That God does know the future and what Job would do
- That Job was trustworthy and God could count on Job to say what was right about God
- That God is not the cause of pain and suffering
- That the health/wellness gospel is wrong
- Others?

The question, "how fair was this to Job and his family" is a question with what at the center? Selfishness, it puts self at the center. But what if we move the question to love and Job's love for God and Job's willingness to serve God? Do we have reason to believe that Job had, at some point given his life to God? And would that typically mean that Job would most likely have said to God, "God let me be useful in your cause"? If this is likely, then is it unfair to Job that God allowed Job to be useful in His cause?

Regarding Job's children—if the events in the book of Job did not occur, what would have happened to Job's children within 50-100 years? They would have all died anyway, just from different causes. Does their deaths, whether in a storm, earthquake, or old age, have any bearing on their eternal destiny?

Read the last paragraph, "And yet..." What does it mean to live by faith and not by sight?



What about the last sentence, “We live by faith when, like Job, we trust and obey God, even when we cannot make sense of what is happening around us.”

Were people who burned others at the stake taking the position, “Well it doesn’t make sense to me why God would want us to burn these people, I trust and obey”? If this seems a stretch, what about Saul of Tarsus before the Damascus road? Was he seeking to do what he was doing because of trust and obedience in God or distrust and seeking to disobey God?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



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The Book of Job Lesson 11 4Q 2016

Out of the Whirlwind

SABBATH

Read memory text: “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding.” Job 38:4

What is the point of the question? What is God trying to get Job to acknowledge?

Is God trying to intimidate Job with power, “I AM CREATOR WHO ARE YOU TO QUESTION ME!!!!”? Or is God trying to enlighten Job with a legitimate question which would lead Job to acknowledge that there is a lot Job doesn’t understand about reality?

And, if it is the second position, then what might God have been trying to enlighten Job about in regard to God’s creation of earth?

Perhaps God was remembering some of Job’s arguments previously given, which our lesson helpfully quotes for us in the first paragraph, “Whatever their differences....”

This quotation from Job 12 is not one of the friends speaking, but Job himself speaking. And what is Job saying? What is Job perhaps arguing to his friends who are alleging Job deserves his misfortune and his misfortune is evidence of his sins?

Could Job be saying, look at the beasts and birds they will teach you how reality works—that the innocent harmless creatures are killed and destroyed by the predators just because they are innocent and harmless, not because they are sinful? Could Job be saying, look around, the world doesn’t work as you say, with only the sinful and guilty getting attacked and destroyed; No! the innocent creatures are harmed and killed all the time by the powerful, the strong, the ferocious?

But then Job goes on to say, “Who among all these does not **know that the hand of the Lord has done this...**”

What is Job saying now? Job is stating that this survival of the fittest, death inflicting predator/prey fear based system **is God’s design**. Job is saying, “This is how God built nature and this is how God governs. So don’t look at me and suggest I am sinning, it is God who created reality to work this way.”

Could this be why God says immediately in Job 38 says, “Job, were you there when I created earth? Did you see how my creation functioned when I built it? You don’t know what you are talking about. Creation as you see it is NOT how I built it. There were intelligent beings there who did see how I created it, and they know how things functioned on earth then and the death, pain and destruction seen



on earth today is NOT how I designed life to operate—an enemy has infected my design and it is this infection which causes the pain and suffering—and it is the same enemy that has brought pain and suffering to your life!”

The lesson also quotes Job 8:3, which is Bildad speaking, and he asks, “Does God subvert judgment? Or does the Almighty pervert justice?”

What is the implication of Bildad’s question? Bildad asked these questions not as legitimate inquiry, but as a way of saying, “Job you deserve what is happening to you because God doesn’t punish people unjustly and doesn’t make mistakes in the judgment.”

Was Bildad right or wrong? How was Bildad right and how was he wrong?

Is it true that God makes no mistakes in any judgment, and is it true that God is never unjust? Yes! Then if those are true statement, how could Bildad be wrong—and he was wrong because God Himself said he was.

So, how was he wrong? By misunderstanding what was happening—what did Bildad misunderstand?

He certainly didn’t understand the players involved, and didn’t realize an evil enemy was active in bringing suffering to Job.

But, even if he did understand that Satan was involved, what might he have said? And I am suggesting this now because I have had Christians who oppose what we teach use this line of reasoning, so while Bildad didn’t himself say it, it is a line of reasoning argued by some Christians today:

Well, God still made the judgment to remove His protection and even though God didn’t actively bring the punishment to Job, God used Satan to punish Job, therefore God was still responsible because God knew what would happen and God chose to let it happen—so God did punish Job, and Job did deserve it because Job was born in sin and conceived in iniquity and as all humans has no righteousness or goodness so as a sinner he deserves only pain, suffering and death. Therefore, if God chose to act in this way and use Satan to punish Job then it was right and just on God’s part.

Is this line of reasoning right or wrong? What is the error in this line of reasoning? What is the underlying lie that causes people to think like this?

The root is again a misunderstanding of God’s law, thinking God works like human beings through imposed laws and imposed punishments, rather than realizing God is Creator and His laws are design laws. Thus, with the error of God’s law being imposed accepted as a fact, they apply the Sovereignty of God through that law and make God responsible for all actions. We must come back to understand



God's law as it really is, the protocols upon which reality functions, and an expression of His character of love. God will not act contrary to His own character!

SUNDAY

Read Job 38:1,2 and answer—what happened here?

Then the Lord answered Job out of the storm. He said: ² “Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?

Who is speaking from the whirlwind? What is the question God is asking and what is implied?

Read the third paragraph, “The word *whirlwind*..” It is the Hebrew word *ca'ar, câ'arah /sah-ar*, and does mean as the lesson said, whirlwind or storm—what might it mean that God was found in the storm, the whirlwind?

The lesson points out that this is the same whirlwind which took Elijah to heaven; and my mind thought of 1Kings 19:11,12:

The Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.”

Then a great and **powerful wind tore** the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, **but the Lord was not in the wind**. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

And I wondered, why was God in the whirlwind, but not the powerful wind? So I looked up the Hebrew and this I found quite interesting, guess what the Hebrew is for wind in 1Kings 19? It is not *ca'ar, câ'arah /sah-ar* as it is Job, but it is *ruwach /roo-akh*, which means spirit, Spirit of the Lord, wind, breath, and is the same word used in Genesis 6:17, regarding the flood, every creature on the earth which has in it the breath of life will die.

What do you think it means that the Bible writers chose in Job's experience to use the word for storm as the place where we find God, and in Elijah's experience the word used for breath and spirit as well as wind for the place we do not find God?

What was the issue with which Job was struggling? Job was struggling with issues of God's character in relationship to Creation—how God built reality to work and Job was falsely believing that God built reality to work with survival of the fittest principle, in which the strong kill the weak and innocent as God's design. Therefore, God approaches Job from the storm, as the one who does control nature, as the one who is in the Builder, and after establishing Himself as the Builder of nature, challenges Job's



assumptions about God's design. "Who talks about what they don't know? Were you there when I built earth? Did you see how it was originally, before it became infected with selfishness?"

What was Elijah's mindset, his concern, his struggle? He had just had the confrontation with the prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel—and what was demonstrated there? Mt. Carmel was a demonstration of God as powerful, because it was a demonstration to all Israel who had fallen into Baal worship, primitive, level-one thinkers. So, for level-one thinkers a ruler establishes his right to rule by demonstrations of power over his rivals. So God demonstrates He is more powerful than Baal. But God wants to lead Elijah to a different insight, that while God can control nature—the earthquake, fire and the wind—even the breath of life—life energy itself. God—His true self—His person is not found in those energies, we find God not by seeking might, power, miracles, signs, wonders, even the breath of life, the raising of the dead—we find God in the quiet moments, in the gentle discussion, which leads to understanding friendship.

The Hebrew for the still small voice is three words:

- *dāmamah* /dem·aw·**maw**: which occurs only three times in Scripture and is translated as: "still" once, "silence" once, and "calm" once
- *daq* /dak: which occurs 14 times and is translated as: "thin" five times, "small" five times, "leanfleshed" twice, "dwarf" once, and "little thing" once.
- *qowl, qol* /kole: which has 506 occurrences; translates as "voice" 383 times, "noise" 49 times, "sound" 39 times, "thunder" 10 times, "proclamation" four times, "send out" twice

MONDAY

The lesson explores when God asks questions and points out in the second paragraph, "The questions, then, that God asks are not to teach the Lord something that He didn't already understand."

Do we agree with this? Absolutely! Why? Because God is all knowing—what does this mean that God is all knowing? Is there anything then that God does not know and He needs, in His divine self, to learn or be educated upon?

Then what do you think Hebrews 4:15 means?

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Heb 4:15,16

How is this often explained?

Have you ever heard this explained as Jesus can sympathize with our struggles, temptations, pains, heartaches and the power of sinful temptation because He went through it. And as our High Priest He



is in heaven and pleads in our behalf to the Father and is able to do so effectively because He truly knows our struggles?

Is it true that God needed Jesus to experience temptation so that God could then sympathize with our struggles, so that God could gain knowledge He didn't possess?

Or, do we have this backward, like so much of our theology? It wasn't God who needed to learn something. It wasn't God who needed to learn how difficult our struggles are so He could sympathize—but WE needed to learn that God really does know our struggles and can truly sympathize with us and is truly capable of understanding and helping us! Thus we read in the very next verse:

Let us then approach the throne of grace **with confidence**, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Heb 4:16

It was to increase our confidence in God not inform God of our difficult struggles—God already knew that is why He sent Christ!

And in Heb 2:18:

Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Again, Christ's mission was to win us to trust and confidence in God and procure the Remedy we need to heal and restore us to righteousness!

What about the investigative judgment? Does God need to investigate records to discover information and inform Himself in order to figure out who is saved and lost? No, the investigative judgment has never been about God investigating records, all such presentations misrepresent God and demonstrate a real lack of understanding of the sin problem and God's solution for it.

So, the lesson is 100% correct, God doesn't need information presented to Him on any topic or subject. So, then the lesson asks us to examine places where God asks questions and answer, what was the purpose of God in asking the question?

- Genesis 3:11: "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"
 - What is implied in the first question?
 - If God is asking the question, is the implication that Adam did not get that information from God? So is God trying to help Adam realize—"Adam I didn't point out your nakedness. I am not the one condemning you—Adam that is your own mind, your own conscience. Something in you has actually changed. Adam did you eat the fruit I warned you not to eat?"
 - What was the purpose of the second question?



- To help Adam realize that this is design law, this is the natural result of deviating from God's design. Cause and effect—Adam you did this to yourself, I didn't do this to you!
- Genesis 4:9: Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"
 - What is the purpose of the question?
 - Did God not know where Abel was?
 - Is it to bring up Cain's wrong doing so God can be justified when God punishes Cain, to point out Cain deserves what he is about to get? What level of thinking would see it this way?
 - Is it to give Cain the opportunity to confess and repent? For whose benefit?
- 1Kings 19:9: There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"
 - What is the purpose of this question?
 - Did God not know where Elijah was?
 - Was it to cause Elijah to feel bad?
 - Was it to get Elijah to think—where am I and why am I here? What is my purpose? What am I trying to achieve? What caused me to be here? Have I forgotten to trust God?
- Acts 9:4: He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"
 - What is the purpose of this question?
 - To enlighten Saul that his actions were not doing God's will but opposing God and to open a dialogue with God for enlightenment.
- Matthew 16:13: When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"
 - What was the purpose of this question?
 - To get the disciples to think and make a decision on who they believe Jesus to be!

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read Job 38:4-41, which is God speaking to Job. Rather than reading the entire section here, let's read three verses which give the tenor of the entire section verses 31-33:

"Can you bind the beautiful Pleiades? Can you loose the cords of Orion? ³² Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons or lead out the Bear with its cubs? ³³ Do you know the laws of the heavens? Can you set up God's dominion over the earth?

What is God saying? What is the purpose of His questions? What is He trying to get Job to realize and comprehend?

Is God trying to say, "Hey I am powerful and you are weak who are you to question me?" No!



What is God saying? “Job, I built all reality. I sustain it. I hold it together. You don’t comprehend how any of it was built, much less how it is designed to operate. So, all your conclusions are wrong. You need to think through a new set of ideas, premises, facts—realize that my laws are the laws the universe is constructed to operate upon—there is nothing arbitrary about my laws. Pain and suffering come from deviations from my design. Earth was built as a paradise, perfect and as I designed it would never experience any pain, any suffering and certainly no death. But earth is not operating as I designed. An antagonistic principle has infected my creation and this antagonistic principle is the cause of all the pain, suffering and death. Yet, I have undertaken the responsibility to heal and restore my creation back to my original design, which means I must win you Job along with my other intelligent creatures back to genuine love and trust in me!”

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “From our perspective...” How much better do we understand God and His law today than Job did?

A couple of years ago Andrews University online magazine published an article critiquing *The God-Shaped Brain*. In the comment section below the article I was able to engage the author and the Senior Editor in a discussion. In one section I brought up the truth about God’s law being design law. This is a response from the Senior Editor, who has degrees in history and theology, posted online:

Violation of some laws (natural sciences) are immediate in their consequences. Don't eat to restore energy, you die. But the Sabbath and other moral laws (not eating from the Tree of knowledge) are "arbitrary." Thus, some laws are "natural" and obvious, others are not. Not all of God's universe of laws is of equal or plain explanatory equivalency. We still don't know how "laws" work at the quantum realm, e.g. So some of God's laws do indeed require external enforcement, by design. Others do not, nature will be its own enforcer. If God hadn't cast out Adam and Eve, they would have kept eating from the tree of life, eg. But God 'chose' to cast them out, and then curse nature as well, to aid us in learning certain lessons.
<https://thecompassmagazine.com/blog/how-are-we-saved-the-character-of-god-and-the-atonement-in-the-adventist-church-part-1>

What do you think?

This view of God has mixed truth and error—the most destructive type of distortion:

- It has God being both designer and dictator
- It has God ultimately as the source of inflicted pain and death
- It puts God in the role of functioning like sinful human beings.
- Thus he interprets God casting Adam and Eve out of Eden as punishment for sin inflicted upon them and the cursing of the ground as punishment inflicted arbitrarily for sin.

What is the truth?



- Why did God expel Adam and Eve from Eden? Was it to punish sin or was it part of the plan to cure sin and save Adam and Eve from eternal torment and suffering?
- What would have happened if Adam and Eve as sinners continued to have access to the Tree of Life? They would not age—I suspect Cain could have still killed Abel by crushing his head, but natural aging and death from slow decay would not have occurred.
 - What then would have happened on earth had the sinful human race had access to the Tree of Life?
 - Who would have controlled it the meek, the humble, the persons who would not harm another, or the most selfish and cruel?
 - And then who would have been eliminated from the earth? The righteous, which would have meant God's plan to heal and restore would not have been realized.
 - Further, it would have meant those who did access the Tree of Life would have lived eons in a state of sinfulness which is a state of pain, suffering, torment of mind, heart, character to themselves and others. God would not permit this.
 - Thus, the expulsion from Eden was NOT punishment for sin, and not an arbitrary infliction, but an act of mercy, a therapeutic intervention in order to save and heal.
- What about cursing the ground?
 - This was not an infliction from God, but in harmony with other Scripture (Rom 8:20) the entire earth was now infected with an antagonistic principle and groans under the weight of sin. Jesus said an enemy has sewed seeds of decay into the earth. EGW says that all thorns, thistles, noxious and poisonous plants are due to Satan's messing with nature and corrupting it.
 - Thus, God was pronouncing, or diagnosing, or announcing that earth was now cursed, God was not inflicting it.

So, I would submit, that based on my experience with many theologians including this Senior Editor, that humanity still doesn't understand God's law and is still suffering with multitudes of misunderstanding about God because of it!

THURSDAY

Read Job 40:1-5:

The Lord said to Job: ² “Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!” ³ Then Job answered the Lord: ⁴ “I am unworthy—how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. ⁵ I spoke once, but I have no answer— twice, but I will say no more.”



Read Job 42:1-6:

Then Job replied to the Lord: ² “I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. ³ You asked, ‘Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?’ Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. ⁴ “You said, ‘Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.’ ⁵ My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. ⁶ Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.”

What is Job’s response to God’s questioning and the evidence to which God pointed in regard to God’s laws, methods and creation?

What was the next thing that happened?

God then says, AFTER Job acknowledges that Job didn’t know what he was talking about and that God’s ways are not the ways Job had suggested earlier, that NOW Job is saying of me what is right and Job’s friends still have not!

Job was initially also wrong about God, but he came to a clearer insight about God and humbled himself and admitted it. It was this clearer insight to which God was referring when He said that Job has said of God what is right?

Read last paragraph, “And yet...” How do you understand the idea of being fallen, sin-damaged person whose very nature itself brings us into conflict with God?

If this is true, then what would be needed to save us?

Would a legal pardon change the sin-damaged nature of human beings? No! This is why penal substitution theology fails because it focuses on a legal solution occurring in heavenly record books and court documents, and fails to bring sinner to genuine transformation of their nature.

The truth is that sin is not a legal problem but a defect in our very nature, a condition of being out of harmony with God’s original design in Eden. And this condition we did not personally choose, and we cannot personally fix. But God through Christ did fix this condition and we can experience this renewal of heart, mind, character, motive to love God and others more than self such that we are changed back into godliness and reconciled to God. This is at-one-ment!

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “God has permitted...” Is the researching of science alone the reason many scientists have given up a belief in God? Or, is there one other factor that when coupled with the advances in scientific knowledge leads many to reject a belief in God?



I submit it is the combination of advancing understanding of science with the historic arbitrary, imposed law, dictator views of God promulgated by religions who have accepted Satan's lies about God that results in people rejecting God. In other words, the God most of the scientists have rejected is a god of Satan's imagination—not the true God of heaven. Evidence for this assertion?

Here are two quotes from one of the founders of the SDA church describing Satan's attack on God's character:

- From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. **Hence he has sought to misrepresent the character of God**, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. **The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself,—as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving**,—that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. [remember the quote from the senior editor of Andrews University's online magazine—he claims that some of God's laws are arbitrary. This is one of Satan's allegations about God and how Satan describes God's laws. A thinking scientist, who has a Christian present God as arbitrary should reject such a view of God.] Satan hoped to so confuse the minds of those whom he had deceived **that they would put God out of their knowledge**. Then he would obliterate the divine image in man and impress his own likeness upon the soul; he would imbue men with his own spirit and make them captives according to his will. {5T 738.1}
- **Satan has ascribed to God all the evils to which the flesh is heir. He has represented him as a God who delights in the sufferings of his creatures, who is revengeful and implacable.** {RH, November 17, 1891 par. 5}

And as an example of what many scientists have concluded, Richard Dawkins famous quote about the God of the Old Testament:

The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.

Is rejecting such a god rejecting the true God?

How many Christians today continue to worship a god like the one Dawkins describes? Have we seen that in our own quarterly this quarter, remember the lesson on Retributive Punishment?

Discuss questions 2 and 3



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The Book of Job Lesson 12 4Q 2016

Job's Redeemer

SABBATH

Read memory text, Isaiah 53:4 "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted" NKJV.

What is the message in this text?

Here is the NIV version: "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

Any additional thoughts? What does it sound like to take up our infirmities?

What does the SDA Bible commentary say about this verse?

The enemy made it appear that the sufferings of Jesus were punishment inflicted upon Him by a vengeful God because He was a sinner (see DA 471). If that were true, He could not be the world's Redeemer.¹

They reference *The Desire of Ages* page 471, which reads:

It was generally believed by the Jews that sin is punished in this life. Every affliction was regarded as the penalty of some wrongdoing, either of the sufferer himself or of his parents. It is true that all suffering results from the transgression of God's law, but this truth had become perverted. **Satan, the author of sin and all its results**, had led men to look upon disease and death as proceeding from God,—as punishment **arbitrarily inflicted on account of sin**. [Arbitrary, is an infliction of punishment that is not inherent, in other words, imposed law not design law. If someone commits murder why does one person get 10 years in prison, another 20, another life, another the death penalty? Because all these penalties are arbitrary and inflicted, the legal penalty to murder is not inherent, thus she is saying the legal penalty theory is from Satan!] Hence one upon whom some great affliction or calamity had fallen had the additional burden of being regarded as a great sinner. {DA 471.1}

Thus the way was prepared for the Jews to reject Jesus. He who "hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" was looked upon by the Jews as "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;" and they hid their faces from Him. Isa. 53:4, 3. {DA 471.2}

God had given a lesson designed to prevent this. **The history of Job had shown that suffering is inflicted by Satan, and is overruled by God for purposes of mercy.** But Israel

¹ Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1977). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 4, p. 291). Review and Herald Publishing Association.



did not understand the lesson. The same error for which God had reproved the friends of Job was repeated by the Jews in their rejection of Christ. {DA 471.3}

Do you remember where EGW also said:

In the opening of the great controversy, **Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed**, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan**; DA 761

and,

Rebellion was **not** to be overcome by force. **Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order.** His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of **these principles is the means to be used.** God's government is moral, and **truth and love are to be the prevailing power.** E.G. White Desire of Ages 759 [what is the prevailing power? Truth and Love—remember that because it is vital to understanding how sinners die in the end, by what power? Truth and Love!]

God could have destroyed Satan and all his sympathizers as easily as one can pick up a pebble and cast it to the earth. **But by so doing he would have given a precedent for the exercise of force. All the compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. He would not work on this line... This principle is wholly of Satan's creation.** E.G. White Review & Herald, September 7, 1897

"Whereunto," asked Christ, "shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?" Mark 4:30. **He could not** employ the kingdoms of the world as a similitude. In society He found nothing with which to compare it. **Earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power; but from Christ's kingdom every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion, is banished.** E.G. White Acts of the Apostles 12

So what does the text for today prophecy will happen? Jesus will come and take up our sinful condition in order to heal and save, but believers in God will instead come to believe that God punished Jesus at the Cross. The Jews believed it and thus rejected Christ—Christian's believe it and while accepting Christ REJECT the truth about God that Christ revealed and instead promote a false God concept!

From 27 Fundamental Beliefs of the SDA church page 111:

For a loving God to maintain His justice and righteousness, the atoning death of Jesus Christ became 'a moral and legal necessity.' God's 'justice requires that sin be carried to judgment.



God must therefore execute judgment on sin and thus on the sinner. **In this execution the Son of God took our place, the sinner's place, according to God's will.**

From *The Adventist World Review*:

One of the fundamental problems of the Moral Influence Theory is that it rejects the substitutionary nature of Christ's death. The idea that **God had to kill the innocent** instead of the guilty in order to save us is considered a violation of justice. (emphasis mine) Rodriguez, A., *Adventist World Review*, December 2007; p. 40.

From *Ministry Magazine*:

Why did **God the Father choose** a cross to be the instrument of death? Why did He not choose to have Christ instantly beheaded or quickly run through with a spear or sword? **Was God unjust in executing judgment on Christ with a cross** when He could have done it by beheading, a noose, a sword, a gas chamber, a bolt of lightning, or a lethal injection? Whidden, W., *Ministry Magazine*, February 2007.

<http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2007/February/sinners-in-the-hands-of-god.html>

Who is being taught killed Jesus? Is this not an exact fulfillment of what Isaiah warned would happen?

Why does this happen? Because those who teach this have accepted the false law construct and believe God's law is arbitrary, just as we read last week, and arbitrary laws require the infliction of punishment.

SUNDAY

Read Job 19:25-27:

I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.²⁶ And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God;²⁷ I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

“Does this suggest Job did have some knowledge of something beyond his life here and now? That a Redeemer was coming? The Hebrew for Redeemer is sometimes translated Defender, and most footnotes include Defender as an option in this text.

- So, if we use the word Redeemer, from what is Job being redeemed?

The divine mind and hand have preserved through the ages the record of creation in its purity. It is the word of God alone that gives to us an authentic account of the creation of our world. This word is to be the chief study in our schools. In it we may learn what our redemption has cost Him who



from the beginning was equal with the Father, and who sacrificed His life that a people might stand before Him **redeemed from everything earthly, renewed in the image of God.** {CT 13.2}

Jesus died for mankind, and in giving His life **He exalted humanity** in the scale of moral value with God. The Son of the infinite God clothed His divinity with humanity, and submitted to the death of the cross, **that He might become a steppingstone by which humanity might meet with divinity.** He made it possible for **man to become a partaker of the divine nature, and escape the corruptions** that are in the world through lust. Christ is continually working to uplift and ennoble man, and He requires that every soul whom **He has redeemed from hopeless misery,** shall co-operate with Him in the great work of saving the lost. We are not to lay snares and make secret plans to draw souls into temptation. {FE 291.1}

The world that Satan has claimed and has ruled over with cruel tyranny, the Son of God has, by one vast achievement, encircled in His love and connected again with the throne of Jehovah. Cherubim and seraphim, and the unnumbered hosts of all the unfallen worlds, sang anthems of praise to God and the Lamb when this triumph was assured. They rejoiced that the way of salvation had been opened to the fallen race and that **the earth would be redeemed from the curse of sin.** [note NOT redeemed from the curse, wrath, or punishment of God!] How much more should those rejoice who are the objects of such amazing love! {AG 72.4}

- If we use the word Defender, from who is Jesus defending us?

What is often taught? How many Christian's have a view of Jesus in heaven defending us in a trial before the heavenly judge?

Zechariah's description of Joshua, the high priest, is a striking representation of the sinner for whom Christ is mediating that he may be brought to repentance. **Satan is standing at the right hand of the Advocate, resisting the work of Christ,** and pleading against him that man is his property since he has chosen him as his ruler. But the defender of man, the restorer, mightier than the mightiest, hears the demands and claims of Satan, and answers him: "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by." [Zechariah 3:2-5.] {CE 159.2}

What do you hear happening? To whom is Jesus defending? Who is Satan standing beside and arguing that they are unworthy of salvation? Who is Jesus working to convince it is not so and to heal and save?



Where is the battle between Christ and Satan fought? Satan is the father of what? Lies, What is it that sets us free? Truth, Who is the source of truth? Who is pleading truth to defend our minds against the lies that we are beyond saving, beyond healing?

So, here is another place where EGW writes about the same scenario of Joshua the high priest, but with slightly different insights, listen closely:

"And he shewed me Joshua the high priest"--a representative of the people who keep the commandments of God--"standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him" [So where are the angel of the Lord and Satan standing? Does this indicate where they are making their arguments?] (Zechariah 3:1). {TMK 108.2}

Christ is our High Priest. Satan stands before Him night and day as an accuser of the brethren. **With his masterly power he presents every objectionable feature of character as sufficient reason for the withdrawal of Christ's protecting power, thus allowing Satan to discourage and destroy those whom he has caused to sin.** [Who is being impacted by Satan's accusation? Is Christ being discouraged? No, so who? Then where is Christ working to defend us against Satan's accusations? In our minds...] But Christ has made atonement for every sinner. **Can we by faith hear our Advocate saying,** "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; . . . is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (verse 2). {TMK 108.3} [who needs to hear this—God? No! We do!]

"Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments" (verse 3). Thus sinners appear before the enemy who by his masterly, deceptive power has led them away from allegiance to God. With garments of sin and shame **the enemy clothes those who have been overpowered by his temptations, and then he declares that it is unfair for Christ to be their Light, their Defender. . . . Hear the words of Jesus: . . . I will blot out his transgressions. I will cover his sins...** [who is to hear the words of Jesus? Is it God hearing the words and saying, "Okay Son, you paid the price, I guess I can legally pardon? Or is it the sinner who hears the words and trust/believes Jesus to do what He says?] {TMK 108.4}

MONDAY

Read third and fourth paragraphs, "Job's complaint..." Read Heb 4:15, 16:

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.¹⁶ Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

And what does this mean? Does it mean that God in His divine self learned something He didn't already know? Or, that God revealed that He truly does know, and this convinces us, also that Jesus in



His human self did truly go through this and understand AS A HUMAN the sufferings we struggle with, because in His human sojourn He had denied Himself access to His divine prerogatives.

And why was it important for Christ to be made in the likeness of sinful flesh? So that He could pick up humanity, in the broken condition in which Adam placed it, and fix, heal, correct, restore, rebuild it. And Christ did this in His own personal human life experience!

Notice Heb 5:8-10

Although he was a son, he **learned obedience from what he suffered** ⁹ and, **once made perfect**, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him ¹⁰ and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

What does this mean? That as a human he grew, confronted, chose, overcome, developed and perfected His human nature into perfect harmony with God's character and design:

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

TUESDAY

Read the second paragraph, "Still, Jesus didn't..." What is true in this paragraph and what is false?

- T-Jesus had to do more than only give an example
- T-It is absolutely true that humankind could not save itself—that only through Jesus could the human species be saved.
- T-It is also true that **Jesus is our substitute**, in that Jesus took upon Himself our infirmities, our iniquities, our sinful condition, our sinful flesh, in order to develop a perfect human character, destroy the infection of selfishness and cure the human sin condition.
- T-It cost God the Father and Jesus to do this—just as we might say to a parent that donated a kidney to save their child in renal failure, "You paid a high price to save your child." But the cost was not a legal cost, it was the cost of what reality required to fix what was broken.
- T-He died so that we could live
- T-We would have died eternally if Christ had not come and completed His mission



- F-He died to pay a legal penalty—this is based on the infection of human law constructs into Christianity—i.e. sin must be punished thoughts and that God’s laws function no different than ours
- F-Someone had to pay the penalty for our sins—no penalty was required to be paid, but the condition required a remedy and Jesus and the Father paid a terrible price to procure and provide that remedy
- True and False—He died the death we deserve. It is true that without His death on the Cross we would have died eternally. It is false that Jesus died eternally—in fact, Paul specifically states that if Jesus didn’t rise again that we are without hope. This is a nail in the coffin of the legal penal substitution model, which claims that Jesus died the same death the wicked die in the end. It is the height of denial, because in one moment they say the death penalty of sin is eternal death without a resurrection, in the next they say Jesus died that penalty but rose again, which immediately denies the very meaning of the second death. It also denies reality and the Scripture itself for Scripture states:
 - “Christ Jesus, **who has destroyed death** and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” 2Tim 1:10
- What is the second death according to Scripture?
 - “Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.” Rev 20:14
 - What is the second death? The lake of fire and what is thrown into the second death? Death—wait? What does this mean? The Bible is saying that the second death is the death that kills death, that eliminates death from the universe? How does one kill death? With life! Is there any Bible texts to support this?
- “Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴ **When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”** Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” 1Cor 15:51-55
- What is the text saying? What destroys death? When is it eliminated? When life destroys death, and where does life originate? God, and what is God’s presence described as?
 - for our “God is a consuming fire.” Heb 12:29
 - As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. ¹⁰ **A river of fire was flowing,** coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. Daniel 7:9,10

So, what is the second death? It is the death in which all defects from God’s design are eliminated, and selfishness is destroyed, and thus those who are solidified in selfishness are gone from all existence for



all eternity. Did Jesus die deviant from God's design, or did His death perfectly **RESTORE** God's design?

So, did Christ die that same death the wicked die in the end? If you have the wrong law concept, the human imposed law concept, then you must believe that He did because if you say no, then, in that model, your penalty isn't paid and fear consumes you as you live afraid that you will have to be punished. So you cling to a lie to avoid the fear God will have to kill you for your sin.

But when we come back to worship Him who made the heavens, earth and sea, the Creator and realize God's laws are design laws, then we realize Christ didn't have to die eternally, He had to destroy the infection which causes people to die eternally. And when we compare the way the wicked die in the end, and how Christ died at the cross these differences become evident:

- Christ died trusting the Father – Luke 23:46
The wicked die distrusting the Father – Revelation 6:16
- Christ died longing to see the Father – Mark 15:34
The wicked die hiding from the Father – Revelation 6:16
- Christ died when the Father's presence was hidden – Mark 15:34
The wicked die when the Father is fully revealed – 2 Thes 2:8
- Christ died less than 72 hours – Luke 24:1-8
The wicked die eternally – Malachi 4:1-3, Romans 6:23, James 1:15, 2Pet 3:10-12
- Christ died when love overcame selfishness – John 3:16, 10:17,18, 1John 3:16
- The wicked die overcome by selfishness – Revelation 21:8

However, the Father takes the exact same action and treats both Christ and the wicked the same—the Bible uses the word wrath to describe this act, or God's strange act. And what action did the Father take with Christ at the cross? He let Him go; He surrendered Him; He abandoned Him; He set Him free to reap the consequences of what CHRIST had chosen—and Christ chose to lay down His life in order to save, heal, fix, redeem, humanity, and God surrendered Him to His choice.

The wicked in the end also receive the same action from God—the Father lets them go, surrenders, abandons, forsakes them and God stops holding at bay the results of what sin does to a sinner. God stops shielding them from His unveiled glory and thus they also reap what they have chosen, which is eternal non-existence!

WEDNESDAY

The first paragraph states, "It was for the sin of all humans who ever lived that Jesus died on the cross."

I thought it quite significant that the quarterly correctly used the word *sin*, rather than the word sometimes used *sins*. What is the difference?



Jesus took upon himself the sin of the world, the sinfulness, the sinful condition and overcame and cured it. There is no evidence that Jesus took upon Himself the individual acts of sin committed by every individual human person and experienced the punishment for those acts of sin—that is part of the lie of the false law construct.

The fourth paragraph points out another important accomplishment of Christ's life, death, and resurrection by quoting Heb 2:14, that by his death he destroyed him who holds the power of death that is the devil. How do you understand this? What is the power of death, how does Satan hold it, and how did Christ destroy him and his power?

Life eternal is knowing God—John 17:3, so if life eternal is knowing God, then death is not knowing God, then the power of death is the lies Satan tells about God that we believe that keep us from knowing Him, so Christ destroys Satan's power by the revelation of the truth about God which destroys the lies and wins us back to trust.

But, this can only truly be done if Jesus is fully God. If Jesus is some lesser being, then Jesus didn't provide evidence of what the Father would do, only what the Son would do and thus no truth is revealed to refute Satan's lies about God. This is the subtle danger in the theologies that try to undermine the Trinity or teach Jesus was something less than fully God. Jesus Himself said, "If you've seen me you've seen the Father."

THURSDAY

The last paragraph states, "At the cross, Jesus paid the legal penalty for sin, thus reconciling the fallen world to God. Though we are sinners condemned to death, by faith we can have the promise of eternal life."

Now, I would like you to practice analyzing these two sentences and unpacking what they mean and what is wrong with them. What is the problem here?

- First, was there a legal penalty? If so, to whom is the legal penalty paid? And if it is paid to God or God's law, then what is the barrier to our salvation in such a model?
- What law construct teaches there is a legal penalty? This is how human law models work, but Design law teaches God is working to heal and restore.
- Where did this idea that God's law functions like human law—imposed rules—come from?
- Who taught in the opening of the controversy in heaven that sin had to be punished?
- What is implied by the idea that paying the penalty reconciles the fallen world to God? What, in this construct, is keeping the world from being reconciled to God? Note—it is an unpaid penalty that is the barrier that needs removal, and that penalty, in this construct, is something the government of God requires—thus this model is teaching that Christ died to do something to God to enable God to allow us back. This is teaching that it is not sin in us that keeps us



from God, but the unpaid penalty to God that keeps us from Him. This is Satan's lie full and clear, and we must reject it and get it out of our churches, doctrines, theologies and minds!

- What is implied by the language that sinners are *condemned to death*? That it is a legal pronouncement that needs enforcement, rather than a condition of being that needs curing.
- What is implied by the language we have the *promise of eternal life*? That we don't yet have eternal life—but what does the Bible say?
 - Does the Bible say “This is the *promise* of eternal life that they might know you...” No, eternal life is knowing God John 17:3
 - Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” Jn 11:25,26

What is Jesus saying? Do we get the promise of eternal life, or do we get eternal life?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the first two paragraphs, “Now is the judgment...”



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

We need HELP! With what? Well, after 10 years of ministry, this website has collected a huge number of articles, blogs, videos, podcasts, and notes that need to be categorized and indexed, so YOU can easily find all that's been said on a particular topic. The problem is, we don't have hundreds of eyes and ears on staff to search, read, listen, and find all these nuggets of truth. So, Come And Reason is calling on you, our faithful supporters, to help us with this task.

What do we need from you? Easy. Whenever you come across an article, blog, video, audio, or note that talks about a specific topic (like wrath, punishment, sanctuary, temple, mind, character, sin, death, etc., etc.), simply go to About > Contact Us and send us a note telling us where you found the information (page # in a document/note, time index in a video or audio file, the exact web address where you found the material, and the TOPIC the citation is talking about). We'll take those TOPICS and arrange them into categories and build a new menu entry to index all these resources.

Thank you, all, ahead of time for your participation and help in this rather significant endeavor!

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

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

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

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

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church

12702 9th Street

Garden Grove, CA 92840

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

Phone: (714) 534-1987

Fax: (714) 534-3877

Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



The Book of Job Lesson 13 4Q 2016

The Character of Job

SABBATH

Last week I received a question about Isaiah 53:10, let's read 53:10 and verse 11:

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. ¹¹ **After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.** NIV This is the NIV and you can see the translators have a certain lens through which they interpret. It has to do with preconceived ideas of God's law and sovereignty—God is causal and inflicting. But this is not in the Hebrew, it is artifact of the translators.

The Lord says, **"It was my will that he should suffer**; his death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness. And so he will see his descendants; he will live a long life, and through him my purpose will succeed. ¹¹ After a life of suffering, he will again have joy; he will know that he did not suffer in vain. My devoted servant, with whom I am pleased, will bear the punishment of many and for his sake I will forgive them. GNT This is the GNT and it shifts the focus slightly that it was God's will he should suffer, but it is not God causing the suffering. This is much closer to the truth as it was God's will for Jesus to rescue humankind!

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days, And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. ¹¹ **He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many,** For He shall bear their iniquities. NKJV This is the NKJV and again the translators bring in a certain view of God's law and God acting as the causal agent.

The SDA Bible commentary on this passage states:

The Lord was not delighted that His Servant (see on ch. 52:13), Messiah, should suffer, but rather, in view of the eternal welfare of men and the security of the universe, it was best for Him to suffer. "It pleased the Lord" in the sense that "it was the will of the Lord." Only thus could the plan of salvation succeed. The sufferings of Christ were part of the eternal plan¹

¹ Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1977). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 4, p. 291). Review and Herald Publishing Association.



The Bible commentary is correct—it pleased God that Jesus in perfect accord with Himself and perfectly revealed the Father and perfectly fulfilled His mission to heal humankind.

How one understands this passage depends entirely upon the law lens one uses.

If we use the false law lens, the lie that God’s law works like human law, rules made up and enforced with punishment then what conclusion do we draw from these texts? That God was pleased to inflict punishment on Jesus in order for Jesus to pay the penalty so God could resolve His anger and wrath and save mankind.

If we use the true view of God’s law as design law, then we realize humankind was in a terminal state, “dead in trespass and sin” and would die eternally unless God intervened through Christ to fix the situation. Thus, while God did not enjoy His Son’s suffering, He was pleased for His Son to carry out His purpose to save humankind and the only way to do this was to partake of our human nature, confront the carnal nature and destroy it restoring the species human back to God’s original ideal.

It would be like a parent whose child was dying of leukemia having another child who was a bone marrow match, they would be pleased the healthy child donated bone marrow to save their sibling, and doing so would cause suffering to the donor and while the parents wouldn’t enjoy the healthy child suffering, they would be pleased with it because of what it accomplished.

Read Memory Text: “Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?” James 2:22 NKJV

What is the long-standing debate between faith and works in Christianity?

The traditional penal substitutionary view is that we are saved totally by faith, i.e. accepting the legal payment of Jesus without any work from us, and that works are only an evidence of the fact we are saved, but have no role whatsoever in our salvation, i.e. there is no work we can do that isn’t contaminated with sin, thus it would be useless to offer our works to God as having any merit for our salvation. Only by accepting the perfect sinless blood of Jesus can we have our sin-debt paid for, if we try to offer God our works we offer Him a contaminated offering and He will not accept it.

Jump to Friday’s lesson and read the first paragraph, “The Protestant Reformation...” What was the works that the Reformation was protesting? That we had to behave in a certain way or do certain rituals or pay certain payments in order to be good enough to be saved—such as:

- indulgences
- go to confessional
- partake of communion
- receive last rights or be buried in sacred ground
- do penance



- make pilgrimages
- give money to the church
- fight in a crusade
- build a cathedral

The idea was that you had to do something which would put yourself in a position where you were now worthy of salvation.

The Reformation was protesting all the works that held salvation hostage to the actions of the sinner and exploited the sinner for benefit of the institution, or suggested we needed to improve ourselves in anyway before we could be saved. In our understanding today it would be like saying to a person with a terminal illness they must get well before the doctor will treat them.

Daniel 7:25 prophesied that a power would arise and seek to change God's law—what power and how?

The power was Rome and Rome changed God's law by replacing the design law truth with the human imposed law lie—the idea that God's laws function no differently than the laws human beings make, rules which require external punishment or some payment to pay the legal authority for breaking the law. This is the root to all paganism, god's who will punish unless paid in some way:

Through heathenism, Satan had for ages turned men away from God; but he won his great triumph in perverting the faith of Israel. By contemplating and worshiping their own conceptions, the heathen had lost a knowledge of God, and had become more and more corrupt. So it was with Israel. **The principle that man can save himself by his own works lay at the foundation of every heathen religion; it had now become the principle of the Jewish religion. Satan had implanted this principle. Wherever it is held, men have no barrier against sin.** {DA 35.2}

In heathenism, what are the works supposed to do? They are always intended to do something to influence the god not to punish or to bring a blessing.

This corruption of the false law led to all the works abuses described above—the Reformation protested the specific distortions but didn't get to the root of it and thus within Protestantism the infection of imposed law remains and infects much of Protestant theology—the most critical is the way we understand the plan of salvation. Protestant theology merely substituted the works of man trying to influence a punishing god, with the works of Jesus to pay off the angry and punishing god.

But is there an error still in the Protestant balance between faith and works, justification and sanctification? Yes, it is in the idea that justification is a legal declaration of someone being righteous, when they are not righteous, but God declares them righteous based on the legal substitution of Jesus into their legal account in heaven. This is all false based on the false law construct.



True Biblical justification is very simple, it is setting a person right with God. The natural sinful heart is enmity to God, it doesn't trust God, thus when a person's heart changes from distrust to trust, they are set right with God again, they are justified. This is what the Bible teaches about Abraham, that after he trusted God then God recognized him as being set right or righteous. And in trust we open the heart and the Spirit comes in and we experience transformation of character, commonly called sanctification. There is nothing legal about it, it is all healing.

So what is the balance between faith and works?

- ²⁰ You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? ²¹ Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. James 2:20-22
- Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Phil 2:12,13
- For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Eph 2:8-10
- Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Gal 6:7,8
 - Who is doing the sowing?
- Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, **set your hearts** on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵ **Put to death**, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸ But now **you must rid yourselves** of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹ **Do not lie** to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator...¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, **clothe yourselves** with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Col 3:1-13



Who is doing the work? Is this work of life transformation only of God? Does it matter? Is our salvation dependent upon this ongoing work?

These Bible passages have been a source of great tension within Christianity resulting in two primary camps – the work your way to heaven camp in which our works commend us to God or somehow save us from sin – legalism, opposed by the camp which says our salvation is of God's grace without our work and our works only reveal what He has done within us.

This tension only exists because of the false law construct, get rid of that lie and you get rid of the tension.

Here are some thoughts from one of the founders of our church, what do you think?

- While God was working in Daniel and his companions "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), they were working out their own salvation. Herein is revealed the outworking of the **divine principle of cooperation, without which no true success can be attained. Human effort avails nothing without divine power; and without human endeavor, divine effort is with many of no avail. To make God's grace our own, we must act our part. His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort.** {LHU 193.4}
- We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}
- There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the **cooperation of man with the divine agencies--** divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding,** but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . .** . Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}
- In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. **The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself.** True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a



power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}

What is the truth? We must accurately diagnose the problem before we can understand the solution

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

When Adam sinned in Eden did God get changed? Did God's law get changed? Did the condition of humanity get changed? Then does Christ need to do something to change or fix God or God's law? No! They are perfect, then what needs to be changed or fixed? The condition of humankind—this is what Christ came to achieve.

Thus, when we move back to the truth about God's law as design law, how He built reality to work and realize that sin changed humankind to be out of harmony with this design and thereby dead in trespass and sin, then we realize the true balance between faith and works:

Christ singly and alone, with no help from any human source, defeated Satan, revealed the truth about God, exposed Satan as a liar, destroyed the infection of selfishness and developed a perfect human character—the remedy to sin! Thus, no work we can do can create our own remedy or add to the healing power or perfection of the remedy Christ achieved. In the humanity of Jesus Christ the species human was saved—and what He achieved can be applied to individual believers, if they will trust Him, i.e. have faith in Him.

So, we have faith that Christ alone won the victory, revealed the truth to win us to trust and procured the remedy. But, we must then *partake* of the remedy and *follow* the prescription of our Heavenly Physician. This is our work to do, and without this work on our part, we simply fail to partake of what Christ has achieved. The work we do does not change or influence God or have any merit in some legal sense, but is the work to connect with, and experience in our own minds and hearts the unity and oneness with Christ that heals us.

It would be like having an infection and there is an antibiotic that will cure you; you didn't develop the antibiotic; you didn't pay for the antibiotic; it is offered to you freely, but you still must take the antibiotic; it won't be forced down your throat. And when you take it the antibiotic does something in you that you cannot do for yourself.

This is what James is saying, that faith without works is dead—to believe in an antibiotic, and believe in its power to heal and save, but refuse to take it is dead, has no ability to heal you and you will still die from the infection. So, too, those Christians who believe Jesus Christ died for them, but refuse to participate with Jesus, partake of the truth He provided and choose to follow that truth will still die of their terminal condition.



How do we put all the texts together? After Adam's sin humanity was changed from beings who operated in perfect accord with the law of love, the template of life. Mankind believed lies about God and didn't trust Him. Christ came to reverse all of this. First He came to reveal the truth to destroy lies and win us to trust, but more than this Christ, as our substitute, took our infirmities, our sick condition upon Himself in order to cure, reverse, recreate, rewrite God's perfect character into the human species. He did this in His own person! He procured the remedy to sin and now offers this to us through the application of His Spirit!

The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; **it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health.** It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters (Letter 406, 1906). {6BC 1074.2}

Thus, when we are won to trust we open the heart, surrender our will to Him and the Spirit infuses us. We partake of the divine nature. We are inspired, enlightened, empowered, encouraged and we then choose daily to eliminate from our lives everything we know is harmful and embrace all that is good. As the apostle says, via the indwelling Holy Spirit – a cooperative arrangement, we choose to rid ourselves of the old life and live a life of love!

The lesson also said this however, and as we prepare for our next quarter on the Holy Spirit I couldn't let this pass: "Yet the truth of salvation by faith alone always included the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, not as a means of salvation but as an expression of it."

Are they saying that we are saved first and then we get the Holy Spirit as an evidence of our already being saved? Again, this distinction is false, based on the false law construct of salvation being a legal declaration. There is no salvation, which means healing, restoration, recreation, without the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the delivery agent of the remedy that Christ achieved, so while the remedy was achieved by Christ, we cannot partake of the remedy without the Holy Spirit—thus the Holy Spirit is part of the means of salvation, the means of delivering and making real in us what Christ achieved. Are we comfortable with this idea or uncomfortable?

The Spirit is given as a regenerating agency, **to make effectual the salvation wrought by the death of our Redeemer.** {AA 52.4}

Of what avail would it have been to us that the only begotten Son of God had humbled Himself, endured the temptations of the wily foe, and wrestled with him during His entire life on earth, and died the Just for the unjust that humanity might not perish, **if the Spirit had not been given as a constant, working, regenerating agent to make effectual in our cases** what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer? {3SM 137.1}

In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart... **The Spirit was to be given as a**



regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. {DA 671.2}

In the battle between Christ and Satan, the evil one has worked to oppose Christ at every point through history. He worked to deceive Adam and Eve, he worked to destroy the avenue through which Messiah would come. He tried to have baby Jesus killed. He tried to get Jesus to sin. He tried to keep Jesus in the tomb. He tried to obscure the truth about what Jesus accomplished making it into a legal act. He tries to get us to deny the importance or even existence of the Holy Spirit, because even though he failed at every other point and the remedy for sin has been procured by Jesus, if we deny the Holy Spirit we close ourselves off to the agent which make Christ's victory effectual in us, i.e. applies the remedy to us!

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Though Job had..." thoughts? Any lesson for us today when we experience trials and difficulties? Is it *sometimes* true that we experience difficulties because we are right with God and the evil one wants to discourage us?

Does this explain all the reasons why trials and difficulties occur? No, but it is one possible reason. Could this be an encouragement?

How can this be misapplied and misused? Some believe if they are not being persecuted by the world it is because they are not yet holy enough and they use persecution as the evidence of their holiness, so they make a point of acting in ways that enhance their divergence from societal norms until they incite conflict and then point to the conflict as evidence of their holiness. David Koresh and the Branch Davidians did this—have you ever known Christians doing this same thing on a smaller scale within their Christian community—perhaps acting with extremes within their congregation to the point of inciting critique and then pointing to the criticism as evidence of their holiness?

Read second paragraph, "How good and how faithful..." Yes, Biblical perfection is about maturity of character, not perfect performance of all tasks—i.e. a person who spills soup, or trips and falls on a tree root, or gets a math problem wrong, makes an error in their check registry and thus bounces a check, or many other mistakes in life, can still be perfect i.e. mature of character.

Apply this insight to this Bible passage:



Although he [Jesus] was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹ and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him... Heb 5:8,9

Wasn't Jesus always perfect? What is Bible perfection? Maturity—while Jesus was always sinless, as a human he was not always fully mature, but had to grow and develop a perfect and mature human character—it was only AFTER He accomplished this, which was fully done at the Cross, that He was then able to be our Savior and High Priest. Thoughts? Concerns? Why is this true?

What was needed for our salvation? If the legal penal view is correct, that what was needed was sinless blood sacrifice of a human life, then God could have provided that when Jesus was a baby—Remember Satan inspired Herod to try and kill baby Jesus. If Herod succeeded the sinless blood of Jesus would have been shed—with what result? The plan of salvation would have failed—why? Because Jesus would NOT have grown as a man and developed a perfect character—this is why Satan tried to have Jesus killed as a baby.

Read third paragraph, “Second, the text says...” What does it mean to be upright? How can we be upright today? What is the balance between obeying God's law and human law?

Read fourth paragraph, “Third, the text says...” What does it mean to fear God? Does it mean to be terrified and scared, or to be in awe, to revere, to be inspired by, to look up to, to humble oneself before?

Why is this an important distinction?

When we are inspired and in awe, but without terror and not afraid, frightened, or scared, what will that lead to? Will it lead to Isaiah 1:18, “Come let us reason together...” Will we be more interesting in talking with God, in asking honest questions, in seeking to understand? Do we see the two people in OT times who God called His friends doing this? Moses and Abraham?

But what if we instead hold to fear, terror, dread? Does this lead us to question, or simply do what the master says, “God said it, I believe it, that settles it?”

Read fifth paragraph, “Finally, Job...” thoughts? What is evil? How can we tell the difference between good and evil?

If we are in the imposed law construct we often miss it and we end up doing evil in the name of good—examples:

- Those who crucified Christ because He broke their law
- Those who burned other's at the stake throughout history
- A mother is home with her 5 and 7 y/o daughters decorating for Christmas and Christmas music is playing and the kids and mother are laughing and frolicking/dancing around to the



music when the father walks in—he sees them dancing and scowls angrily and comments about how dancing is sinful and stomps out.

- A preacher tells his church that Christ cannot return until the women stop wearing make-up, jewelry, and pants, and until Christians stop watching TV, and stop eating meat.
- Others?

What is true evil? Here is a short three paragraphs from EGW:

All sin is selfishness... The sowing of seeds of selfishness in the human heart was the first result of the entrance of sin into the world. **God desires every one to understand the evil of selfishness**, and to co operate with Him in guarding the human family against its terrible, deceptive powers. **The design of the gospel is to confront this evil** by means of remedial missionary work, and to destroy its destructive power by establishing enterprises of **benevolence**. {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 3}

As a remedy for the terrible consequences into which selfishness led the human race, God gave His only begotten Son to die for mankind. [what was the reason? as a remedy to cure the human condition from selfishness] How could He have given more? In this gift He gave Himself. "I and My Father are one," said Christ. **By the gift of His Son, God has made it possible for man to be redeemed and restored to oneness with Him**. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." **Love is the great principle that actuates unfallen beings**. With amazement the angels behold the indifference that those who have light and knowledge manifest toward a world unsaved. The heavenly host are filled with an intense desire to work through human agencies **to restore in man the image of God**. They are ready and waiting to do this work. **The combined power of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost is pledged to uplift man** from his fallen state. Every attribute, every power of divinity has been placed at the command of those who unite with the Saviour in winning men to God. O, that all would appreciate the truth as it is in Jesus. O, that all would love God in return for the love wherewith He has loved them. {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 4}

Sin has extinguished the love that God placed in man's heart. The work of the church is to rekindle this love. The church is to co-operate with God **by uprooting selfishness from the human heart, placing in its stead the benevolence that was in man's heart in his original state of perfection**. {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 5}

Do you hear anything legal or penal? No it is all design law, restoring God's law of love, His design back into human beings.

Thus the greatest evil is the evil of religions and religious teachings that present God to be like Satan in character!



Go around the world and ask people to define evil. You will always find that no matter what society, that evil has at its core the exploitation of other human beings. This means evil, by definition, recognizes the value of other human beings. And where does this value, this worth of humanity originate—in all societies, including those who reject God?

MONDAY

The title of the lesson is from Job 29:6 where Job said “my steps were bathed with cream.” What is he saying?

Read fourth paragraph, “But we can see...” thoughts? How must Job have treated people for them to think of him this way?

Do we see all human beings as equal? Do all human beings have equal worth? Absolutely! How has this truth been perverted to cause division?

The truth that all humans are of equal worth has been distorted into the idea that it is immoral, wrong, even sinful, to make distinctions between people based on ability. Historically, discrimination occurred based on arbitrary reasons such as the color of one’s skin or their gender. But, this doesn’t mean we are not to discriminate, i.e. make discerning decisions between people and Martin Luther King Jr. stated it quite accurately:

I look to a day when people will not be judged by the color of their skin, but **by the content of their character.**

It is right to discriminate by character, to refuse to hire someone who is untrustworthy etc.

Is it also wise to discriminate based on ability—a good coach doesn’t put the quarterback in the defensive line, or put the offensive lineman at quarterback, or the kicker as running back. A good coach recognizes that the team functions best when each person’s abilities are taken into account and they are allowed to function in the role they are best suited for.

In the church we are advised in the New Testament that some have various gifts, abilities, endowments, and that persons should fill roles in the church according to their gifts. In other words, we should discriminate and avoid putting people in positions where they are not well suited.

Society could learn from this principle.

TUESDAY

The last paragraph states, “Here, though, Job shows just how much he understands about human rights and that these rights originate in the God who made us.”



What are human rights? What does it mean?

They are commonly understood as inalienable fundamental rights "to which a person is inherently entitled simply because she or he is a human being," and which are "inherent in all human beings" regardless of their nation, location, language, religion, ethnic origin or any other status. They are applicable everywhere and at every time in the sense of being universal, and they are egalitarian in the sense of being the same for everyone. They require empathy and the rule of law and impose an obligation on persons to respect the human rights of others. They should not be taken away except as a result of due process based on specific circumstances; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights

Can we name any?

- Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?
- Freedom of thought and religion and conscience
- Freedom from torture
- Freedom from imprisonment
- Freedom from slavery
- Freedom of speech
- Freedom of movement
- Right to a fair trial
- Right to bear arms

Why are these rights? Where do they come from? What makes them rights?

If the evolutionary worldview is correct—then how can any of these be inherent rights? In the evolutionary worldview isn't it a law that the strong prey on the weak in order to advance and succeed and a species is benefited by killing off its weakest members?

We have pointed out in here many times the contradiction in Christianity by those who teach a God of love and that God will kill you or torture you in hell if you don't love Him in return.

But, notice, the liberal humanist has similar contradictions—teaching that there is no God, no higher moral authority, that we just evolved by random chance through the process of the weak and defective being killed off and the strong surviving, yet arguing for the equal rights of all human beings. What is the moral basis for them if there is no God?

Here is an interesting quote from EGW:

When Christ came to the earth, humanity seemed to be fast reaching its lowest point. The very foundations of society were undermined. Life had become false and artificial. **The Jews, destitute of the power of God's word, gave to the world mind-benumbing, soul-deadening**



traditions and speculations. The worship of God "in Spirit and in truth" had been supplanted by the glorification of men in an endless round of man-made ceremonies. **Throughout the world all systems of religion were losing their hold on mind and soul. Disgusted with fable and falsehood,** seeking to drown thought, men turned to infidelity and materialism. Leaving eternity out of their reckoning, they lived for the present. {Ed 74.4} [Does this sound familiar?]

As they ceased to recognize the Divine, they ceased to regard the human. Truth, honor, integrity, confidence, compassion, were departing from the earth. Relentless greed and absorbing ambition gave birth to universal distrust. **The idea of duty, of the obligation of strength to weakness, of human dignity and human rights,** was cast aside as a dream or a fable. The common people were regarded as beasts of burden or as the tools and the steppingstones for ambition. Wealth and power, ease and self-indulgence, were sought as the highest good. Physical degeneracy, mental stupor, spiritual death, characterized the age. {Ed 75.1}

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, "But there's a deeper..." I think this is a good point, Job didn't curse God because he had enough experience, personal knowledge of God, that even though Job didn't understand what was happening and why, He knew that God would not do evil or wrong. It is similar today when you know someone very well and you hear a rumor about them that puts them in a bad light, and you say—no, there must be some other explanation, and you give time for them to reveal the truth to you.

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, "What we see..." How do we understand this in the setting of the Great Controversy?

What was the original purpose in the creation of humankind?

They were to be the repository of God's living law of love and govern this planet as God governs His universe!



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A couple of weeks back I made reference to an online dialogue I had with writers of the Compass Magazine website. I stated that Compass Magazine was in some way affiliated with Andrews University—however, I received an email this week from a listener that suggests this may not be an official relationship, i.e. owned and operated by Andrews, but instead appears to be a not-for-profit organization in an informal relationship, as it is edited by students of Andrews. If anyone else can clarify the specific relationship that would be helpful.

We need HELP! With what? Well, after 10 years of ministry, this website has collected a huge number of articles, blogs, videos, podcasts, and notes that need to be categorized and indexed, so YOU can easily find all that's been said on a particular topic. The problem is, we don't have hundreds of eyes and ears on staff to search, read, listen, and find all these nuggets of truth. So, Come And Reason is calling on you, our faithful supporters, to help us with this task.

What do we need from you? Easy. Whenever you come across an article, blog, video, audio, or note that talks about a specific topic (like wrath, punishment, sanctuary, temple, mind, character, sin, death, etc., etc.), simply go to About > Contact Us and send us a note telling us where you found the information (page # in a document/note, time index in a video or audio file, the exact web address where you found the material, and the TOPIC the citation is talking about). We'll take those TOPICS and arrange them into categories and build a new menu entry to index all these resources.

Thank you, all, ahead of time for your participation and help in this rather significant endeavor!

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

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

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle Is Real at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcs Summit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

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

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



The Book of Job Lesson 14 4Q 2016

Some Lessons From Job

SABBATH

When you consider the book of Job, what are the main lessons you take from it?

- God is not the source of evil
- There is a reality beyond which we can see, a dimension with which we are currently out of phase
- That there is a real intelligent being who is evil, consumed completely with selfishness
- That bad things can happen to good people through no choice or wrong of their own
- That people with good intentions can be the voice of the evil one
- That sometimes the circumstances we are in don't make sense to our current level of understanding—yet God is still good and is worthy of our trust!
- That we have genuine freedom and God doesn't use His power to control His intelligent creatures like puppets.
- The way the world currently operates is out of harmony with God's design—in other words, we cannot look at nature and say, the strong prey on the weak, innocents are slaughtered all the time, therefore God is the one doing this, or it is God's will for it to be this way, or it is God's design. No! God challenged Job's assumption on this and pointed out that Job was not there when God created earth and life on it, and Job's current view is misinformed. Much of our modern world, both Christian and scientific need to learn this lesson!
- others?

Read second paragraph, “We have no reason...” What do you hear this saying? That just because we cannot currently understand something doesn't mean God is not good or that God cannot be trusted. That the problem is in our limited awareness of all the facts and variables involved, **but**, is this saying that because we are limited in our understanding that we should NOT try to comprehend and understand? No! God invites us to reason, to think, to intelligently understand as far as we are able and to never rest satisfied in our current understanding but to keep moving forward in the truth! thoughts?

SUNDAY

The lesson points us to 2Cor 5:7: “We live by faith, not by sight.” and 2 Cor 4:18: “So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

Thoughts about these passages?

What does it mean to live by faith and not be sight? Does it mean believing without evidence?



Remember this quote from a quarterly a few years ago:

“There is always a need for faith, which is belief in something we don’t totally see or understand. If we could totally see it or understand it, then there would be no room for faith. We don’t need faith to believe that the sky is over our heads. We can look up and see it. Faith is needed, instead, to believe in the God who lives beyond that sky, because we can’t see Him.”¹

Is this correct, or is there an error in this line of thinking? What is the error? If this is the correct way to understand faith, then when Jesus comes and we see Him face to face do we say, “Jesus I used to have faith in you, but now that I meet you, see you, come to know you and understand you I don’t have faith in you any more?” Or will our faith be so much stronger on that day?

So how do understand the passages?

This lesson did a good job of describing it correctly, read first paragraph, “The immediate...” How is this correct and the paragraph about the sky incorrect?

Because this paragraph is about faith in a promise for something not yet experienced, and we have no evidence of what has been promised, thus we live by trusting or having faith in the One who promised. But, even though we don’t have evidence of the future promise, do we have abundant evidence of the existence of God and His trustworthiness? Yes, so the point is this:

Our faith in God is based on EVIDENCE of His existence and His trustworthiness, which He has provided in abundance. However, we do not have current evidence to prove that everything He has promised is real, that we take on faith because of the evidence of the trustworthiness of the One who promised.

Does this make sense? I want to hammer this point home, because in Christianity texts like these have been used to teach a lie that we don’t have or need evidence to believe in God, not so, our faith in God is supposed to be based on the evidences He has provided and what are the three threads of evidence?

- Scripture
- Science
- Experience

Jesus followed the **divine plan of education**... His education was gained directly from the **Heaven-appointed sources; from useful work, from the study of the Scriptures and of nature, and from the experiences of life--God's lesson books**, full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart. {Ed 77.2}

¹ *Bible Biographies, Actors in the Drama Called Planet Earth*. Adult Bible Study Guide (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn. [April-June 2001]): 128.



What do you say to those who report it is illogical to believe in God because we cannot see Him?

What are answers that can put this argument to rest?

Read third and fourth paragraphs:

A preacher stood before a church in a large city. He asked the congregation to be quiet. For a few seconds there was no sound. He then pulled out a radio and turned it on, running the dial across the channels. All sorts of sounds came out of the radio.

“Let me ask,” the preacher said, “Where did these sounds come from? Did they originate in the radio itself? No, these sounds were in the air all around us, as radio waves, waves just as real as my voice is now. But the way we are wired, we don’t have access to them. But the fact that we can’t see or feel or hear them doesn’t mean that they don’t exist, right?”

Are there other examples of things we cannot sense, but are proven to be real?

- Light beyond our visual spectrum—ultraviolet, infrared
- Sound beyond our ability to hear
- Smells beyond our ability to smell—
 - Dogs are believed to have sense of smell 10,000 to 100,000 times as sensitive as ours. If we translated the 10,000 times better to vision—we can see a third of a mile, then a dog could see 3,000 miles!
 - Dogs can sense up to 1 part per trillion. For instance, we could tell if we had a teaspoon of sugar in a cup of coffee, a dog could sense that same teaspoon of sugar a million gallons of water, the amount in two Olympic size pools.
 - There are reports of dogs finding 35 pounds of marijuana packed in plastic container submerged in gasoline within a gas tank.
- Radiation
- Gravity
- Nuclear forces—the force that hold nucleuses of molecules together
- What about quantum forces?

Are there spiritual lessons we can learn from this?

Why should we believe that life is intelligently designed rather than just randomly coming to be on its own?

Last week I mentioned the differences between origin science and evolutionary science. Origin is science on how things came into existence, whereas evolutionary science is about how things adapt and change based on experience. The problem with godless evolutionary science however is that you



cannot start evolving until origin happens, if nothing originates then there is nothing to evolve. And all the origin science supports creation and refutes a godless origin.

If you examine the big premises of what evolution teaches about origins versus what creation teaches about origins in light of the scientific method, i.e. what is testable and reproducible, we find something quite interesting—that creation is more scientific than evolution. Here are the big premises:

- Evolution—something came from nothing
- Creation—something came from something else
- Evolution—order came from disorder on its own with no intelligent input—this idea violates the second law of thermodynamics and all scientific experiments disprove the theory
- Creation—order came from disorder with intelligent input—this idea is in harmony with the second law of thermodynamics and life proves this to be true every day
- Evolution—life came from non-living matter on its own, spontaneous generation—which has been proven scientifically to be false, so scientists came up with a new name—abiogenesis, which also has no evidence in science.
- Creation—life comes from living matter—which the entire planet every day demonstrates to be true

Further problems with the godless view of origin are well described in Nancy Pearcey's book *Finding Truth* (I want to thank Marilyn Holm an online listener for gifting me this book) writes:

The origin of the universe has given rise to a puzzle known as the fine-tuning problem. The fundamental physical constants of the universe are exquisitely balanced, as though on a knife's edge, to sustain life. Things like the force of gravity, the strong nuclear force, the weak nuclear force, the electromagnetic force, the ratio of the mass of the proton and the electron, and many other factors have just the right value needed to make life possible. If any of these critical numbers were changed even slightly, the universe could not sustain any form of life. For example, if the strength of gravity were smaller or larger than its current value by only one part in 10^{60} (1 followed by 60 zeroes), the universe would be uninhabitable. (page 25)

She goes on to say:

What makes the fine-tuning problem so puzzling is that there is no *physical* cause to explain it. "Nothing in all of physics explains why its fundamental principles should conform themselves so precisely to life's requirement," says astronomer George Greenstein. p. 26

Why do you think chemists have never been able to create life in a lab? Pearcey quotes Physicist Paul Davies and says:

The central role of information explains why scientists have failed "to cook up life in the chemistry lab. Chemistry is about substances and how they react, whereas biology appeals to



concepts such as information”—which is clearly *not* chemical. Genetic information can be described only by using terminology borrowed from the mental world of language and communication: DNA is “a genetic ‘database,’ containing ‘instructions’ on how to build an organism. The genetic ‘code’ has to be ‘transcribed’ and ‘translated’ before it can act.” p 27

Pearcy points out:

Biologists’ favorite analogy for DNA is a computer. The molecule itself (the physical chain of chemicals) is the hardware. The DNA (the encoded information) is the software. In the origin-of-life research, the focus is on building the hardware. “Attempts at chemical synthesis focus exclusively on the hardware—the chemical substrate of life,” Davies writes; they “ignore the software—the informational aspect.” Yet any twelve-year-old kid with a laptop knows that building an electronic device out of copper, plastic, and silicone has nothing to do with writing the code to create the software program.

The surprising implication is that even if scientists succeeded in coaxing all the right chemicals to link up and form DNA molecules in a test tube, *that would do nothing to explain where the encoded genetic information came from.* p 27.

And, if the scientists in a lab did get the chemicals to form strands of DNA they would deny that they were using their intelligence to create the very conditions needed for the DNA to form—meaning it didn’t happen randomly on its own, but with intelligent input.

There are other lines of reason to support intelligent design to be much more reasonable than a godless origin. First the principle of cause and effect, in order for an effect to occur the cause has to be capable of producing the effect.

Pearcy puts it like this:

Because humans are capable of knowing, the first cause that produced them must have a mind. Because humans are capable of choosing, the first cause must have a will. And so on. Philosopher Etienne Gilson captures the argument neatly: because a human is *someone* and not a *something*, the source of human life must also be a *Someone*.

Materialism cannot explain human consciousness. There is nothing in science that has ever even come up with a theory for the existence of human consciousness.

Philosopher Even Fales calls it a mystery: “Darwinian evolution implies that humans emerged through the blind operation of natural forces. It is mysterious how such forces could generate something nonphysical.” Percy p. 109



Philosopher Colin McGinn treats it akin to a miracle. “We do not know how consciousness might have arisen by natural processes from antecedently existing material things. One is tempted, however reluctantly, to turn to divine assistance...” Percy p. 109

So, we come to the deep denial and foundation of a faith with evidence system of belief for those who deny the existence of God:

In the words of philosopher Galen Strawson, the denial of consciousness “is surely *the strangest thing that has ever happened in the whole history of human thought*.” It shows “that the power of human credulity [ability to believe without evidence] is unlimited, that the capacity of human minds to be gripped by theory, by faith, is truly unbounded.” It reveals “the deepest irrationality of the human mind.” Ibid. p 110

When we speak of evolution, the adaptation of things over time, the Bible teaches that this process is the way God designed reality to work. This is why God said to Adam and Eve that they would create beings in their image. It is found in the commandments that the sins would pass down 3 and 4 generations. It is found in Psalms that we are born in sin and conceived in iniquity. The Bible teaches that we were created with the ability to learn, adapt, change and pass those changes along to the next generation. This is epigenetic modification which happens within a few generations and which science has documented in thousands of examples.

Any examples of adaptation?

- Darwin’s famous finches – with all the different beaks; the diversity of beaks Darwin observed didn’t happen over millions of years due to random mutation, but happened in 1-2 generations due to environment and epigenetic modification. Amazingly, Darwin’s finches are evidence of creation, not evolution.² Had Darwin had the advantage of modern DNA science his theory of change over millions of years would have been refuted.
- Not all changes, since humankind deviated from God’s design are adaptive and consistent with how God designed life to operate.
 - Telomere shortening, which contributes to aging
 - Epigenetic modification in response to famine, which contributes to obesity in offspring

² Abzhanov, Arhat; Meredith Protas, B. Rosemary Grant, Peter R. Grant, Clifford J. Tabin (September 3, 2004), “[Bmp4 and Morphological Variation of Beaks in Darwin's Finches](#)”, *Science* (USA: AAAS) **305** (5689): 1462–1465, [doi:10.1126/science.1098095](#), [ISSN 0036-8075](#), [OCLC 1644869](#), [PMID 15353802](#), retrieved 2008-03-08

Abzhanov, Arhat; Winston P. Kuo, Christine Hartmann, B. Rosemary Grant, Peter R. Grant and Clifford J. Tabin (August 3, 2006), “[The calmodulin pathway and evolution of elongated beak morphology in Darwin's finches](#)”, *Nature* (UK: Nature Publishing Group) **442**(7102): 563–567, [doi:10.1038/nature04843](#), [ISSN 0028-0836](#), [OCLC 15863110](#), [PMID 16885984](#), retrieved 2008-03-08



- Epigenetic modification related to alcohol, which results in offspring of mothers who drink while pregnant have change in taste receptors such that alcohol tastes better than if mother didn't drink while pregnant
- 1000 new damaging mutations in the human genome every generation—the genome is degrading slowly—again consistent with the second law of thermodynamics and just the opposite of the evolutionary theory

So what if we changed the words in Genesis 1:1 from: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” To:

“Earth began when an extra-terrestrial intelligence came and terraformed it establishing a viable atmosphere and a stable planet.”

Does this say anything that contradicts the traditional view? Would non-believers be more open to it? Would you be comfortable or uncomfortable using this language? If we did use this language wouldn't the most important question still be—who is this extra-terrestrial intelligence? Is he a being we can trust?

Why is it so many prefer the illogical, evidence-denying idea that there is no God and the universe came into being by itself, ordered itself, and generated life all by itself without any intelligent input?

Because the alternative from human history has been worse—a false god who is worse than the worst human dictator—supreme in power and a being who will torture those who don't love him for all eternity.

Many people who have rejected God and gone to a godless view of reality is because the god construct they have been presented with is one that rightly should be rejected. The good news however, is that that God construct is false. We have an incredible truth, a message about our Designer God whose laws are the protocols upon which reality functions, who is always love and is seeking to heal and restore all who trust Him!

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “Evil is something put into...” Any questions or concerns about this paragraph?

I personally am not comfortable with this description. For me evil requires volition, intention, choice, thus inanimate nature is not capable of evil. Evil requires the choice to reject good and choose evil, without that choice it might be harmful, it might be destructive, it might be a result of some other evil, but itself is not evil.

- is water evil?



- What if water is used to drown someone? Now is water evil?
- What if the water was from a flood, is water now evil?
- Is the flood evil?
- What if the flood was due to a broken dam that broke simply because of age—was the dam evil? Was the water evil? Was it evil for the people to build the dam?
- What if the flood was due to heavy rains, are rains evil?
- What if the heavy rains flooded an area because of development of the area in a flood plane, was it evil to develop an area at risk for flooding?
- Could someone perpetrate evil by using water—drowning someone on purpose, blowing up a dam etc.? Is the water evil? Is the dam evil? Are the explosives evil? Is the flood which occurred because the dam was blown up evil? What was evil? The choice to deviate from love and act selfishly and destructively.
- What about pestilence—is a bacteria evil, or a result of evil in the world?

Read last paragraph, “In Job’s case...” What was the evil for which Satan was responsible? Is the evil in the natural event, or in the one who instigated the natural event to perpetrate harm?

Is a knife evil? What if a knife is used perform life-saving surgery, is the knife evil? What if a knife is used to murder someone, is the knife now evil?

This type of thinking, calling inanimate things evil leads to superstitious thinking:

- black cats are evil
- carved images, statues are evil
- pentagrams and goats heads are evil
- rabbits feet are good luck
- crosses are protection from evil
- a Bible in my car will keep me from a wreck

As we said last week in every culture of the world when you ask people to define evil it always involves exploiting or injuring another human being, and sometimes cruelty to animals, but never to cultures define evil by doing something to inanimate material.

TUESDAY

The lesson is about the friends who were more of a burden than a relief to Job and in the first paragraph it states, “However, after Job first started speaking, bemoaning the tragedies that befell him, they apparently felt it was more important for them to put Job in his place and set his theology straight than it was to encourage and uplift the spirits of their suffering friend.”

Do we ever see this today?



Do you remember the story from the beginning of *The God-Shaped Brain* of the young woman who came to see me distraught because she and her husband were unable to get pregnant? Her pastor had told her that God was punishing her because when she was a teen she had gotten pregnant and had an abortion and now God was punishing her by making her infertile.

Why would a pastor say such a thing to a young lady hurting as she was? What would motivate the pastor?

Who was the pastor trying to comfort—the young lady or himself? In other words, the pastor saying what he said because he needed to continue to promote a framework that brought him comfort regardless of who he hurt.

This is what Job's friends were doing—Job's friends saw the terrible tragedy that befell Job and it would most certainly cause them some anxiety and distress, and they would want to feel safe and secure in their situation. How? By finding fault with Job, it must be Job's fault and as long as it is Job's fault, something Job did to deserve this, then they didn't have to live in fear and anxiety as long as they didn't do something evil. So, Job just needs to admit he was wrong and deserved this so they can all go home and feel secure.

They wanted to be in control, believe that they were in control of what happened to them and could keep themselves safe. They didn't want to live in a universe in which they were not in control, thus they had this theology of rules and as long as they obey the rules they are safe.

This is very much one of the reasons for the penal views of theology we deal with today. God has His rules, if we know the rules and keep them then we are safe, we cannot be tagged out if we are on base so to speak. Thus many people cling to this false legal view and put burdens on innocents, just like Job's friends, so they can make themselves feel better.

The third paragraph compares how Jesus treated the woman caught in adultery with how Job's friends treated him. Then the lesson says this, "But even if he had been guilty like this woman, what Job needed from these men was what this woman needed, and what all suffering people need: grace and forgiveness."

What do you understand this to be saying? What does "grace and forgiveness" mean to you?

How can this be heard very accurately and correctly in God's plan and how can this be heard very inaccurately and even destructively?

What is grace? How would you explain it to a non-Christian you met on an airplane?

What about forgiveness, what do you understand it to be?



What law lens do you see these things through?

If we operate under the imposed law lens, broken rules which require inflicted punishment, grace means unmerited favor and forgiveness means legal pardon.

If we view these things through design law, we realize grace is God's constant interest, work, expenditure of energy and resources for the healing and restoration of His creation—because God is always gracious. And forgiveness is more than personal or legal pardon, it is the actual experience of being forgiven in the heart which brings repentance and reconciliation.

So the woman caught in adultery did not need to be legally pardoned, she needed to have her guilt, shame, self-loathing, self-disgust, fear of rejection and belief that she was too sinful for God or others to love removed. This is God's grace manifested in Christ's actions in dispersing the crowd and then asking where are her accusers. In other words, "Young lady, I am not accusing you." Why not? There is no need. Her actions were condemning her. Jesus is saying, "I know where you were just now and what you were doing. If you had not been caught and brought before me you would have snuck home, head hung low, consumed with guilt and shame, feeling worthless, searing your conscience and warping your character. I don't condemn you because your own actions are what are condemning and destroying you—why? Because you are acting outside my design for life and relationships and whenever someone chooses to do so they damage themselves. Please stop hurting yourself like this and go and live in harmony with my design—sin no more!

Here is an EGW quote:

God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. **It is not only forgiveness for sin but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart.** David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. {FLB 129.2}

If you have concerns about the "not merely a judicial act" meaning that is in part a judicial act, I would say this is because of the written law being added because of transgression to bring us to repentance, so for those who are still operating under the burden of the added written law God doesn't leave them in fear and insecurity, but adds for their peace the language of legal pardon, but there problem was never a legal problem it was always a condition of heart problem.

WEDNESDAY

Read fourth paragraph, "Secular writers, atheistic writers..." Do you know anyone who believes this way? How sad, to think we are only here for up to a 100 years and then we die and it meant nothing?

What does such a concept lead to?



Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die—hedonism—live for the moment, no sense in planning for a future.

The loss of a sense of right and wrong, everything is right if you can get away with it....as some think.

THURSDAY

What parallels do you see in the story of Job and the story of Jesus?

- A conflict over the character of God in which Satan works to misrepresent God; Job and Jesus work to reveal the truth about God
- Job had friends who were suggesting lies to him—Jesus friends (Peter) also suggested lies to him
- Job was righteous and was accused of not being righteous, Jesus was sinless and accused of being sinful
- Job suffered by no wrong action of his own, but because of who he was in God's plan. Jesus suffered by no wrong action of his own but because of who is was in God's plan
- Job turned to nature for answers—but drew the wrong conclusions, Jesus turned to nature as illustration to reveal the right answers!
- Job's wife had no role in his struggle to overcome his dilemma, except to perhaps add an additional burden; Christ's bride played no role in his struggle to overcome his dilemma, except to add a burden (remember when Christ asked His disciples to watch with Him, they slept, and one betrayed Him.)
- Job converses with God and finally come to peace; Jesus prays to His Father during His greatest agony and in that conversation comes to peace.
- Job, even though he lost children and had property destroyed, receives a greater property and more children in the end. Jesus, even though He lose many of His children and has had His property (earth) destroyed, in the end has many children restored to eternal life and His universe renewed in perfection.

Other parallels?

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

We need HELP! With what? Well, after 10 years of ministry, this website has collected a huge number of articles, blogs, videos, podcasts, and notes that need to be categorized and indexed, so YOU can easily find all that's been said on a particular topic. The problem is, we don't have hundreds of eyes and ears on staff to search, read, listen, and find all these nuggets of truth. So, Come And Reason is calling on you, our faithful supporters, to help us with this task.

What do we need from you? Easy. Whenever you come across an article, blog, video, audio, or note that talks about a specific topic (like wrath, punishment, sanctuary, temple, mind, character, sin, death, etc., etc.), simply go to About > Contact Us and send us a note telling us where you found the information (page # in a document/note, time index in a video or audio file, the exact web address where you found the material, and the TOPIC the citation is talking about). We'll take those TOPICS and arrange them into categories and build a new menu entry to index all these resources.

Thank you, all, ahead of time for your participation and help in this rather significant endeavor!

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

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

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle Is Real at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcs Summit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

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

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



The Holy Spirit and Spirituality 1Q 2017 Lesson 1

The Spirit and The Word

INTRODUCTION to the Quarterly:

Read fifth paragraph, which is first paragraph on page 3: “But there is a reason...” They are drawing a contrast between the HS and the Father and Son, so are they suggesting the Father and Son do seek to be the center of attention—is that true?

When Jesus was on earth did He seek attention for Himself? Or was He unassuming, often slipped away after a miracle before people could make a big deal, told people not to tell what He had done, and most importantly always said He was here NOT to bring attention to Himself but to point everyone to the Father! And the Father invested His energy and resources in the Son. The Trinity is the Triune perfection of other-centered love all three constantly seeking the good of the other two and their creation.

Why is the HS in the background more? Because of their *chosen* roles. Within a family the husband and wife decide between them many duties to be fulfilled, laundry, cooking, taking kids to school—either one is completely capable of doing any of these duties, it is simply by mutual agreement that one does some and the other does different duties. It is like this amongst the Godhead, any of the three could do anything because they are all equally God, yet they have, through mutual agreement, decided different roles or duties because of their character of love, because love gives, because all enjoy doing for each other and their creation; and what do you see those duties to be?

- The Father acts as the source of all that is good.
- The Son is the medium, mediator, advocate, conduit, agent through which the Father reveals Himself or acts and directly interacts with their creation on a physical level
- The Holy Spirit is the actualizer or applier of what the Father and Son have achieved

Thus God was in the Son reconciling the world to Himself (2Cor 5:19). Jesus’ work on earth was the acting out of the Father’s heart. His completed mission and victory over sin are applied into the lives of believers by the work of the Holy Spirit. In creation we have the Father as the source, the Son as the architect, designer, and builder and the Spirit as the actualizer or implementer of Their design.

So, with this understanding we realize what Christ meant when He said, “I do nothing of myself.” Christ takes from the Father to fulfill all the Father’s purposes for His universe. In this sense we can see various writers describing Christ turning to the Father, not to persuade the Father to be kind, but to receive from the Father the fullness of the Father’s purpose of love for His creation and carry that purpose out in meaningful action!

Another way to say this is the analogy of the connect-the-dot books. Each dot represents a fact, an actual historical act—these dots were placed by Jesus, who is the member of the Godhead who left



infinity to interact in physical form directly with His creation. The Holy Spirit is the member of the Godhead who comes to us and enlightens our minds to connect the dots so that we can see the larger picture of reality.

SABBATH

Read memory text:

“All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” NKJV

This from the NKJV but the KJV is very similar:

All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. KJV

A week or so ago I mentioned that there were errors in the KJV, this is one of those texts with an error—anyone recognize the translation error in this text?

If you are reading from the KJV it helps you because all the words that are not in the Greek are in italics, which means the translators added those words. So in this case, the first “is” is added, when it says “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God...” the “is” is supplied and leads to a false meaning, which has been quite destructive.

What is the false meaning? That all Scripture is given by God—is it? What about the Apocrypha and pseudo-Apocrypha are inspired by God? In the original 1611 KJV the entire Apocrypha was included, so those readers would use this text believe that the Apocrypha is equally inspired to the rest of Scripture.

What about the Koran or the Book of Mormon—are they equally inspired to the Bible? But they are also scriptures, just not *our* scriptures.

Almost all translations get this wrong. But the American Standard Bible and *The Remedy* state it more accurately. Here is the American Standard Bible:

Every scripture inspired of God *is* also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. ASB

Do you see the difference? It is absolutely true that all Scripture that God inspired is useful—it is not true that all Scripture has been inspired by God.



SUNDAY

Read the first paragraph, “How does God ensure...” No doubt, we as finite human beings, with natures that are fearful and selfish have quite limited innate understanding of reality and without the work of the Holy Spirit would be incapable of figuring out what is true.

So God is revealing truth to us—the lesson makes a distinction between revelation and inspiration—what do you understand the difference to be?

- Revelation is the act of revealing or disclosing—in this context, God acting to reveal or disclose truth about Himself and the GC to us.
- Inspiration—in the theological context it is defined as: “a divine influence directly and immediately exerted upon the mind or soul.”

As you hear these definitions, does *inspiration* then become one method or means of revelation? Or is there another distinction?

Other methods of Revelation besides inspiration?

- Directly talking to an intelligent being—in heaven, in Eden, with Moses, with Enoch, with Elijah
- Through signs and wonders
- Written messages directly from God—10 Commandments
- Written messages through angels—handwriting on the wall
- Written messages through humans—Scripture
- Verbal messages from angels—Gabriel talking to Daniel, Zachariah, Mary, the shepherds etc.
- Verbal messages through people
- Nature—Rom 1:20
- Life experiences and circumstances
- Animals—Balaam’s donkey
- Rituals and symbols and holy-days (holidays)
- Dreams and Visions—would these be forms of revelation that fall under the inspiration category?

Any others?

What is the purpose of all of these various activities—to achieve what? Communication to finite beings, primarily sinners, for what purpose? To enlighten us—to what purpose? To bring us back to the knowledge of God for our healing and restoration. There is nothing magical in any of these forms of communication—such as rituals, communion, baptism, or Scripture all of it is God reaching out to us to enlighten, transform, renew, heal and restore us to unity with Him!



Therefore, if the medium used by God to communicate with us instead becomes an obstacle to communication, worse darkens our minds and misinforms us about God and prevents us from seeing the truth—then what? It might need to be removed—which is what God did twice with the symbolic system of the OT.

The lesson points out that, “Revelation is the process in which God makes Himself and His divine will known to humans. The basic idea associated with the word *revelation* is an *unveiling*, or uncovering, a disclosure of something that otherwise is hidden.”

The question—what has hidden what God is revealing? Why are these truth hidden?

Satan’s lies about God and his distortions about God have hidden the truth about God necessitating God to act to reveal it. God has never acted to obscure the truth of His character and method of love—it is Satan that has done this—and most of the world remains in gross darkness to the true character of God, seeing God merely as powerful, but rarely as good.

Read last paragraph, “According to the apostle Peter...”

First question—how does inspiration work? Does the Holy Spirit dictate to the Bible writers what to write? Does the Holy Spirit enlighten the Bible writers with truth but the writers are left free to choose how they will express the truths? What then is inspired by God the words or the ideas expressed by those words? So can we substitute words as long as we retain the accurate meaning or ideas? Yes, this is why we can substitute Greek and Hebrew words with English ones. It is also why those claim the KJV is the only version that can be used show their misunderstanding of inspiration.

Here is what EGW said about inspiration:

The Bible is written by inspired men, **but it is not God’s mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented.** Men will often say such an expression is not like God. **But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible.** The writers of the Bible were God’s penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers. {1SM 21.1}

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man’s words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.-- Manuscript 24, 1886 (written in Europe in 1886). {1SM 21.2}

Why is this important to realize? So we don’t use the Bible as a rulebook, a declaration of actions that we are to take without thought. It is not an instruction manual—do this, to that, but a revelation of



God to us to enlighten us to how reality works and bring us back to a trust relationship with God. This requires we actually think and comprehend. Following an instruction manual does not require understanding and very little thought—yet this is how much of religion, including Christianity, functions.

Second question from this paragraph is What give the Bible authority? The lesson suggests its divine source gives it authority—but what does this mean?

- The divine all-powerful ruler who inspired the Bible it will enforce what it says—do what it says or else?
- It contains the seal of God therefore because it has the proper legal elements of a seal it legally binding and must be adhered to?
- Because the divine source if the source of all truth, and therefore the Bible contains truth and truth itself is authoritative?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “*Inspiration* is the term...” Has inspiration stopped with the writing of the Bible? Are people today inspired by the Holy Spirit? If they are is the inspiration of the Holy Spirit less inspiration than the writers of the Bible? How do we determine if a message from someone bears the marks of inspiration from God?

The enemies of the disciples could not but be convinced that Christ had risen from the dead. **The evidence** was too clear to be doubted. Nevertheless, they hardened their hearts, refusing to repent of the terrible deed they had committed in putting Jesus to death. **Abundant evidence that the apostles were speaking and acting under divine inspiration had been given the Jewish rulers, but they firmly resisted the message of truth.** Christ had not come in the manner that they expected, and though at times they had been convinced that He was the Son of God, yet they had stifled conviction, and crucified Him. In mercy God gave them still **further evidence**, [this is the third time in this paragraph that the word “evidence” is used. Notice, not declaration, command, claim, proclamation, order, directive, but evidence, and evidence requires something that proclamations do not—our contemplation, reasoning, understanding and then agreement!] and now another opportunity was granted them to turn to Him. He sent the disciples to tell them that they had killed the Prince of life, and in this terrible charge He gave them another call to repentance. But **feeling secure in their own righteousness**, the Jewish teachers refused to admit that the men charging them with crucifying Christ were speaking by the direction of the Holy Spirit. {AA 61.1}

What evidence was presented? Why didn’t those church leaders accept the inspiration of the Apostles? What did they use to reject the inspiration of the Apostles? Did they use the OT Scriptures that supported their preconceived ideas and expectations? Do we see this happening today, religious leaders, study for years teaching certain viewpoints and having certain expectations, and resisting any advancing truth that doesn’t meet with their expectations?



We are not to set our stakes and then interpret everything to reach this set point. [which means we are not to go to Scripture to prove what we already believe and have been taught is true] Here is where some of **our** great Reformers have failed, and this is the reason that many who today might be mighty champions for God and the truth **are warring against the truth.** . . . **[Many within our denomination are warring against the truth—why? Because they have their preconceived ideas and use the Bible to prove those ideas true, rather than learning from the Bible.] God designs we should be learners,** first from the living oracles, and second from our associates. This is God’s order. {CTr 331.2}

The Word of God is the great detector of error; to it we believe everything must be brought. The Bible must be our standard for every doctrine. We must study it reverentially. **We are to receive no one’s opinion without comparing it with the Scriptures. [this is something I actively encourage everyone to do with what we teach!]** Here is divine authority, which is supreme in matters of faith. {CTr 331.3}

Read third paragraph, “While many parts of the Bible...” One of the most important questions when reading Scripture, is first to be sure one has an accurate version of the Scripture and then to inquire, what is the point, why is this recorded in Scripture, what is this to teach? For instance we just finished with Job and we found many things recorded in Scripture that are what Job’s friends said, and which were not true—why are the misunderstandings and falsehoods of Job’s friends recorded in Scripture?

The words of Job’s friends, which were lies and falsehoods, are not inspired of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit inspired that the events, including the interaction of Job and his friends be recorded, so we might learn lessons, that well intentioned people, people with good motives can be wrong, can even be making arguments that undermine trust in God and lead us away from Him. Thus, the inspired message in Job is not what the friends said, but what we observe happening in the story, be careful who you trust, think for yourself, don’t believe someone else is right just because they are sincere.

The point is that it is not enough to quote a Scripture passage, one must understand why it was written and what it was written to accomplish.

With this in mind turn to:

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “The Word of God is trustworthy...” What does this mean? Does this mean we are not to make judgments about the Scripture, what it means, what is applicable today and what is not, that we are just to take it as it reads and do what it says? Or, is it okay to read the Scripture and conclude that specific God given instructions should not be practiced by us? Is it okay to disagree completely with one of God’s prophets—for instance, if one of God’s prophets says God is doing



something is it okay to sit in judgment of this idea and conclude God is not doing it, but the message of the prophet had a different purpose?

Let's examine a couple of Scripture passages and—I will leave it to you to decide if you will take it as it reads or will you pass judgment on what it says:

Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year. ²³ Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the Lord your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name, so that you may learn to revere the Lord your God always. ²⁴ But if that place is too distant and you have been blessed by the Lord your God and cannot carry your tithe (because the place where the Lord will choose to put his Name is so far away), ²⁵ then exchange your tithe for silver, and take the silver with you and go to the place the Lord your God will choose. ²⁶ **Use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, wine or other fermented drink,** or anything you wish. Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the Lord your God and **rejoice**. Dt 14:22-26

Should we sit in judgment here or should we simply do as the Bible says and use our tithe to buy fermented wine and rejoice in church each week or maybe just once a year? Does the Word of God have full acceptance, or do we only accept the parts that we believe are appropriate to God's will and purpose in our lives today?

Do we stone the Sabbath breaker today? Do we prohibit people from being pastors who have vision problems and who need glasses?

Another example is the story of Micaiah, who is a prophet of the Lord when Ahab is asking Jehoshaphat to join him in attacking Ramoth Gilead. This is what Micaiah said:

But Micaiah said, "As surely as the Lord lives, I can tell him only what the Lord tells me."

¹⁵ When he arrived, the king asked him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?"

"Attack and be victorious," he answered, "for the Lord will give it into the king's hand."

¹⁶ The king said to him, "How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?"

¹⁷ Then Micaiah answered, "I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and the Lord said, 'These people have no master. Let each one go home in peace.' "

¹⁸ The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Didn't I tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me, but only bad?"

¹⁹ Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. ²⁰ And the Lord said, 'Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?'



“One suggested this, and another that. ²¹ Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the Lord and said, ‘I will entice him.’

²² “ ‘By what means?’ the Lord asked.

“ ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,’ he said.

“ ‘You will succeed in enticing him,’ said the Lord. ‘Go and do it.’

²³ “So now the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The Lord has decreed disaster for you.” 1Kings 22:14-23

Do we take the position, “Well the Bible is God’s Word, who am I to question. If one of God’s prophet says it then it must be the truth and God sends lying spirits.” Or do we sit in judgment of this story and come to a different conclusion? What conclusion do we come to?

To whom was Micaiah speaking? To Ahab, and who did Ahab worship—Baal, who was the god of thunder—a precursor to the Norse god Thor. Whenever there was lightening and thunder, Ahab saw his god acting in power and might and knew his god Baal was real. What kind of message would get through to Ahab, what would Ahab be willing to listen to—a gentle God who would not use might and power and would allow His creatures to kill Him on a cross? So, if God wants to get through to Ahab, how does the message have to be framed? That God is powerful and God sent His agents to the false prophets to deceive them—i.e. the prophets of Baal are lying and you will be defeated if you go to war against them. What does this say about God—that God will not speak French to those who do not comprehend French—in other words God speaks in ways the person spoken to can comprehend.

And how does God look? Amazing, He is still willing to reach out in love to warn Ahab even when Ahab has turned his back on God. What parent in the room wouldn’t do the same for a child who has rejected God, gotten into criminal activity, but the child reached out and asked for your advice—what parent wouldn’t give the best advice in the way designed to get through to the child?

When Hebrews says the Scripture judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart what does this mean?

Heb 4:12 from *The Remedy*:

For the word of God is the living and active revelation of the truth about God, his methods and principles, and the real basis of life in the universe. It is sharper than any two-edged sword: it penetrates the deepest recesses of the mind and separates thoughts and feelings, habits and motives; it also diagnoses the true intentions, attitudes, and principles of the heart.

WEDNESDAY

Read the first paragraph, “The Holy Spirit is instrumental...” What does this mean? Does it mean that one cannot understand spiritual truths without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit? And do we agree with this? Absolutely, then how can we tell if who has the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit?



Is graduating from one of our seminaries evidence one has the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit? Then why do so many churches require a theology degree for pastoral or other church leadership roles?

If education in a parochial school is the measure for service in the church why didn't Jesus go to the parochial school of His day?

The child Jesus did not receive instruction in the synagogue schools. His mother was His first human teacher. From her lips and from the scrolls of the prophets, He learned of heavenly things. The very words which He Himself had spoken to Moses for Israel He was now taught at His mother's knee. **As He advanced from childhood to youth, He did not seek the schools of the rabbis.** He needed not the education to be obtained from such sources; for God was His instructor. {DA 70.1}

The question asked during the Saviour's ministry, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" does not indicate that Jesus was unable to read, **but merely that He had not received a rabbinical education.** John 7:15. Since He gained knowledge as we may do, His intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures shows how diligently His early years were given to the study of God's word. And spread out before Him was the great **library of God's created works.** He who had made all things studied the lessons which His own hand had written in earth and sea and sky. Apart from the unholy ways of the world, He gathered stores of **scientific knowledge from nature.** He studied the life of plants and animals, and the life of man. From His earliest years He was possessed of one purpose; He lived to bless others. **For this He found resources in nature;** new ideas of ways and means flashed into His mind as He studied plant life and animal life. Continually He was seeking to draw from things seen illustrations by which to present the **living oracles of God.** The parables by which, during His ministry, He loved to teach His lessons of truth show how open His spirit was to the **influences of nature,** and how He had gathered the spiritual teaching from the surroundings of His daily life. {DA 70.2}

Thus to Jesus the significance of the word and the works of God was unfolded, as He was trying to understand the reason of things. Heavenly beings were His attendants, and the culture of holy thoughts and communings was His. From the first dawning of intelligence He was constantly growing in spiritual grace and knowledge of truth. {DA 70.3}

Every child may gain knowledge as Jesus did. DA 70

Do you notice that Jesus' education was a combination of Scripture with science and life experience? Why? Because God is the God who constructed reality and only when Scripture is brought into the bounds of how God created reality to function (design law) can we get to the truth. The religious schools of Christ's day, and religious schools today have rejected design law and teach imposed law and thus sever Scripture from science and nature and end up teaching superstitious beliefs of various kinds. This indoctrinates people into beliefs that close their minds to advancing truth and Christianity



is stuck in a system governed by people who have a false criteria for leadership—a theology degree and adhering to a list of preconceived ideas.

In the days of Christ the Jews gave much care to the education of their children. Their schools were connected with the synagogues, or places of worship, and the teachers were called rabbis, men who were supposed to be very learned. {The Story of Jesus 30.3}

Jesus did not go to these schools, for they taught many things that were not true. Instead of God's Word, the sayings of men were studied, and often these were contrary to that which God had taught through His prophets. {SJ 30.4}

Could we say that when one is enlightened by the Holy Spirit they are able to integrate and find the harmony in God's written word and nature? Should we have concerns with leaders who refuse to integrate their understanding of Scripture with the truths revealed in nature and real life experiences?

So can we conclude that having a theology degree is not a reliable measure of whether one is enlightened by the Holy Spirit?

What about gender? Is being male a requirement for enlightenment of the Holy Spirit? Again, why is our institutional church making gender a measure of fitness for church office rather than equipping by the Holy Spirit?

Who is the great divider? Who created Adam and Eve to be one, united, bonded together? Who split them apart and turned them against each other—with Adam (man) the first to turn and cast blame at his spouse? Why in the church are we not coming back to the unity God designed and realizing women were created equal to men?

Did EGW recognize that women were to be treated equal to the men? What did our church determine tithe was to be used for? To pay the salaries of the pastors—then what would it mean if EGW said that in the name of the Lord tithe should be given to women?

There are ministers' **wives**—Sisters Starr, Haskell, Wilson, and Robinson—who **have been devoted, earnest, whole-souled workers**, giving Bible readings and praying with families, helping along by personal efforts just as successfully as their husbands. These women give their whole time, and are told that **they receive nothing for their labors** because their husbands receive wages. I tell them to go forward and all such decisions will be revised. The Word says, "The labourer is worthy of his hire." Luke 10:7. When any such decision as this is made, **I will, in the name of the Lord, protest. I will feel it my duty to create a fund from my tithe money to pay these women who are accomplishing just as essential work as the ministers are doing, and this tithe I will reserve for work in the same line as that of the ministers**, hunting for souls, fishing for souls. DG 106.1



I know that the faithful women should be paid wages as it is considered proportionate to the pay received by ministers. They carry the burden of souls and should not be treated unjustly. These sisters are giving their time to educating those newly come to the faith and hire their own work done and pay those who work for them. All these things must be adjusted and set in order and justice be done to all...—Manuscript Releases 12:160 (1898). DG 106.2

Does the Holy Spirit use gender as a measure of who is fit for service in God's cause—who is inspired?

Why do you think the institutional churches often use gender as a criteria for leadership if the Holy Spirit does not?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The Holy Spirit..." Is this true? Absolutely! Then why are there so many denominations and so many conflicts within denominations?

Because while the Holy Spirit will never lead people to believe contrary to Scripture, people do! And people teach many things from Scripture that are not what the Scripture itself teaches.

Read second paragraph, "Some people claim to..." That go against the "clear message of the Bible." Clear to whom? Isn't that the point what is clear to one person is not clear to another? This is why Paul in Romans 14 said every person is to be fully persuaded in their own mind!

One of the points of disagreement I have had with some church leaders is over the character of God—some church leaders would say I teach things that go against the clear message of the Bible when I teach that sin is the source of suffering, pain and ultimately death—not God, that God is the source of life seeking to heal and deliver from the infection of sin. However, they argue that I deny the clear teaching of Scripture where fire will come down out of heaven from God and destroy the wicked and therefore God is the source of inflicted pain suffering and death.

Is our position, that sin is the source of pain suffering and death and not God, a contradiction of the clear teaching of Scripture, or the truth that all Scripture reveals?

Read last paragraph, "The Holy Spirit never..." Do we agree that if someone is making claims that contradict the Bible that they are not speaking truth?

How do we tell if someone is contradicting the Bible? Do we contradict the Bible when we say we should not use tithe to buy fermented wine and rejoice with it in church each week? Do we contradict the Bible when we say that God did not send lying spirits to Ahab's prophets? Do we contradict the Bible when we say that God is not the source of inflicted pain and suffering, that God does not have to inflict punishment for sin because sin destroys the sinner?



The last question asks “What are some of the teachings that people are trying to promote in the church that are clearly contrary to the Word of God?”

Oh, how about:

- God killed Jesus on the cross?
- God’s law requires legal punishment?
- God is the source of inflicted pain and suffering?
- If you go to church on Sunday you get the mark of the beast?
- If you go to church on Sabbath you get the seal of God?
- Jesus cannot come if women wear makeup or people are not vegetarian?
- Justification is a legal declaration that we are righteous, even though we are not righteous

FRIDAY

Read first three questions and discuss



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

We need HELP! With what? Well, after 10 years of ministry, this website has collected a huge number of articles, blogs, videos, podcasts, and notes that need to be categorized and indexed, so YOU can easily find all that's been said on a particular topic. The problem is, we don't have hundreds of eyes and ears on staff to search, read, listen, and find all these nuggets of truth. So, Come And Reason is calling on you, our faithful supporters, to help us with this task.

What do we need from you? Easy. Whenever you come across an article, blog, video, audio, or note that talks about a specific topic (like wrath, punishment, sanctuary, temple, mind, character, sin, death, etc., etc.), simply go to About > Contact Us and send us a note telling us where you found the information (page # in a document/note, time index in a video or audio file, the exact web address where you found the material, and the TOPIC the citation is talking about). We'll take those TOPICS and arrange them into categories and build a new menu entry to index all these resources.

Thank you, all, ahead of time for your participation and help in this rather significant endeavor!

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

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

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle Is Real at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcs Summit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

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

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



The Holy Spirit and Spirituality 1Q 2017 Lesson 2

The Holy Spirit: Working Behind the Scenes

SABBATH

Read the second paragraph, “Yet, He is not the center...” Is this contextual? In other words, do we find this particular fact occurring because of the need of sinful humanity?

- Would Jesus have become human if humanity had not sinned?
- Would Jesus have encumbered His divine abilities with human limitations if humanity had not sinned?
- Would Jesus have needed the Holy Spirit to act as His agent on earth to represent Him if humanity had not sinned?
- Would humans have needed the extra help of the Holy Spirit to point to Jesus and reveal Jesus to us if humanity had not sinned?
- Would humans have needed the extra help of the Holy Spirit to transform our lives and apply Christ’s character in us if humanity had not sinned?

The point is the record we have in Scripture is the record we need for the plan of salvation. There is much information we do not have in Scripture, especially pertaining to things in the heavenly realms and those events that happened in the universe prior to the creation of planet earth.

But, what we do know is that man in sin needed Jesus—why? What did man in sin need Jesus to do? What did Jesus do, accomplish, carry out, that the Holy Spirit and the Father did not do (notice I did not say “could not do,” but did not do). Jesus became human and lived a perfect sinless life by the exercise of a human brain and human abilities, and then died at the hands of His creation. Why? What did this accomplish?

Jesus revealed the truth to destroy Satan’s lies and win us back to trust in God, and Jesus developed a perfect human character restoring God’s design (law) back into the human creation. This could only be done by the exercise of a free sentient human being—which Jesus became. And in dying He destroyed in His humanity the infection of selfishness which had become the dominate operative drive in all human beings and arose with a perfected and restored humanity.

But what does humanity in sin need beyond what Jesus has historically already accomplished? We need the application of what Jesus has accomplished within our hearts and minds! This is the current work of the Holy Spirit—to bring truth to our minds that we can comprehend, leave us free to decide whether we will follow the truth, trust God or not, and then for those who do trust God and invite Him in the Holy Spirit takes what Christ achieved and reproduces it in us.

Here is a quote from one of the founders of the SDA church:



In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. **The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail.** The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer.** It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. DA 671.2

Do you agree? What is this saying? Notice nothing legal here—what Jesus procured—the remedy to our terminal sin condition—must be applied within us. The Holy Spirit is not working on the Father to do something in some legal court setting or adjust record books. We must partake of the Remedy. We partake by willing cooperation with God and when we surrender the heart in trust, choosing with our individuality—our will—to embrace, accept and apply the truth, the Holy Spirit applies in our hearts what Christ achieved and we are renewed in the deepest recesses of our characters to be like Christ!

Now, was *this* role needed of the Holy Spirit prior to sin? So, we don't know the exact way the Father, Son and Spirit manifested, acted, interacted etc. with creation prior to the fall of humanity. Remember the Bible is written to provide us everything we need for our healing and restoration, not to provide all answers to all mysteries in the universe.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “By comparing the Holy Spirit’s...” Are there other appropriate lessons we gain from considering the Holy Spirit as the wind?

What about the ubiquitousness (being everywhere) of the wind—air? Can you have wind without air? Is there wind in a vacuum?

Is the Holy Spirit like the air—**required for life**—always there, sometimes not noticed or thought about, but other times so strong it can't be ignored? Is it like the air which at times is so peaceful you can hardly feel it, but at other times so strong it blows you over? But, what is the most important thing about the air—is it the blowing power of the wind or the life-giving properties that we constantly breathe in?

What would happen if the air were removed from planet earth?



What would happen if the Holy Spirit were removed from planet earth?

And because of the air we have clouds, rain, snow, the climate in which we live, the transfer of heat. Because of the Holy Spirit we have the early and latter rains which refresh the soul, the life giving presence and power of truth and love which creates a new atmosphere in the heart, home, community and church where the Spirit is cherished.

Read second paragraph, “Yet, we can learn to become...” If the Holy Spirit is active where the Holy Spirit wills, why do so many Christians seek to dictate to the Spirit His activities? How do humans try to dictate the activities of the Holy Spirit?

How about groups that restrict the evidence of the working of the Holy Spirit to only one manifestation—speaking in tongues? That this particular action is the only way the Holy Spirit can be manifested? I know some Christians who believe that if they don’t speak in tongues then they have not yet been filled with the Holy Spirit—would this be allowing the Holy Spirit to work, or putting on restrictions?

What about organizations that say the Holy Spirit is restricted by gender, that the Holy Spirit is not allowed to ordain any woman, and if the Holy Spirit does we deny it is the Holy Spirit?

Here are some interesting historic quotes:

If **women** do the work that is not the most agreeable to many of those who labor in word and doctrine, and if their works testify that they are accomplishing a work that has been manifestly neglected, **should not such labor be looked upon as being as rich in results as the work of the ordained ministers?** Should it not command the hire of the laborer? ... DG 105.1

This question is not for men to settle. The Lord has settled it. You are to do your duty to the women who labor in the gospel, **whose work testifies** that they are essential to carrying the truth into families. Their work is just the work that must be done, and should be encouraged. In many respects a woman can impart knowledge to her sisters that a man cannot. The cause would suffer great loss without this kind of labor by women. **Again and again the Lord has shown me that women teachers are just as greatly needed to do the work to which He has appointed them as are men.**—Evangelism, 493 (1903). DG 105.2

Who has appointed the work?

Does this statement say God only appoints one type of work to women, that of teaching other women? Or is this merely the example that the writer chose to use in order to bring home her main point without diversion onto other areas that were likely to cause resistance?

The point I am making—is the Holy Spirit free to ordain for use in God’s cause whomever the Holy



Spirit wants—male or female? Then, what of institutions that say the Holy Spirit is not free to do so?

Well as usual, EGW, took the position of not telling God what to do, but instead allowing God to lead and we should follow:

“All who desire an opportunity **for true ministry**, and who will give themselves unreservedly to God, will find in the canvassing work opportunities to speak upon many things pertaining to the future, immortal life. The experience thus gained will be of the greatest value to those who are **fitting themselves for the ministry**. It is the **accompaniment of the Holy Spirit of God that prepares workers, both men and women, to become pastors to the flock of God.**”—Testimonies for the Church 6:322. DG 251.4

The Lord calls upon those connected with our sanitariums, publishing houses, and schools to teach the youth to do evangelistic work. Our time and energy must not be so largely employed in establishing sanitariums, food stores, and restaurants that other lines of work will be neglected. **Young men and young women who should be engaged in the ministry**, in Bible work, and in the canvassing work should not be bound down to mechanical employment.

“The youth should be encouraged to attend our training schools for Christian workers, which should become more and more like the schools of the prophets. These institutions have been established by the Lord, and if they are conducted in harmony with His purpose, the youth sent to them will quickly be prepared to engage in various lines of missionary work. **Some will be trained to enter the field as missionary nurses, some as canvassers, and some as gospel ministers.**”—Testimonies for the Church 8:229, 230. DG 252.1

Why then did EGW not overtly promote the ordination of women? What is the primary purpose of all of God’s spokespersons? To speak the truth about God in a language the audience can comprehend as winsomely as possible and therefore, to not introduce things that are not pertinent to that message and would offend and close minds.

So, to that point, why are there black conferences in the southern states of the USA? Because after slavery what would have happened if the SDA church had allowed blacks into the churches where whites attended?

And what would have happened if the SDA churches had allowed black pastors in churches where whites attended?

Would such a policy have advanced or hindered the gospel message? Why?

Was God against blacks and whites integrating? Or were the minds of the southern whites so prejudiced and biased, that they were not ready for the light on equality of all humans, that in order for



them to accept the equality of all humans they **must first** come to a real knowledge of God as revealed by Jesus?

This means the gospel message had to be presented first, and then reform of character with love rooting out prejudice could occur. If the church tried to move first with integration, **before the minds had been renewed with love**, then there would have been no advancement of the gospel, in fact the church would likely have been attacked and driven out of communities.

So, there was policy, set up due to cultural biases, that were not what God would have preferred but were expeditious in the setting.

I think this is exactly why EGW did not push for women's ordination, not because God was opposed, but because males were biased and opposed. Here is a portion of a letter from EGW's secretary answering an inquiry about women's ordination and an article written by EGW.

“And may I add that Sister White, personally, was very careful about expressing herself in any wise as to the advisability of ordaining women as gospel ministers. **She has often spoken of the perils that such general practice would expose the church to by a gainsaying world;** but as yet I have never seen from her pen any statement that would seem to encourage the formal and official ordination of women to the gospel ministry, to public labor such as is ordinarily expected of an ordained minister. DG 255.2

“This is not suggesting, much less saying, that no women are fitted for such public labor, and that none should ever be ordained; it is simply saying that so far as my knowledge extends, Sister White never encouraged church officials to depart from the general customs of the church in those matters.”—C. C. Crisler. DG 255.3

What was the reason—because God has determined that women should not be ordained, or because the culture was so biased that it would set the church up for undo criticism and distract from spreading the gospel?

Would that also mean however, that where culture changes, and the minds of humans become more Christlike, more open to truth, and realize in God's kingdom there is no Jew or Greek, no male or female, but all are equal that ordaining women would be in harmony with the working of the Spirit of God?

How much of God's plans have been delayed, hindered, limited, or watered down, because of the biases, bigotry, and prejudices of human beings?

- 40 years in the wilderness
- Regulations on meat eating
- Kings
- 70 years in captivity



- The Dark Ages
- The delay since 1844

MONDAY

Read last paragraph, “He does not appear...” Do we see the Godhead, agreeing amongst themselves, to take on various roles: the Father as the source of all that is good, the Son as the architect, agent which acts in space and time, and the Holy Spirit as the actualizer, applier?

The bottom green section asks, “What does the Sabbath tell us about this work of Creation and re-creation?”

Hebrews chapter four speaks about the Sabbath, here are verses 1-11 from *The Remedy*:

Therefore, since the Remedy is still available, and the promise of complete healing and perfect rest still stands, let us be careful that none of us be found to have rejected it.² For we also have had the good news of God's healing truth presented to us just as they did; but the message of truth had no value to them because they did not believe it nor did they trust the one who gave it.³ But we, who have trusted God on the basis of the truth Christ provided, experience healing and enter that rest, and our minds are at peace. As God has said, "So I granted them their persistent choice and said, 'Since they refuse the truth—the Remedy I freely offer—they will never be able to enter my rest and get well.'" It was not because God's perfect rest was not available—for it had been ready since his work of creation was complete—⁴ as the Scriptures say elsewhere regarding the seventh day: "And on the seventh day, God rested his case. He had finished all his work of providing the evidence needed to refute the lies of Satan."⁵ And yet in another passage he says, "If they refuse the truth, if they reject the evidence I have provided, their minds will never find rest and they will not get well."

⁶ The opportunity to find God's healing and rest still remains, even though those who formerly had the good news of God's healing truth presented to them did not get well or find rest because they refused to believe the truth and trust God.⁷ Therefore God again and again presents his healing Remedy, and he set a certain day which he called "today," when much later he spoke through David in the same Scripture as before: "Today, if you hear his voice offering healing and restoration, do not reject the true Remedy and darken your minds."

⁸ For if Joshua had already given them healing of character and rest for their minds, God would not have spoken later about another day of rest still to come.⁹ There remains then a Sabbath-rest—a rest in the evidence and truth of the character of God—which heals and transforms the people of God;¹⁰ for anyone who rests in the achievements of Christ rests from working to save himself, just as God rested from his work.¹¹ Let us therefore make every effort to rest in the truth about God as revealed by Christ, so that no one will fall by following the example of distrust and refusal to accept the truth.



What is the relation of the Sabbath to Creation and recreation? What did God do at the end of creation week? God rested—He stepped back and stopped using power—He created a space in time for contemplation, for thinking, for choosing freely what one prefers. And what do we realize when we appreciate the Sabbath?

- God is not only powerful as evidenced by the first six days of creation week, but God is good, He doesn't coerce, He leaves us free to think and choose for ourselves—God's methods are truth and love to win, not power to intimidate and force compliance
- That God's laws are design laws—how does nature operate, upon what laws? And what does the Sabbath point us to? The Creator and the laws upon which all nature is built—it refutes the dictator view of God!
- That salvation is the process of restoring sinners back into harmony with God's design—i.e. healing, which is a function of design law and it is not a legal process, but a re-creation process, which comes about when we realize the truth and are won back to trust

TUESDAY

The title is The Holy Spirit and the Sanctuary—what do you think of when you think of the Holy Spirit in connection with the Sanctuary?

Certainly, as the lesson points out the Holy Spirit gifted craftsman with abilities to make the elements of the OT sanctuary—but what are the bigger lessons?

What was the sanctuary built in the OT? It was a stage, an object lesson, an acted out drama with cool props, which was to depict what? Us—we are a sanctuary in which the Spirit is to dwell:

- Just as the Shekinah presence of God dwelt in that building, so too the Holy Spirit is to dwell in us.
- Just as the sanctuary had the blood administered throughout, Jesus said we must drink His blood
- Just as the law was kept in the MH place of that sanctuary, so too in the New Covenant the law is written upon our hearts and minds
- Just as the lamp was in that building, so too we are to have the Word of God, which is a lamp to us living within our hearts
- Just as the priests were dressed in white robes our characters are to be cleansed to the perfection of Jesus—His robe of righteousness
- Just as the priests met each Sabbath with the High Priest to eat the showbread, so too we are to meet with Jesus each Sabbath and consume His Word, making it a part of our thoughts, beliefs and cherishing it in our hearts
- And just as the Holy Spirit enabled people then to build the physical building, so too the Holy Spirit gifts people today to go out and spread the gospel, teach truths which will shape and



polish other people preparing them to become living stones built together into a house for the Lord.

Here is another historic quote:

The first tabernacle, built according to God's directions, was indeed blessed of Him. The people thus were preparing themselves to worship in the temple not made with hands--a temple in the heavens. The stones of the Temple built by Solomon were all prepared at the quarry and then brought to the Temple site. They came together without the sound of ax or hammer. The timbers were also fitted in the forest. The furniture was likewise brought to this house all prepared for use. {3MR 231.3}

Even so, the mighty cleaver of truth has **taken out a people from the quarry of the world and is fitting this people, who profess to be the children of God, for a place in His heavenly temple.** We want the cleaver of truth to do its work for us. **We are taken from the quarry of the world. The material must not be a dead substance but living souls, and these souls must be brought out of the quarry of the world, where the hand of God can fit them for the temple in heaven.** We are here as probationers, and we must pass under the hand of God. All rough edges and rough surfaces must be removed and **we must be stones fitted for the building.** We are brought into church capacity with defects of character, but we must not retain them. **We must be fitted and squared for the building. We must be "laborers together with God," for we are "God's husbandry," we are "God's building."** In view of this we must see that our temple is not defiled with sin. We should be lively stones, not dead ones, but live ones that will reflect the image of Christ. We must be worshipers in spirit and in truth. {3MR 231.4}

Read third paragraph, "The Bible tells us..." Did reconciliation between sinful humanity and God actually take place at the Old Testament sanctuary, or was that only a mere enactment, a theatrical depiction, of the true reconciliation that takes place between God and sinful mankind? Where did the genuine, real, reconciliation take place? In the person of Jesus, culminating at the Cross, when Jesus fixed what Adam did to the species!

The lesson also states that "It was God who communicated to Moses His plan to build the earthly sanctuary according to the heavenly original (Exod. 25:9,40)"

What do you understand this sentence to be saying? Is it saying that the OT sanctuary is a physical copy of a building that exists in heaven, that the sanctuary in heaven is built out of similar stuff and has similar elements?

Do we believe there is a physical building in heaven with two compartments, separated by a veil and it has a golden altar with a fire where incense is being burned, along with a lampstand, and a golden table with bread and wine that Jesus eats every seven days; and that behind the curtain is a box made



out of genetically defective wood covered by gold containing a rod, manna and the 10 Commandments?

The lesson references Exodus 25:9 and 40 to support their assertion, here are those two texts:

Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you. Ex 25:9

See that you make them according to the pattern shown you on the mountain. Ex 25:40

What was Moses shown? A pattern

What is a pattern? A blueprint, a design, an architects drawing.

Moses was NOT shown a building in heaven. He was shown a pattern for what he was to build on earth—when will we realize this?

A pattern is not a building, but a drawing, an illustration, a depiction, which Moses was shown and for which he used in building the OT sanctuary. This pattern was the instructions on building the stage, the theater, the object lesson; it was not a reproduction of some structure in heaven.

What about Hebrews 8:2?

He serves as High Priest in the Most Holy Place, that is, in the real tent which was put up by the Lord, not by human hands. (GNT)

Does this mean there is a tent in heaven, but it was not build by human beings?

From what is that real physical sanctuary in heaven constructed?

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, **God's building**. 1Cor 3:9

Don't you know that **you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you**? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and **you are that temple**. 1CO 3:16,17

What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? **For we are the temple of the living God**. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." 2Cor 6:16

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the **whole building** is joined together and



rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Eph 2:19-22

1PE 2:4 As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For in Scripture it says:

"See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame."

1PE 2:7 Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

"The stone the builders rejected
has become the capstone, " (see Zech chapter 4)

But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast. Heb 3:6

But I really like this one, in conjunction with the Hebrews text about a sanctuary not built by human hands:

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, **not built by human hands**. 2Cor 5:1 NIV

What is this talking about? It is talking about or physical bodies, built not by human beings, but by God. Consider now what it means to cleanse the sanctuary? Wow—huge much more significant implications that the traditional meaning—all in harmony with worshiping God as Creator and His plan to heal and restore (design law).

WEDNESDAY

What is the work of the Holy Spirit?

"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. (Jn 16:12–15).



What does this mean? What is it that is Christ's that we need?

How do we understand this in light of the OT sanctuary symbolism? When blood was being applied throughout the system do we see the blood doing something to God, or to us? What?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The Holy Spirit..." This is critical, we could not be saved as a species without the work of the Godhead, Jesus but also the work of the Father and the Spirit, any texts in the Bible that put all of them together in the work of salvation?

Romans 8:

⁵ Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

⁶ The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; ⁷ the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

⁹ You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ... And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you... ¹⁶ **The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children...** ²⁶ **In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.** ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will... ³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to this? **If God is for us, who can be against us?** ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? **Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.**

God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all interceding for us—interceding with what or whom?

- In our hearts and minds against the carnal nature to give a desire for good, wooing us with truth and love
- With the forces of evil, holding them at bay
- And through Christ with sin itself, with what sin would naturally do to the species human. The Godhead interceded to offer an alternative outcome to death.

Read #3 in the bottom section, "By reproducing..."



FRIDAY

The lesson states, “But the work of the Holy Spirit is not instantaneous. We don’t automatically become the kind of people we ought to be...The Holy Spirit is the Divine Agent that works in our lives to make us new creatures in Christ. This is, though, the work of a lifetime.”

What does this mean that we only get transformed on our deathbed?

No, this is a work of a lifetime just like eating is the work of a lifetime—think about eating—do you have to do it your entire life? Does that mean you have reached maturity until the end of your life? No! But if you stop eating what happens? So, if we stop partaking of Jesus via the work of the Holy Spirit what happens?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

We need HELP! With what? Well, after 10 years of ministry, this website has collected a huge number of articles, blogs, videos, podcasts, and notes that need to be categorized and indexed, so YOU can easily find all that's been said on a particular topic. The problem is, we don't have hundreds of eyes and ears on staff to search, read, listen, and find all these nuggets of truth. So, Come And Reason is calling on you, our faithful supporters, to help us with this task.

What do we need from you? Easy. Whenever you come across an article, blog, video, audio, or note that talks about a specific topic (like wrath, punishment, sanctuary, temple, mind, character, sin, death, etc., etc.), simply go to About > Contact Us and send us a note telling us where you found the information (page # in a document/note, time index in a video or audio file, the exact web address where you found the material, and the TOPIC the citation is talking about). We'll take those TOPICS and arrange them into categories and build a new menu entry to index all these resources.

Thank you, all, ahead of time for your participation and help in this rather significant endeavor!

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

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

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle Is Real at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcs Summit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

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

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church

12702 9th Street

Garden Grove, CA 92840

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

Phone: (714) 534-1987

Fax: (714) 534-3877

Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



The Holy Spirit and Spirituality 1Q 2017 Lesson 3

The Divinity of the Holy Spirit

SABBATH

Read second paragraph, “However, the deity....” What did you think of the last two sentences, “we should not make our human reasoning about God the standard of how the Holy Spirit should be understood. Instead, we should accept and testify to what Scripture affirms, no matter how hard some of the concepts might be for us to grasp fully.”

First—should we be affirming something we don’t grasp?

It almost sounds like they are encouraging us to affirm things that we don’t understand and don’t make sense?

It is this type of reasoning, taking the Scripture as authoritative without thinking, without comprehending, without truly understanding, that has led to so much abuse and destruction in God’s name throughout history.

The religious leaders did this in Christ’s day when dealing with Jesus, they constantly said that the Scriptures taught something and Jesus was constantly seeking to show they what they affirmed from Scripture wasn’t what it taught at all.

Did the Holy Spirit inspire the Isaiah to write, “Come let us reason together though your sins are like scarlet they will be white as snow?”

Is the Holy Spirit saying that God wants us to reason things out with our reasoning powers what is written in Scripture—with a heart open to truth of course?

Do wouldn’t those who disagree with us on some point of doctrine agree that we should accept and testify to what Scripture affirms? If essentially all honest-of-heart Christians would agree that we should accept and testify to what Scripture affirms, why is there so much division?

Because people think the Scripture affirms different things—why do they think this? Because they are exercising their minds to understand to the best of their ability what the Scripture is saying, and people have different perspectives, different assumptions, different blind spots, different capacities and honestly come to different conclusions yet all claiming they are following Scripture.

How do we determine which view is more accurate to the truth? What method do we use?

Here are some methods used throughout history and still used today:



- We pray long and hard until the Spirit convicts us in our spirit what is true—this is the preferred method in the Mormon tradition
- We ask for a sign or wonder, perhaps a message from the Spirit through tongues? Often in Pentecostal traditions
- We look for another human in a position of authority to tell us the right answer—Roman Catholic when Pope speaks ex-cathedra and many Christians who surrender their thinking to their pastors or conference leaders
- We surrender our judgment to someone with a theological degree, or accept what we read in a Bible commentary as the definitive answer
- We organize committees of theologians to investigate and come back to us with a theological paper—we might even make a Scripture research institute and create a tradition that a position coming from that group has some higher spiritual authority and is to be accepted as truth
- We cite proof texts to support our point
- We hold a meeting of church delegates and take a vote on what is truth

Any questions about any of these methods?

Has the Holy Spirit ever used any of them?

- We pray long and experience conviction—yes the HS sometimes does this—but can this be counterfeited? Yes! Then is it the best barometer to determine the movement of the Spirit?
- We ask for a sign or wonder, perhaps a message from the Spirit through tongues? Has the Spirit ever done this? Yes, but can it be counterfeited? Yes! Is it the best barometer to determine the movement of the Spirit?
- We look for another human in a position of authority to tell us the right answer. Has the Spirit ever done this? Yes—God’s prophets in the past. Can this be counterfeited? Is it the best method of determining truth? Can trusting what a spokesperson for God says sometimes be wrong? Remember the old and young prophet? Paul had to correct Peter. Do all people believe the writer of Hebrews correct when he wrote that immediately after the ascension Jesus entered the MH of the heavenly sanctuary?
- We organize committees of theologians to investigate and come back to us with a theological paper—Does the Holy Spirit ever use this method? Yes—can this be counterfeited?
- We cite proof texts to support our point—Does the Holy Spirit ever use this method? Yes, Christ quoted Scripture in response to Satan’s temptations. Can this be counterfeited? Yes, Satan quoted Scripture to tempt Christ.
- We hold a meeting of church delegates and take a vote on what is truth—Does the Spirit ever use this method? Yes, but can it be corrupted and misrepresent the Spirit? Yes!

What method is not represented here and which cannot be corrupted? The integrative evidenced based approach, which harmonizes Scripture, Science and Experience—understanding God’s testable laws and realizing how God actually runs things, then certain interpretations of Scripture are ruled out!



SUNDAY

Read Acts 5:1-4:

Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property.² With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

³ Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?⁴ Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."

Then read second paragraph, "If the Holy Spirit..." Do you find there argument compelling? The weakness I found throughout this entire lesson is not that they fail to make the case that Holy Spirit is God—but that they fail to make the case the Holy Spirit is a distinct individuality and not simply God the Father, God's Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is simply the Spirit of the Father then He would be fully God and the arguments to prove the Spirit is God are moot, because it is God. The position that many who deny the Trinity take in regard to the Holy Spirit is not that the Holy Spirit is some lesser being than God, but that He is the same being as God the Father. Those who deny the Trinity deny the idea that the Spirit is a separate individual to the Father. The lesson doesn't do a great job in addressing this idea and instead makes the point over and over that the Spirit is fully God—which is accepted by many who deny the Trinity because they accept it is God's Spirit.

We will see this problem on almost every page of this lesson.

The lesson uses this text to say that because Peter says that Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit and that he lied to God that the Holy Spirit is God. I can see the argument, I don't think it is wrong, but I don't find it most compelling either. In the same text Peter says that Ananias didn't lie to men—was that true, there were no men there—so what are Peter and the others to whom these two lied, angels? Should we conclude that because Ananias lied to Peter and Peter said that Ananias didn't lie to men that Peter was either an angel or a woman in drag?

And for those who believe that the Holy Spirit is the Father's Spirit using the terms interchangeably doesn't resolve their denial of the Trinity and the separate personality of the Holy Spirit.

Before we explore further the question of the individuality of the Holy Spirit, perhaps we might discuss what happened to Ananias and Sapphira, the lesson says: "Why such a harsh punishment for what these two people did?"

What is the lesson suggesting? Is the lesson suggesting that because they lied to God that God used His power to punish them by executing them?



Any concerns with this interpretation?

1. Does the Bible say they were punished? No! Remember in Sabbath's lesson they authors counseled us with these words, "we should not affirm less than what Scripture states, and we also should not 'exceed what is written.'" In suggesting they were punished, are they exceeding what the Scripture states?
2. What is the punishment for sin—sleep death from which there is a resurrection or eternal death? Which did they die? Then was it punishment?
3. For those who hold a legal view, and believe God inflicts punishment for sin, does the inflicted punishment for sin happen before the judgment? Did the great white throne judgment happen yet? Then was this punishment for sin?
4. Does the Bible say that they were killed by God? No
5. Does the Bible say they were killed by men or angels? No
6. What does the Bible say? That they fell down and died.

If we say God killed them because they lied would there be any problems with this?

- What would it say about how God runs His universe—what method would that be? Would it be coercive? Does God use coercive tactics? Why or why not?
- What happens when people are threatened, "do what I say or I will kill you—legally of course." "I am the king, I have made a law that you will bow down to this golden idol and if you don't I will kill you." All legal—does the fact some people claim that God is the rightful King and He has the right to demand our obedience and if we disobey it is legally right to kill us, avoid the destruction that would happen in God's universe if God acted this way? And what destruction would happen if God acted this way?
- Rebellion—it is a law that when a free being is coerced that love is damaged and eventually destroyed, rebellion is instilled in the heart, and if they stay rather than rebelling, then their individuality is destroyed. God would not do this—ever.

So we read things from one of the founders of the SDA church like this:

Rebellion was **not** to be overcome by force. **Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order.** His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of **these principles is the means to be used.** God's government is moral, and **truth and love are to be the prevailing power.** E.G. White Desire of Ages 759 [what is the prevailing power? Truth and Love!]

God could have destroyed Satan and all his sympathizers as easily as one can pick up a pebble and cast it to the earth. **But by so doing he would have given a precedent for the exercise of force. All the compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. He would not work on this line... This principle is wholly of Satan's creation.** E.G. White Review & Herald, September 7, 1897 [Yet here we have people teaching that God does something that is wholly of Satan's origin.]



"Whereunto," asked Christ, "shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?" Mark 4:30. **He could not** employ the kingdoms of the world as a similitude. In society He found nothing with which to compare it. **Earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power; but from Christ's kingdom every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion, is banished.** E.G. White Acts of the Apostles 12

A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. **If he dared, such a one would disobey.** His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897}

Can God get love and trust by using might and power to kill those who don't love and trust? No! Never, this is Satan's method.

Then how do we understand what happened to Ananias and Sapphira—and Peter's words predicting she was going to die?

How did Jesus describe the Holy Spirit to Nicodemus? Like the wind—and what did we discuss last week? The wind is made of air—and air is ubiquitous and required for life. The Greek for Spirit is *pneuma* from which we get breath and breath of life. So, what would happen to a person if they chose to cut themselves off from earth's atmosphere, from air? Could we say: Why did you do this? And could we say with great confidence: Since you have chosen to no longer abide in the air, since you have chosen to separate yourself from the life-giving atmosphere the people who buried your husband are going to bury you also—because you can't live without contact with the atmosphere?

Can we live separated from God? And who is the member of the Godhead described in the role of the breath of life? The Holy Spirit—does this give insight into why we can't be forgiven for blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? Because the Holy Spirit is the physical conduit of life from the eternal God and the applier of the remedy to sin in our lives!

What kind of a law did I describe in operation in this circumstance? Design law—the law of love. This perspective allows us to have perfect harmony with the Scripture, and yet not put God in the role of acting with Satan's character and methods.

What is the message of the three angels? What is the message we are to take to the world? Do you see our church, the institution we love, has been compromised and good hearted people, with intentions to help, taking a message that continues to obscure the truth about God!

We must come back to understand God's character of love and how He actually constructed His reality to work. We must bring our understanding of Scripture to be in harmony with God's nature, character and principles and stop using human methods and laws in our interpretation of Scripture.



MONDAY

The lesson points us to four texts and asks us what attributes are ascribed to the Holy Spirit which are the exclusive prerogative of God—thus evidence that the Holy Spirit is God:

- 1Cor 2:10,11: The Spirit knows the mind of God
- Ps 139:7: Omnipresence
- Hebrews 9:14: Immortality
- Luke 1:35 wielding the power of the Most High

I do think the Bible provides abundant evidence to support the teaching that the Holy Spirit is fully God—little question to me about this. However, do these text address the interpretation critics of the Trinity make that references to the Holy Spirit are merely references to God the Father's eternal presence moving where the Father moves?

We see the same concern in **WEDNESDAY's** lesson when it refers to the Spirit as the one who cleanses us from sin, washes and regenerates us and transforms us. The critics of the Trinity would merely say that this again is the energy and presence of the Father being referred to as the Spirit to help us differentiate the action and role the Father is doing at that time. They would remind us that in the Bible God is called many names:

- ***El Shaddai***: "God Almighty." (Gen. 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; Ex. 6:1; Ps. 91:1, 2).
- ***El Elyon***: "The Most High God (Gen. 14:19; Ps. 9:2; Dan. 7:18, 22, 25).
- ***El Olam***: "The Everlasting God." (Gen. 16:13).
- ***Yahweh (YHWH)***: Comes from a verb which means "to exist, be." This, plus its usage, shows that this name stresses God as the independent and self-existent God of revelation and redemption (Gen. 4:3; Ex. 6:3).
- ***Yahweh Jireh (Yireh)***: "The Lord will provide." (Gen. 22:14).
- ***Yahweh Nissi***: "The Lord is my Banner." (Ex. 17:15).
- ***Yahweh Shalom***: "The Lord is Peace." (Jud. 6:24).
- ***Yahweh Sabaoth***: "The Lord of Hosts." (1 Sam. 1:3; 17:45).
- ***Yahweh Maccaddeshcem***: "The Lord your Sanctifier." (Ex. 31:13).
- ***Yahweh Ro'i***: "The Lord my Shepherd." (Ps. 23:1).
- ***Yahweh Tsidkenu***: "The Lord our Righteousness." (Jer. 23:6).
- ***Yahweh Shammah***: "The Lord is there." (Ezek. 48:35).
- ***Yahweh Elohim Israel***: "The Lord, the God of Israel." (Jud. 5:3; Isa. 17:6).
- ***Adonai***: The singular form means "master, owner." (Gen. 18:2; 40:1; 1 Sam. 1:15; Ex. 21:1-6; Josh. 5:14).
- ***Theos***: Greek word translated "God." Primary word in NT for God



- **Kurios:** Greek word translated “Lord.” but can be used for others besides God: sir (John 4:11), owner (Luke 19:33), master (Col. 3:22), or even refer to idols (1 Cor. 8:5) or husbands (1 Pet. 3:6)
- **Despotes:** Greek word translated “Master.” (Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; Rev. 6:10; 2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 4)
- **Father:** (Matt. 7:11; Jam. 1:17; Heb. 12:5-11; John 15:16; 16:23; Eph. 2:18; 3:15; 1 Thess. 3:11).

God has many names in Scripture—what do we say to those that suggest *pneuma* used for the Spirit is just another name for the same eternal God, not another individuality who is also God?

Jesus taught there was a third member of the Godhead called the Comforter, Counselor or Spirit:

- “If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. John 14:15-17
- But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. John 14:26
- “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. John 15:26

Notice the way Jesus speaks here—this language is not Jesus saying that He will ask the Father to come Himself, but is talking about another entity, another individuality and refers to him as such. So, Jesus’ testimony makes a distinction between the Father and the Holy Spirit as separate individuals.

The Old Testament teaches God is a plurality, not a singularity:

- Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness... Genesis 1:26

Even the text quoted by Jews and Muslims that “God is one” teaches a plurality, not a singularity:

- Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: DT 6:4
 - Notice the passage in English uses “Lord” and “God”. The reading of this passage with the Hebrew names for “Lord” and “God” would go like this: “Hear, O Isreal: *Yahweh* our *Elohim*, *Yahweh* is One.” Or,
 - What is interesting is that the word *Elohim* in Hebrew is plural and is the same word used for God in Genesis 1:26. Thus an accurate English reading might go like this: “The One is more than One yet is One”
 - In Hebrew there are two words for one, *Yacheed* and *Echad*. The first indicates singular unit as in one and only, the second indicates compound unity, as the oneness of two or



more. In this text *Echad* is used along with the plural name of God *Elohim* indicating the oneness of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

But, for me all the above evidence is not what is most compelling. The most compelling evidence for me that God exists in plurality rather than singularity is the nature and character of God Himself.

The Bible says, “God is love.” 1John 4:8. Further the Bible teaches that this love is “not self seeking.” 1Corinthians 13:5. Love is outward moving, other-centered. Therefore, God, being love, could not *be* love in isolation because love requires an object to pour itself upon. Love is other-centered! God’s nature and character of love, rightly understood, is the most powerful argument for the plurality of God. Therefore, when God created us in His image He created “them male and female” and the “two shall become one” united in a triune relationship – husband, wife and God indwelling their hearts via the Holy Spirit!

The minimum number for genuine other-centered love to exist and function is three—not two. In a relationship of two there can be narcissistic reinforcement—I have seen this in marriages where things were fine until the first child was born and the husband becomes jealous and hostile he no longer commands the supreme attention and affection of the wife.

EGW saw it this way:

There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit--those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.-- Evangelism, p. 615. {7ABC 441.9}

Back to the bottom of Monday’s lesson, it states “Jesus also says that blasphemy against the Spirit is unforgivable. (Mt 12:31-32). This is incomprehensible unless the Spirit is divine.”

What does it mean? Through which law lens do you hear this—rules imposed and legal pardon, or design law? And how would this fit with design law?

If the Holy Spirit is the agency from heaven which applies into the terminally sin-sick person the healing Remedy achieved by Christ and the person rejects the Holy Spirit, then what?

If a person rejects Jesus—because they have been told lies about Jesus—or have such strong cultural biases they cannot see Jesus in His true light, but their hearts remain open to the working of the Holy Spirit, and they value the principles of truth, love and freedom—what will happen in their heart?

If a person rejects a life-saving medicine because someone told them that the medicine is poison and will kill them—even though it is exactly what they need, but they accept the very medicine when it is given them in its generic form, rather than the brand name—what will happen?



But, if the person who is sick rejects the only doctor who brings and administers the medicine, then what?

Likewise if a person rejects God because they have heard only of the dictator views, a being who will torture them in hell for all eternity, but their hearts love truth and other people what will the Holy Spirit do for them?

But if a person finds the Spirit of truth and love reprehensible, such that they think honesty, fidelity, truthfulness is weak and despicable, and love for others is weak sentiment and they reject such motives and principles, but claim belief in God, what happens in them?

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is not merely saying one doesn't believe in the Trinity, or that one doesn't believe in God, but it is the functional rejection of the presence of the Holy Spirit and the presence of the Holy Spirit as the source, within our internal worlds, of truth, honesty, integrity, love, fidelity etc. Rejecting this and choosing evil is the true blasphemy.

TUESDAY

What lessons do we learn regarding the divinity of the Holy Spirit and the teaching of the Sanctuary? Where was the dwelling place of God in the OT times? In the Sanctuary, but who is to dwell in us? The Spirit and we are often called the Spirit temple—does this enlighten us on a variety of topics, like:

- The Holy Spirit is fully God
- The OT Sanctuary was all theater to teach the truth about what humans were created to be
- That the cleansing of the sanctuary is something quite different than a legal process in a building in heaven

WEDNESDAY

Read last paragraph, “The Bible states that the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead...” The lesson is referring to Romans 8:11:

And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

What of Jesus' words?

The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.” Jn 10:17,18

Do you see any tension here? How do we harmonize these two statements?



It is evidence of the Trinity at work, the functional aspects of how love works in God's universe—the Trinity are always working together, never in opposition, never one against the other—like one pleading to the other, but are all involved together, in creation, in redemption, etc. Thus, it is the Father calling His Son, and the Spirit filling the Son and the Son choosing to exercise His own individuality to choose to rise again.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “What would be lost...” The character of God as a being of love as discussed above.

Read the second paragraph, “The divinity of the Holy Spirit...” This is to me is more persuasive, to demonstrate not only that the Bible gives the attributes of God to the Holy Spirit, but lists the Holy Spirit as separate being in the same context as the Father and Son is much more persuasive and really undermines the position of those who would suggest the Holy Spirit is just the Spirit of the Father.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

We need HELP! With what? Well, after 10 years of ministry, this website has collected a huge number of articles, blogs, videos, podcasts, and notes that need to be categorized and indexed, so YOU can easily find all that's been said on a particular topic. The problem is, we don't have hundreds of eyes and ears on staff to search, read, listen, and find all these nuggets of truth. So, Come And Reason is calling on you, our faithful supporters, to help us with this task.

What do we need from you? Easy. Whenever you come across an article, blog, video, audio, or note that talks about a specific topic (like wrath, punishment, sanctuary, temple, mind, character, sin, death, etc., etc.), simply go to About > Contact Us and send us a note telling us where you found the information (page # in a document/note, time index in a video or audio file, the exact web address where you found the material, and the TOPIC the citation is talking about). We'll take those TOPICS and arrange them into categories and build a new menu entry to index all these resources.

Thank you, all, ahead of time for your participation and help in this rather significant endeavor!

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

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

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle Is Real at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcs Summit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

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

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church

12702 9th Street

Garden Grove, CA 92840

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

Phone: (714) 534-1987

Fax: (714) 534-3877

Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



The Holy Spirit and Spirituality 1Q 2017 Lesson 4

The Personality of the Holy Spirit

SABBATH

Read memory text, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” John 14:26, NASB

In Acts of the Apostles it says:

To the repentant sinner, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, the **Holy Spirit reveals the Lamb of God** that taketh away the sin of the world. "He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you," Christ said. "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 16:14; 14:26. {AA 52.3}

The Spirit is given as a regenerating agency, to make effectual the salvation wrought by the death of our Redeemer. The Spirit is constantly seeking to draw the attention of men to the great offering that was made on the cross of Calvary, to unfold to the world the love of God, and to open to the convicted soul the precious things of the Scriptures. {AA 52.4} [What is the purpose of the Spirit according to this author? To make Christ's sacrifice effectual in sinners—how? What would the Spirit need to do to make that effectual? Would unfolding to the world the love of God be part of it? Would this be something connected to the great offering? Where are the benefits of the great sacrifice to be made effectual—in God the Father or in sinners? Who needs persuading, transforming, renewing, recreating? Do you see how backward the legal model is when it has Jesus pleading His blood, sacrifice in heaven trying to make His sacrifice effectual in heaven?]

Having brought conviction of sin, and presented before the mind the standard of righteousness, the Holy Spirit withdraws the affections from the things of this earth and fills the soul with a desire for holiness. "He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13), the Saviour declared. **If men are willing to be molded, there will be brought about a sanctification of the whole being. The Spirit will take the things of God and stamp them on the soul.** By His power the way of life will be made so plain that none need err therein. {AA 52.5} [What is the Spirit doing? Changing the desires of the heart, renewing motives, and enlightening the mind so that we won't be confused about which is the right course of action. But this author says “By His power...” that this change is accomplished—what is the power of the Holy Spirit? The power of truth and love—not by might nor by power but...]

What do you think Christ meant when He said the Spirit will teach you “all things”?

Are there any limits upon what things the Holy Spirit will teach us? Yes! There is the knowledge of good and evil—the Holy Spirit will teach us all things that are good, but will not teach us to participate



in evil; the Spirit will enlighten us to discern evil and why it is evil and how to disengage and be free of it.

But what about other topics than religion, will the Holy Spirit teach us science?

In acquiring the wisdom of the Babylonians, Daniel and his companions were far more successful than their fellow students; but their learning did not come by chance. **They obtained their knowledge by the faithful use of their powers, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.** They placed themselves in connection with the Source of all wisdom, making the **knowledge of God the foundation of their education.** A Call To Stand Apart 55

Did the Holy Spirit help Daniel without Daniel's participation? Is there a role we have to play in obtaining knowledge and wisdom? If we make the knowledge of God the foundation of our education do we gain greater knowledge into science, when we study science, than if we do not make God the foundation?

I would suggest—only if we have the right conception of God and practice His methods in our lives. If we believe in God, but have the legal imposed law view of God, that belief will almost certainly obstruct our learning in every avenue. Such ideas as:

- We have faith we don't need evidence
- The Bible said it, I believe it that settles it
- The Bible supersedes science, so any disagreement must be a problem with science—rather than realizing that nature is God's first book—where the truth of God's character was first written, and the Bible came along quite later and rightly understood they always harmonize. So, disagreement between science and Scripture means a misunderstanding exists—and that misunderstanding may be in how we understand Scripture, not science.

But when we come to understand God is the Creator and His laws are design laws and seek to find the harmony between science and Scripture, then worshipping such a God does lead us into greater knowledge in science as well as any other field of non-evil study.

From God, the fountain of wisdom, **proceeds all the knowledge that is of value to man, all that the intellect can grasp or retain.** The fruit of the tree representing good and evil is not to be eagerly plucked because it is recommended by one who was once a bright angel in glory. He has said that if men eat thereof, they shall know good and evil; but let it alone. The true knowledge comes not from infidels or wicked men. The word of God is light and truth. **The true light shines from Jesus Christ**, who "lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John 1:9. **From the Holy Spirit proceeds divine knowledge.** He knows what humanity needs **to promote peace, happiness, and restfulness here in this world, and to secure eternal rest in the kingdom of God.**--Special Testimonies on Education, pages 26-31; written from Cooranbong, N.S.W., Australia, June 12, 1896.



Let me tell you what I know of this heavenly Guest. The Holy Spirit was brooding over the youth during the school hours; but **some hearts were so cold and dark** that they had no desire for the Spirit's presence, **and the light of God was withdrawn.** The heavenly **Visitant would have opened the understanding, would have given wisdom and knowledge in all lines of study that could be employed to the glory of God.** He came to convince of sin and to soften the hearts hardened by long estrangement from God. **He came to reveal the great love wherewith God has loved these youth.** . . . {CT 364.2}

A principle of divine origin must pervade our conduct and bind us to God. **This will not be in any way a hindrance to the study of true science.** "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10); and the man who consents to be molded and fashioned after the divine similitude is the noblest work of God. **All who live in communion with the Creator will have an understanding of His design in their creation.** They will have a sense of their own accountability to God to **employ their faculties to the very best purpose. They will seek neither to glorify nor to depreciate themselves.** . . . {CT 364.3}

What prevented the Holy Spirit from enlightening these people? Their own closed hearts to the presence of the Holy Spirit.

What lines of study will the Holy Spirit enlighten our minds about? All lines of study, including science, that can be employed to God's glory.

And what will all of these lines of study ultimately reveal? The truth about God's character of love—do we see God's character of love revealed in science when science and Scripture are rightly understood?

What is required of us to be able to benefit from the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit? That we accept the truth about God's character of love AND HIS DESIGN for life—which is His Law being design law. If we reject God's law as design law, and instead teach it is imposed law, we obstruct the work of the Holy Spirit and prevent the Spirit from being able to enlighten us in regard to God's truth.

So, what is the power of the Holy Spirit in regard to our salvation? It is the power of truth and love! It is not merely the power to create matter out of energy, but to transform the character of intelligent beings, while retaining their unique individuality—this is only accomplished by the gentle working of truth and love!

Some people have emailed and asked about the presence of the Holy Spirit in the past and what was Jesus talking about when He said the Spirit would come after He was gone? Wasn't the Spirit already present?

I read this in *The Desire of Ages* regarding Jesus promise of the coming of the Comforter:



Before this the Spirit had been in the world; from the very beginning of the work of redemption He had been moving upon men's hearts. **But while Christ was on earth, the disciples had desired no other helper.** Not until they were deprived of His presence would they **feel their need of the Spirit**, and then He would come. {DA 669.1}

The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, **Christ could not be in every place personally.** Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high. {DA 669.2}

Does this give insight as to why the Spirit was limited in times in the past? Could it have anything to do with God's character, methods and the way reality works?

Is God love? Does God win our love and trust by overwhelming displays of might and power? Then how? By gentle persuasion of love and truth—and what is required then for a person to experience the Holy Spirit in more overt ways? A desire from that person—without a desire, a willingness in the heart, the Spirit works in the background to inspire, enlighten, draw, woo, but never forces His way, and is limited by our own hearts' desires in how much we experience of Him.

SUNDAY

Read second and third paragraph, "Jesus cares for..." I found this quite interesting, has anyone heard the term allopathic medicine, which is distinct from chiropractic, osteopathic, and homeopathic medicine?

The term *allopathic* comes from two Greek words—*allos* and *pathos*. *Pathos* means suffering and put together with *logia*, from which we get logic, *pathology* means the study of suffering, or disease. *Allos* mean *another*—*pathos* means suffering or disease, so *allopathic* medicine, which is science based medicine in which I was trained, means not to bring along another disease or suffering to the patient, but to treat the disease or suffering with something that causes the *disease* to suffering, i.e. something that is directly antagonistic and destructive to the disease. So an infection is treated with an antibiotic.

Homeopathy on the other hand is based on the flawed idea of *like cures like*, meaning that what causes the disease in healthy people, will cure the disease in sick people; so giving sick people diluted forms of what is believed to have caused the disease is the approach. It has been proven repeatedly to be no better than placebo at best.

So, back to the *allos parakletos*—another helper. What is the significance of "another helper"? Does this mean separate and distinct from Jesus? What about separate and distinct from the Father? Yes, another, but along side and alike to Jesus to help heal and restore us!



How does the Holy Spirit comfort?

What do you think of this description from *The Desire of Ages*:

The Comforter is called "the Spirit of truth." His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the **heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind.** By directing men to **false standards, he misshapes the character.** Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. **It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself.** {DA 671.1}

What do you understand this to mean?

How is truth comforting? What do lies do? Is the comfort that comes from the Spirit emotional only? Or is the comfort the comfort of genuine healing, transformation, health and wellness?

Can someone experience the comfort the Spirit longs to bring if they refuse truth? Why not?

What happens if they claim to believe in God and follow the rules and do the right rituals but hold to lies about God as an imposer of rules and one who is required to inflict punishment? Have any of you ever believed such things? Was there comfort in such belief or instead discomfort, anxiety, uncertainty, fear, insecurity?

What happened when you came to the truth about God and His Design law of love, knowing that deviations from God's design cause suffering and ultimately death, while God is constantly working to heal and restore? Did this truth bring comfort?

Read question at bottom of lesson, "Why is it so much more comforting to know that the Holy Spirit is a personality instead of a mere force?"

- Are these the only two options?
- Does a person have to believe in the unique personality of the Holy Spirit to benefit from the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives?
- Could a person believe the Spirit is the Spirit of God the Father rather than a unique separate personality? Does that prevent the Spirit from working in their lives?
- Could a person not believe either, in the Holy Spirit or in a force? Would the Holy Spirit still seek to work with such a person?
- How could we tell if a person was responding to the Holy Spirit even if they were ignorant of the Holy Spirit?



- Conversely, could a person believe in the unique personality of the Holy Spirit, but accept the workings of a false spirit as the Holy Spirit?
- So, does believing in the unique personality of the Holy Spirit protect one from a false spirit?
- Does not believing in the unique personality of the Holy Spirit preclude one from the benefits of the Holy Spirit?

Romans 2:12-15:

All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)

And what is the New Covenant—God writing His law on the heart and mind, which these people experience. And who is the member of the Godhead who does this internal transforming of the heart? The Holy Spirit—so here we have people who don't know about the Spirit, or God, but are still transformed by the Spirit.

I love this description in *The Desire of Ages*:

Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, **but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit** they have been a blessing to those about them. Even among the **heathen** are those who have **cherished the spirit of kindness**; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. **Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish.** Though ignorant of the written law of God, **they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature**, and have done the things that the law required. **Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts**, and they are recognized as the children of God. {DA 638.2}

Some ask, why then do we take the gospel to the world and preach Christ if this is true?

Let me give an analogy. Penicillin is an antibiotic, discovered from mold. It is true, that sometimes, ancient cultures would treat wounds with moss or other materials that contained mold, and the molds secreted penicillin and such individuals benefited and either avoided infection or had infections resolve.



Because it is true that people can benefit from natural occurring penicillin in this way, does that mean we should not produce and distribute penicillin, and teach people of its benefits and how to apply it to those who are infected?

Just because people can find God's character revealed in nature and benefit from the working of the Holy Spirit, doesn't mean it isn't much more effective when the truth is presented in its full light.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Can an impersonal force..." Some of these questions are quite good, like, "Can an impersonal force intercede in our behalf?"

Intercession takes intention, willfulness, understanding, which requires individuality—so this is a very good question.

But one question is not necessarily as good at making the distinction between a personality and an impersonal influence, like, "Does an impersonal influence have the ability to speak?" Just say to your iphone, "Hey Siri." And what happens?

We must put forth the best arguments. What would have happened if you had a functioning iPhone in your pocket 2000 years ago and called the Spirit Siri and in front of a group said, "Hey Siri, what will the weather be like tomorrow?"

Might some people have formed some false beliefs based on that experience?

What is better evidence that hearing a voice speaking?

Read second paragraph, "The distinctive characteristics of personality..." Is there a difference between knowledge and understanding?

- Knowledge is awareness of facts or information, whereas wisdom is the ability to understand and appreciate the significance and right application of those facts?
- Knowledge is awareness that a tomato is fruit; wisdom is knowing that tomatoes don't go in fruit salad.
- Knowledge is awareness that your parents have a rule to brush your teeth or else you will get punished; wisdom is knowing that the punishment will not come from your parents.
- Knowledge is awareness that God has rules that we must obey or else we will get punished; wisdom is knowing that the punishment does not come from God.

What about the point that only a personal being can be grieved? I think this is quite true, inanimate objects cannot be grieved. But can animals be grieved? Are animals are personal beings? Yes, why? Because the higher animals were made to have relationship with each other and mankind—grief is the experience of loss—if we lose someone we have bonded with we grieve, thus animals can grieve. But



this is a personal experience. So the Holy Spirit who grieves the loss of every person who is lost is a personal being.

And what about the capacity to choose, and the capacity to love? This is something a machine cannot do, something a non-individual can do. Gravity is a force, but it cannot grieve, it cannot love, it cannot choose. Siri is a program that also cannot grieve, love, or choose.

TUESDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “A challenge we face...” Is it hard to connect with the Holy Spirit because the Spirit remains a very amorphous physical entity?

Does anyone have an idea, a way of conceiving of the Holy Spirit that makes it easier for you to comprehend and make Him real in your life?

What about praying to the Holy Spirit? How many of you have prayed to Jesus? How many have prayed directly to the Father... “Our Father which art in heaven...” How many have prayed directly to the Spirit?

If not, why not? Can we? Should we? Or should we pray only to Jesus or the Father asking them to send the Spirit?

I have often heard people pray for Jesus or the Father to send the Spirit, do such prayers undermine our ability to experience the Holy Spirit as equal to the Father and the Son?

The middle of the lesson asks us to read two passages and replace *Holy Spirit* with the word *power* and see if it makes sense.

I know what they are trying to do, but don’t think that it works very well here because of the sentence structure.

Romans 13:15: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” NIV,

So putting in power reads “by the power of the power,” if we reversed it and replaced power with Holy Spirit it doesn’t work either—“by the Holy Spirit of the Holy Spirit.”

This is just bad English. If we instead use force instead of power, it would read “by the power of the force,” which would suggest a force accessible and powerful, like in Star Wars, and thus would give a meaning, although it would be a false meaning.

Same problem with 1Cor 2:4:



My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power...

- demonstration of “the power’s power” doesn’t work
- but neither does demonstration of “the Spirit’s Spirit”

The Apostles statement in Acts 15:28, gives intent and intelligence to the Spirit “it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.” This type of language is more convincing to me.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “In the Gospel of John...” What is the distinction they are trying to make?

- Life eternal is that they might *know*... which is not cognitive but personal, experiential, not knowing about but knowing
- Truth it about the knowledge, the experience of reality, of God’s true character and how reality works—which is more than data collection, it is wisdom of life experience with God
- Jesus is the Word that was made flesh, the way and the truth, the living light, the living embodiment of God’s character and law of love
- Thus truth is not something merely to cognitively comprehended, but something to be experienced

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “The question of the personality...” What is the argument being made? That the HS will be slighted, offended, get His feelings hurt, be cheated out of something that is rightfully His?

Is this the argument? OR is the lesson arguing that in denying the personhood of the Holy Spirit we are cheating *ourselves* of something—what?

A personal relationship with a divine being who is the one who not only connects us with the other two members of the divine trio, but is the one with whom we can have the most personal and intimate connection as we are living temples where the Spirit’s personal presence will dwell!

If we deny the personhood of the Spirit, what do we lose in that intimate relationship?

Read the second paragraph, “If we think of...” The green section states, “We cannot use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us.”

What happens if we surrender ourselves completely to the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit gets to do entirely what the Spirit wants to do in us?



But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Gal 5:22,23

The Holy Spirit heals and restores us to God's original ideal and what was that ideal, that we not only have the traits of Christlike character, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, but we also recover the ability to be *SELF-controlled*, not Spirit-controlled!

God does not want puppets controlled by the Spirit, God wants intelligent beings healed and restored to be able to love others and govern self freely in harmony with God's design.

Adam, before the fall, was self-governed and had the ability to resist evil in his own human strength, at least according to one of the founders of the SDA church:

“Because man fallen could not overcome Satan with his human strength, Christ came from the royal courts of heaven to help him with His human and divine strength combined. Christ knew that Adam in Eden with his superior advantages might have withstood the temptations of Satan and conquered him. He also knew that it was not possible for man out of Eden, separated from the light and love of God since the fall, to resist the temptations of Satan in his own strength. In order to bring hope to man, and save him from complete ruin, He humbled Himself to take man's nature, that with His divine power combined with the human He might reach man where he is. He obtained for the fallen sons and daughters of Adam that strength which it is impossible for them to gain for themselves, that in His name they might overcome the temptations of Satan.” {Confrontation 45}

God's plan is to restore us to perfection, to restore to us self-control so that we can live in harmony with God and His design for life, by the exercise of our own healed minds and wills.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

We need HELP! With what? Well, after 10 years of ministry, this website has collected a huge number of articles, blogs, videos, podcasts, and notes that need to be categorized and indexed, so YOU can easily find all that's been said on a particular topic. The problem is, we don't have hundreds of eyes and ears on staff to search, read, listen, and find all these nuggets of truth. So, Come And Reason is calling on you, our faithful supporters, to help us with this task.

What do we need from you? Easy. Whenever you come across an article, blog, video, audio, or note that talks about a specific topic (like wrath, punishment, sanctuary, temple, mind, character, sin, death, etc., etc.), simply go to About > Contact Us and send us a note telling us where you found the information (page # in a document/note, time index in a video or audio file, the exact web address where you found the material, and the TOPIC the citation is talking about). We'll take those TOPICS and arrange them into categories and build a new menu entry to index all these resources.

Thank you, all, ahead of time for your participation and help in this rather significant endeavor!

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

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

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle Is Real at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcs Summit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

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

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church

12702 9th Street

Garden Grove, CA 92840

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

Phone: (714) 534-1987

Fax: (714) 534-3877

Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



2017 Q1 Lesson 5. The Baptism and Filling of The Holy Spirit

SABBATH

The thief cometh not but to steal and to kill and to destroy. I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. John 10:10. 21KJV.

According to the same author [John] what is the definition of “abundant [read eternal] life? John 17:3.

Where / when did the process of Baptism begin? Did it originate with Heaven or elsewhere?
Consider the following:

“And the devils, indeed, having heard this washing published by the prophet, instigated those who enter their temples, and are about to approach them with libations and burnt-offerings, also to sprinkle themselves; and they cause them [the pagans] also to wash themselves entirely, as they depart [from the sacrifice], before they enter into the shrines in which their images are set.” [Justin Martyr, First Apology, Ch 62].

This seems to indicate that “the devils”, having read Old Testament prophecies, came up with the “ritual” of baptism for pagan rites, knowing of a coming Messiah and the eventual symbolism of baptism.

How did Christianity get from Baptism by water [repentance] to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?
What’s the whole point of Baptism by water?

This was quoted last week, but it bears repeating:

It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world’s Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. DA 671

The preaching of the word is of no avail without the presence and aid of the Holy Spirit; for this Spirit is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. Only when the truth is accompanied to the heart by the Spirit, will it quicken the conscience or transform the life. A minister may be able to present the letter of the word of God; he may be familiar with all its commands and promises; but his sowing of the gospel seed will not be successful unless this seed is quickened into life by the dew of heaven. Without the co-operation of the Spirit of God, no amount of education, no advantages, however great, can make one a channel of light. Before one book of the New Testament had been written, before one gospel sermon had been preached after Christ's ascension, the Holy Spirit came upon the praying disciples. Then the testimony of their enemies was, “Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.” Gospel Workers 286



“The Christian’s life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

From the teacher’s lesson:

“This week’s lesson should help members of your class to be aware that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not for a select few or a small group of spiritually elite Christians. The baptism or infilling of the Holy Spirit is for all believers in every generation. When we become insensitive to the infilling of the Holy Spirit, we live the Christian life in our own strength, powerless to overcome temptation. We live in frustrated defeat rather than in joyous victory. Our decisions are based on human wisdom rather than divine guidance. We are caught in the grip of seemingly unbreakable habits rather than enjoying the freedom that the Spirit of Christ brings.”

AMEN.

SUNDAY

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Why the baptism by water? Why not just wait on the baptism of the Holy Spirit? What’s the purpose of the baptism by water? What are the similarities? What are the differences? What is a baptism of repentance?

From the Lesson:

“John, however, in contrast to the other Gospels, does not use the future tense when speaking about the baptism of the Spirit. Instead, he uses a present participle, indicating that this is something that has continuing validity (see John 1:33). The same tense is used by John just a few verses earlier in John 1:29, when he talks about another important work of Jesus: the taking away of the **sins** of the world.” Emphasis added.

Following are 25 versions of John 1: 29. One out of the 25 uses the term “**sins**”. The remainder use the term “sin.” Which makes more sense? Sin? or sins?

New International Version

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

New Living Translation

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

English Standard Version

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes



away the sin of the world!

Berean Study Bible

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

Berean Literal Bible

On the next day, he sees Jesus coming to him and says, "Behold the Lamb of God, the *One* taking away the sin of the world.

New American Standard Bible

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

King James Bible

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Holman Christian Standard Bible

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

International Standard Version

The next day, John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

NET Bible

On the next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

New Heart English Bible

The next day, he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

Aramaic Bible in Plain English

And the day after, Yohannan saw Yeshua Who came to him and Yohannan said: "Behold, The Lamb of God who takes away the **sins** of the world!" Emphasis added.

GOD'S WORD® Translation

John saw Jesus coming toward him the next day and said, "Look! This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

New American Standard 1977

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes



away the sin of the world!

Jubilee Bible 2000

The next day John saw Jesus coming unto him and said, Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

King James 2000 Bible

The next day John saw Jesus coming unto him, and said, Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

American King James Version

The next day John sees Jesus coming to him, and said, Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.

American Standard Version

On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!

Douay-Rheims Bible

The next day, John saw Jesus coming to him, and he saith: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sin of the world.

Darby Bible Translation

On the morrow he sees Jesus coming to him, and says, Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

English Revised Version

On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!

Webster's Bible Translation

The next day John seeth Jesus coming to him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.

Weymouth New Testament

The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and exclaimed, "Look, that is the Lamb of God who is to take away the sin of the world!"

World English Bible

The next day, he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Young's Literal Translation

on the morrow John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, 'Lo, the Lamb of God, who is



taking away the sin of the world;

MONDAY

Being Filled With the Holy Spirit

From the lesson: “If we yield to the influence of alcohol, our walk, talk, and thoughts will be affected negatively. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we yield every part of our life to His transforming influence with the result that our walk, talk, and thoughts will reflect Jesus.”

Which Law is being described here?

Again, from the lesson:

“In the Greek of Acts 13:52, the term filled with the Spirit is in the imperfect tense, signifying continuous action. It literally means: “being [continuously] filled.” Being filled with the Spirit is not a one-time event. It is something that we should seek and receive every day. This filling has to be repeated so that every part of our lives is filled with His presence, and so we are empowered to live as we should.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit does not so much mean that we possess more of Him but that He possesses more of us.”

I think this is very well said.

TUESDAY

Conditions Part I

The lesson suggests that “repentance” is one of the first conditions for being baptized by the Holy Spirit. Any thoughts? Does it matter which Law lens you are viewing “repentance”? What constitutes “repentance”? Is it the same as “forgiveness”?

From the lesson:

“True repentance is more than just feeling sorry for the dire consequences of our sins. It is a thorough change of heart and mind so that we see sin for what it really is: an ugly evil and rebellion against God.”

To be sure, “sin” is ugly, evil, and rebellion, but is that all? Why is humanity in “rebellion against God?”

Remember the cascade? Lies believed lead to the broken circle of Love and Trust, which leads to self seeking behavior.

Which Law lens are we viewing sin with?

Sin is “Lawlessness” [I John 3:4] Which Law?



I'm happy that the lesson uses "trust" synonymous with "faith", however, can we receive the Holy Spirit without "trusting God's Word?" How much Scripture was written when Abraham was on Earth? Scripture tells us Abraham "trusted God", not just His Word. And he didn't always trust, did he? Was he bereft of the Spirit?

The lesson asks: "Why does persistent intercession make a difference?" I would ask, "Upon whom does persistent intercession make the difference?"

WEDNESDAY

Conditions Part II

From the lesson:

"Then, as now, the Holy Spirit is granted to all who obey God. In the Bible, love and obedience go hand in hand, and true faith is expressed in obedience."

Is this accurate? Which comes first, the obedience – leading to the indwelling Spirit, or the indwelling of the Spirit – leading to obedience?

What about Balam? He said only what God told him to say [obedience], but was his heart full of love for God?

4 He that saith, "I know Him," and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. I John 2: 4, 5 21KJV.

Consider, again, which comes first – the keeping His commandments or the indwelling Spirit leading the character to want to live in harmony with God's Design Law?

A mechanical obedience may hide the smoldering fire of rebellion, but it is ready to break out at any time against restraint. In the service of such there is no peace or light or love. The atmosphere surrounding their souls is not fragrant. The influence of their words and actions is felt by others, and this influence is a harm even to those who are trying to do their best in any position in which they are placed. Self-pity is deteriorating to the characters of those who cherish it, and it exerts an influence that spoils the happiness of others. MM 173 – 1932.

17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, 18 how they told you that there would be mockers in the last times who would walk after their own ungodly lusts.

19 These are they who **separate themselves**, sensual, having not the Spirit. Jude 17-19 21 KJV. Emphasis mine.



Again, look at the mechanics of the problem. God doesn't withhold His Spirit, they "separate themselves" by their thoughts, choices, and behaviors, searing their own consciences.

THURSDAY

Self-Centered Living versus Christ-Centered Living.

6 You will know these people because of what they do. Good things don't come from people who are bad, just as grapes don't come from thornbushes, and figs don't come from thorny weeds. 17 In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, and bad trees produce bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. Matt 7: 16-18. ERV.

But the fruit that the Spirit produces in a person's life is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these kinds of things. Galatians 5: 22, 23. ERV.

From the Lesson:

"We cannot transform ourselves. We possess no real power to change ourselves, for sin is too deeply ingrained in us. The renewing energy must come from God. The change from within can be successful only through the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. No mere external change, such as correcting this or that bad habit, makes us Christians. The change has to come from a heart renewed by the Holy Spirit.

This is the work of a lifetime, a work that will have its up and downs, but a work that God promises to do in us if we surrender to Him, "being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6, NKJV)."

AMEN. Very well said.



The Holy Spirit and Spirituality 1Q 2017 Lesson 6

The Holy Spirit and Living A Holy Life

Before we get into this week's lesson I received a number of emails from listeners and one post on our Facebook page about our discussion regarding Ananias and Sapphira. Here is the post from our Facebook page, which is similar to the emails received:

Dr. Jennings, really appreciate the focus on God's character and your willingness to challenge our thinking. Even though I agree generally with your conclusions, I fear you have undermined your credibility a bit in this lesson, by selectively quoting Ellen White on the topic of Ananias and Sapphira. I noticed that you quoted Ellen White's beautiful statement about coercion having no place in God's government, and you rightly point out that the Bible does not say this was an act of punishment on God's part (not going beyond what is written), but you did not seem to be aware of Ellen White's own comments on the Ananias and Sapphira story. When your listeners read for themselves Ellen White's comments on the Ananias and Sapphira incident on AA pp.75-76 in which she very clearly refers to the incident using the word punishment, they will have reason to believe you have an agenda and have selectively quoted to make your point. Just as you said regarding the lesson author's comments about the divinity of the Holy Spirit based on this story, that you agree with the conclusion, but don't find the argument compelling, I would say the same. I agree with your conclusion, that God does not coerce, but I'm not sure we need to excise the word punishment from our vocabulary in order to arrive there.

Here are two paragraphs from AA:

From the stern punishment meted out to those perjurers, God would have us learn also how deep is His hatred and contempt for all hypocrisy and deception. In pretending that they had given all, Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit, and, as a result, they lost this life and the life that is to come. **The same God who punished them,** today condemns all falsehood. Lying lips are an abomination to Him. He declares that into the Holy City "there shall in no wise enter . . . anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." Revelation 21:27. Let truth telling be held with no loose hand or uncertain grasp. **Let it become a part of the life. Playing fast and loose with truth, and dissembling to suit one's own selfish plans, means shipwreck of faith.** "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth." Ephesians 6:14. He who utters untruths sells his soul in a cheap market. His falsehoods may seem to serve in emergencies; he may thus seem to make business advancement that he could not gain by fair dealing; **but he finally reaches the place where he can trust no one. Himself a falsifier, he has no confidence in the word of others.** {AA 75.3} [Please note what she is describing happening, what is occurring?]



In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, the sin of fraud against God was speedily punished. The same sin was often repeated in the after history of the church and is committed by many in our time. But though it may not be attended by the visible manifestation of God's displeasure, it is no less heinous in His sight now than in the apostles' time. The warning has been given; God has clearly manifested His abhorrence of this sin; and **all who give themselves up to hypocrisy and covetousness may be sure that they are destroying their own souls.** {AA 76.1}

So, how do you hear this quotation? Through what law lens? Do you hear it as God sending power, originating in Himself, out and inflicting death upon them, OR as God surrendering them to their choice and thus ceasing the use of His power which had been protecting them?

Consider this passage from Romans:

But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance **he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished**—Romans 3:21-25

Did all the people in OT times (other than Enoch and Elijah) die? Was their death punishment for sin? Paul says their sins were not punished—what do we understand this to mean?

Was the death that Ananias and Sapphira suffered a different death than Nadab and Abihu, or the platoons that came to arrest Elijah or Sodom and Gomorrah suffered? In other words was their death the first or second death? Is the first death the punishment for sin...hmmm...what do we do then?

Perhaps we should read a few other EGW quotes and compare them to the one in AA read above:

"We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, **men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.**" {1SM 235.2}

And these next two quotes were emailed to me this week by Ben Welebir:

This case is placed on record for our benefit. Just what took place in Pharaoh's heart will take place in every soul that neglects to cherish the light and walk promptly in its rays. **God**



destroys no one. The sinner destroys himself by his own impenitence. When a person once neglects to heed the invitations, reproofs, and warnings of the Spirit of God, **his conscience becomes seared**, and the next time he is admonished, it will be more difficult to yield obedience than before. And thus with every repetition. Conscience is the voice of God, heard amid the conflict of human passions; when it is resisted, the Spirit of God is grieved. – {5T 120.1}

We want all to understand how the soul is destroyed. **It is not that God sends out a decree that man shall not be saved.** He does not throw a darkness before the eyes which cannot be penetrated. But man at first resists a motion of the Spirit of God, and, having once resisted, it is less difficult to do so the second time, less the third, and far less the fourth. **Then comes the harvest to be reaped from the seed of unbelief and resistance.** Oh what a harvest of sinful indulgences is preparing for the sickle! – {5T 120.2}

Are these quotes as equally true as what she wrote in the AA? If so, then how do we balance them?

We recognize the balance is *the punishment that sin brings* when God stops intervening to hold sin at bay and surrenders the sinner to their choice, which, in the Bible, is also known as God's wrath!

So, Ananias and Sapphira, experienced God's wrath of letting them go, because of their choice, and they reaped what happens when the source of life lets go—they died the first death—not the second, but the method was not merely the wearing out of their bodies from old age, but the accelerated, or speedy, immediate result of separation from God. This is what sin does, which is to separate one from God, and is what we described in different words in our lesson a few weeks ago. Thus, God punished them by stopping His interventions that were keeping them alive and allowing them to reap what sin brings—death. This is exactly what I described happening in the lesson a few weeks ago with the Holy Spirit.

I want to commend all those who found these EGW quotes in AA and emailed us or posted on our Facebook page for not simply reading the EGW quote and then closing your minds to what we are teaching, but inquiring, asking for clarification. Excellent!

But, now, I would like to point out a process that happened here—typically when I present something that sounds like it is different than what has been commonly taught, I go to great lengths to look up statements like this one from EGW in AA and bring it into class and unpack it and demonstrate, as we just did, that what I am teaching is consistent with her writings. However, this time I did not do this and several listeners immediately found they could not resolve this apparent contradiction on their own—but these types of situations are exactly what each of us need in order to practice thinking through the evidence for ourselves. It is like a math teacher showing how to work problems, but then the students need to work some of the problems on their own.



I hope those of you who found the AA quote, over the last couple of weeks, have been grappling with it in light of other quotes, Scriptures, God's design laws searching for answers and realize that the typical inflicted penalty view is wrong, that the punishment is the punishment sin brings when God no longer intervenes.

It is the goal of Come and Reason Ministries to help each person to develop the skill to work through such quotes so that when others come to you with such quotes you won't be stumped, but will be able to give a powerful evidence based response.

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, "It's easy to become..." What does it mean? Why does God hate sin? What does it mean that God hates evil?

It is like a doctor hating disease and wanting to destroy it, but does a doctor hate the sick patient or even the terminal patient? No! God hates none of His children, even those who have refused His healing, but He hates the disease which is killing them—sin and evil. And God hates it when His children refuse to let Him heal them!

Read second paragraph, "Holiness, however, is a crucial..." What is holiness? We use the term, but functionally what is it, what does it mean? How do you define it?

Here are 7 definitions from the dictionary of "holy," because holiness means something that is holy:

1. specially recognized as or declared sacred by religious use or authority; consecrated: *holy ground*.
2. dedicated or devoted to the service of God, the church, or religion: *a holy man*.
3. saintly; godly; pious; devout: *a holy life*.
4. having a spiritually pure quality: *a holy love*.
5. entitled to worship or veneration as or as if sacred: *a holy relic*.
6. religious: *holy rites*.
7. inspiring fear, awe, or grave distress: *The director, when angry, is a holy terror*.

As I see it only one of these definitions defines the core of true holiness, the rest of these are all open to counterfeits and can confuse us and obscure our understanding of true holiness:

1. specially recognized as or declared sacred by religious use or authority; consecrated: *holy ground*.
 - Can Satan worshippers declare certain temples, or worship sites to be holy and can such places be set aside for religious use? Does setting it aside for religious use make it holy?
2. dedicated or devoted to the service of God, the church, or religion: *a holy man*.
 - Can a cult priest or priestess be set aside for service to their god, church or religion? Does that make him or her holy?



3. saintly; godly; pious; devout: *a holy life*.
 - Can a person live a devout, pious and godly—defined by how the god that person worships functions—and burn people at the stake etc.? Does such a life mean a person is holy?
4. entitled to worship or veneration as or as if sacred: *a holy relic*.
 - If something is worshipped or considered worthy of veneration does that make it holy?
5. religious: *holy rites*.
 - Are religious rites holy because they are religious rites? Are there many religious rites that are actually evil because they obstruct the truth about God?
6. inspiring fear, awe, or grave distress: *The director, when angry, is a holy terror*.
 - Does the truth about God bring fear and grave distress—or is it sin which brings the distress. So, if a person is genuinely holy, will they have terror, dread and grave distress of God?

The only definition which, in my opinion, approximates true holiness is definition 4: having a spiritually pure quality: *a holy love*.

What is the core to this definition? Healthiness, being in harmony with God, His character, methods, design for life. This is what holiness means, restoration to God's original ideal and intent—ultimate total and eternal healthiness.

Does the idea of mental, spiritual and characterological healthiness demystify the concept of holiness?

Can we make ourselves spiritually healthy—i.e. holy? No! Can God? Yes!

Why is the holier-than-thou attitude so offensive? Because it is claiming that the sickness—pride—is actually what healthiness looks like! It would be like walking around with fever and chills and condemning those without fever and chills.

Read third paragraph, “God’s love and holiness...” Does any part of you recoil at this? Why? Because they are introducing a split in God’s character, a false idea and trying to make it sound good—it is the same process as the holier than thou attitude—trying to make something sick look like it is right.

The reason this happens is that they misunderstand God’s law as imposed, and misunderstand holiness as intolerance for breaking rules. They present God’s holiness as strict enforcement of rules that without God balancing it with love would be cruel.

The problem resolves when we come back to Design Law—life only exists and operates upon the design protocols God instituted when He built all reality—His law—which is an expression of love.



Thus, we cannot be reconciled to Him while being out of harmony with that design, any more than an organ can be transplanted into a host that is not compatible—why? Because the host (person dying of renal failure) doesn't want the organ—or because it simply does not possess the right traits to allow it to survive in the atmosphere of the host's body? We cannot survive in the atmosphere of heaven if we are not transformed and renewed in heart to be like God originally designed humankind in Adam to be. And we can only be healed by partaking of Jesus!

Love is holiness, which is healthiness, and there is no other way to live in God's universe. Not one aspect of God's law can be changed without destroying God's creation. Thus God is working through Christ to change the sinners who are out of harmony with God and His design so we can live in God's reality!

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "It's popular to emphasize..." Paragraphs like this sadden me, because it is evidence of how deeply the false law infection penetrates into every aspect of Christian thought.

They are actually trying to draw a contrast between God's love and His holiness—let's examine their concerns and investigate their claims.

They say God's holiness is connected with His name—what does this mean?

In the Bible what is the significance of a name? Why was Jacob's name changed to Israel? Because Jacob's character changed, thus his name changed. In the Bible name means character.

So, what then would it mean if God's holiness is connected with His name? That it is connected with His character, and His character is what? Love! So, consider this quote:

Christ declares the mission he had in coming to the earth. He says in his last public prayer, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. **And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love** wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." [John 17:25, 26.] When Moses asked the Lord to show him his glory, the Lord said, "**I will make all my goodness pass before thee.**" [Exodus 33:19.] "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, **The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious**, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty. . . . And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped." [Exodus 34:6-8.] When we are able to comprehend the character of God as did Moses, we too shall make haste to bow in adoration and praise. **Jesus contemplated nothing less than "that the love wherewith Thou hast love me"** [John 17:26.] should be in the hearts of his children, that they might impart the knowledge of God to others. {CE 75.1}



What is the name of God? It is His character and God is LOVE! So if God's holiness is tied up in His name, then it is tied up in His character of love!

The lesson states holiness describes purity and moral perfection—what is the standard of purity and moral perfection? God's character of love, which is manifested in His *living* law of love—the design protocols upon which life is built!

Consider these quotes:

Christ came to our world to represent the character of God as it is represented in His holy law, for **His law is a transcript of His character. Christ was both the law and the gospel...** {CTr 339.2} [If Christ was the law, what kind of law is it? It is living, functional, design law, not imposed rules!]

In setting aside the law of God, men know not what they are doing. **God's law is the transcript of His character. It embodies the principles of His kingdom.** He who refuses to accept these principles is **placing himself outside the channel where God's blessings flow.** {COL 305.3} [What kind of law is being described? What happens if we refuse His law? We place ourselves outside the channel where God's blessings flow—i.e. this is design law, it is like the hand cutting itself off from the body!]

So, what is the standard of purity and perfection? God's character of love which is evidenced in the living law of love! Again, no separation or division between holiness and love!

Holiness means being completely free from evil—what is evil at its core?

Unselfishness, the principle of God's kingdom, is the principle that Satan hates; its very existence he denies. **From the beginning of the great controversy he has endeavored to prove God's principles of action to be selfish,** and he deals in the same way with all who serve God. **To disprove Satan's claim is the work of Christ and of all who bear His name.** {Ed 154.3}

All sin is selfishness. Satan's first sin was a manifestation of selfishness. He sought to grasp power, to exalt self...**The sowing of seeds of selfishness in the human heart was the first result of the entrance of sin into the world.** {7MR 232.4}

God desires every one to understand the **evil of selfishness**, and to cooperate with Him in guarding the human family against its terrible, deceptive power. The design of the gospel is to confront this evil by means of remedial missionary work, and to destroy its destructive power **by establishing enterprises of benevolence.** {7MR 233.1}



As a remedy for the terrible consequences into which selfishness led the human race, God gave His only begotten Son to die for mankind. How could He have given more? In this gift He gave Himself. "I and My Father are one," said Christ. By the gift of His Son, God has made it possible for man to be redeemed, and restored to oneness with Him. {7MR 233.2}

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." **Love is the great principle that actuates unfallen beings.** With amazement the angels behold the indifference that those who have light and knowledge manifest toward a world unsaved. The heavenly host are filled with an intense desire to work through human agencies to restore in man the image of God. They are ready and waiting to do this work. The combined power of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost is pledged to uplift man from his fallen state. **Every attribute, every power, of divinity, has been placed at the command of those who unite with the Saviour in winning men to God.** Oh that all would appreciate the truth as it is in Jesus! **Oh that all would love God in return for the love wherewith He has loved them!** {7MR 233.3}

Sin has extinguished the love that God placed in man's heart. The work of the church is to rekindle this love. The church is to cooperate with God by uprooting selfishness from the human heart, placing in its stead the benevolence that was in man's heart in his original state of perfection. {7MR 234.1}

So what is evil? Selfishness, and what is the opposite of selfishness? Love, so again, there is no distinction between God's holiness and His character of love!

Do you think we rekindle love when we teach legal theologies or teach ideas that separate God's character of love from His holiness?

So what does it mean to be free from evil? To be free from selfishness, which means to love perfectly.

So, what then is holiness?

Read third paragraph, "His power is holy power..." Has God been presented by Christians in an unlovely and detestable way? How?

- By presenting His character as split—love and something else—every attribute of God's nature reveals in some way His character of love—there is never a separation
- By presenting God's law as human law, imposed rules and thus God as the imposer of punishments
- By presenting God as the source of evil, pain, suffering and death

Read fourth paragraph, "God's holiness means..." What does this mean? What does it not mean?



If they are saying there is no evil, sinfulness, selfishness in God, that God exists free of all sinfulness then this is absolutely true.

If, though, they mean that God is so holy that He will not tolerate sin in His presence and in fact cannot tolerate it, is such an idea true?

Where did sin begin? In heaven, with whom? Lucifer, and in whose presence did Lucifer dwell? After Adam and Eve sinned who sought them out and in whose presence did they find themselves? God's—so the idea that sin cannot occur in God's presence is disproved. The idea that sin cannot occur or exist in God's presence led to a theological construct that is quite wrong—the idea that God's holiness cannot exist in the presence of sin, so Jesus could not be born to a sinful woman, therefore Mary had to be sinless, which would mean several serious problems if true:

- God has a way to make humans holy without Jesus
- Jesus was not born part of the fallen human species but to a different human species that was not descended from Adam and fallen into sin
- Jesus doesn't know what it is like to be tempted in every way like us because He didn't partake of our humanity
- Jesus' work on earth would not have been able to eradicate the infection of sin, i.e. destroy the carnal nature, if He were born to a sinless mother
- The only purpose for His birth if born to a sinless mother would be to be executed in order to pay a legal payment and such an idea perpetuates the false human imposed law construct and distorts the character of God.

Fortunately, the idea that sin cannot occur in God's presence is false and the teaching that Mary was sinless is also false and we can rejoice that we have a Savior who was born part of this human species and fixed what Adam's sin did to it!

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, "Holiness is both..." What do you hear?

When you hear holiness is a command—what happens in your mind and heart? How is that concept heard and processed?

What law lens to you hear it through?

Does the tension evaporate if we substitute *holiness* with the word *healthiness*, where *healthiness* means spiritual healthiness?

God's command then is His plan, His prescription, His directions, His expectations and goals for us—perfect healing and restoration to Christlikeness—the question is how does this occur?



No man receives holiness as a birthright, or as a gift from any other human being. **Holiness is the gift of God through Christ.** Those who receive the Saviour become sons of God. They are His spiritual children, **born again, renewed in righteousness and true holiness. Their minds are changed.** With clearer vision they behold eternal realities. They are adopted into God's family, and **they become conformed to His likeness, changed by His Spirit from glory to glory.** From cherishing supreme love for self, they come to cherish supreme love for God and for Christ. . . . Accepting Christ as a personal Saviour, and following His example of self-denial--this is the secret of holiness. {AG 120.4}

What do you hear holiness is? It is transformation, rebirth, recreation, restoration, renewal, becoming in heart, mind, character like Jesus, having the law written on the heart, etc. etc. This is being restored to God's design for life, this is all design law, there is no imposed law, legal aspects to any of it!

The bottom paragraph states, "God's acceptance of each believer is perfect from the beginning; yet, our growth in sanctification is a lifelong process and always needs to be extended further so that we become more and more transformed into the unblemished image of Him who has saved us."

What do you hear this say?

Did the antediluvians have an advantage in sanctification because they lived longer? Do we only get sanctified by aging?

Or, when we think of sanctification as being the work of a lifetime, do we realize it is like eating—is eating the work of a lifetime? Why? Because our bodies need ongoing sustenance, not because we haven't matured. So too our minds and characters need daily sustenance, we may experience spiritual maturity here and now—consider Elijah, he achieved it much younger than the antediluvians, yet he still needed daily sustenance.

The green section states, "There is a tension between being holy and yet having to pursue holiness." Is there? How?

Is there a tension between being healthy and having to pursue healthiness?

TUESDAY

The Agent of Sanctification—who is this agent? It is the Holy Spirit—what is Jesus' role?

Jesus is the one who procured the Remedy to sin, the Holy Spirit is the one who applies it into our hearts and minds!

This is the two-phase aspect of salvation, the species being saved or set right or justified with God in the person of Jesus Christ, who simultaneously procured the remedy which heals all who partake. And



individuals being set right or justified with God when their hearts are changed from distrust to trust—then in trust—having been set right, their open hearts and experience the presence of the Holy Spirit who brings the achievements of Christ and applies them in the cooperative heart! This is the sanctification, which is an ongoing cooperative experience in the lives of those who trust God and keep their hearts open to Him.

We cannot heal or save ourselves and our works do not procure or provide the remedy. But we have the work of participating and internalizing all that Christ has achieved and making choices to follow His prescriptions.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “We know that...” Do you agree that “the answer is found in the idea of holiness”?

Yes, *if* we understand the word holiness to mean *healthiness*. Why do we live in harmony with the laws of health? Because it is the only way to be healthy. Likewise, the only way to be spiritually healthy, whole, and experience the abundant life God wants for us is to live in harmony with His law, which is His construction protocols or design parameters for life!

So, what happens if we break God’s law—do we get in legal trouble with the heavenly judge, or do we damage ourselves and create barriers between us and God, which will eventually lead to our destruction?

Read third paragraph, “To live a spirit-filled...” I think there was some less than ideal word choices here when they said, “The law is never our way to salvation. Rather, it is the path of the saved.”

What is a path other than a way. I think it could have been more clear if stated like this—the law is not the remedy to our terminal state, but is the protocols upon which we live.

So, the laws of health cannot heal a person with a terminal disease—a remedy is needed, however, partaking of the remedy does not do away with the laws of health and if the terminal condition is cured, the healthy person, if they want to stay health, must live in harmony with the laws of health.

The last paragraph states, “While it is possible to keep the letter of the law without love, it is not possible to exhibit true love without keeping the law.”

This is true and well said, but can anyone give some practical examples of what this means?

Can a person live the true law of love without ever keeping the seventh-day Sabbath?



Can a person keep the seventh-day Sabbath without ever practicing the law of love? How about those who crucified Christ?

THURSDAY

First sentence states, “Holiness is the precondition for enjoying the happiness of fellowship with God.” Why?

What if we read, “Healthiness is the precondition...”? Does this make sense?

Can we enjoy fellowship with anyone if we are terminal and dying?

The beginning of the fifth paragraph states, “Activism is not holiness. There will be people who think that they have done great works for the Lord, and yet they really were not following him at all.”

What is the key? Is it the right rituals and rule keeping, or the right heart motive?

These are they that....

FRIDAY

First paragraph asks, “How do we even begin to grasp the holiness of God when our nature is fallen and corrupt and His is compromisingly holy?”

What about through nature and the life of Jesus?

Read and discuss the questions.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

We need HELP! With what? Well, after 10 years of ministry, this website has collected a huge number of articles, blogs, videos, podcasts, and notes that need to be categorized and indexed, so YOU can easily find all that's been said on a particular topic. The problem is, we don't have hundreds of eyes and ears on staff to search, read, listen, and find all these nuggets of truth. So, Come And Reason is calling on you, our faithful supporters, to help us with this task.

What do we need from you? Easy. Whenever you come across an article, blog, video, audio, or note that talks about a specific topic (like wrath, punishment, sanctuary, temple, mind, character, sin, death, etc., etc.), simply go to About > Contact Us and send us a note telling us where you found the information (page # in a document/note, time index in a video or audio file, the exact web address where you found the material, and the TOPIC the citation is talking about). We'll take those TOPICS and arrange them into categories and build a new menu entry to index all these resources.

Thank you, all, ahead of time for your participation and help in this rather significant endeavor!

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

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle Is Real at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcs Summit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

AUGUST 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

Love is more than emotion, more than compassion, more than positive regard for another; love is power—the power to live, heal and be free. Love is functional, operational, with specific design parameters built into the fabric of reality. Love is intelligent and as we intelligently choose to harmonize with how love functions we not only experience greater health, fulfillment and wellbeing, we are transformed to become forces for good in the world. In *The God-Shaped Heart* Christian psychiatrist Dr. Tim Jennings explores the healing power of love, exposes a belief system infecting Christianity that obstructs love, and identifies eternal truths that open the heart to God's transforming power of love.

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

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



The Holy Spirit and Spirituality 1Q 2017 Lesson 7

The Holy Spirit and the Fruits of the Spirit

SABBATH

When you think of fruit what comes to mind?

- A product of a plant
- Something that often is nutritious
 - What about spiritual fruits should they nurture?
- A healthy plant brings forth healthy fruit a diseased plant brings forth diseased fruit
 - Is this true regarding fruits of character?
- Fruit is a product of intimacy—offspring are sometimes referred to fruit
 - Are the fruits of the spirit a result of intimacy with God?
- Something that is fertile—capable of reproducing itself
 - What about spiritual fruits—should they be fertile—contribute to the growth of more?
- Do fruits occur on immature or mature plants?
 - What about spiritual fruits, do we experience spiritual fruits in immature or mature people?
- In fact are the fruits the evidence of growing up, maturing?

What enhances maturation and what impairs it?

At Augusta National they hold the Masters each year, and they are renowned for their beautiful Azaleas. But some years, in order to delay the blooming of the plants for the event, they will ice them—the cold prevents maturing—does this have any correspondence in the spiritual world?

What about Laodicea?

Is it an accident that the Holy Spirit is presented as fire? Do we need a certain warmth of heart in order to grow spiritually? If we are cold does that prevent spiritual fruit?

What does it mean to be spiritual cold or lukewarm?

The lesson states, “The fruit of the Spirit is not something we achieve by purely human effort.”

In other words, we cannot do this on our own—would this be similar to saying, “pregnancy is not something a woman can achieve purely by her own effort”? A pregnancy requires something the woman does not possess on her own—what about fruits of the Spirit—do they require something we don’t possess in ourselves?



But, pregnancy requires the woman contribute something of her own—do the fruits of the Spirit require we contribute something of our own? What?

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read John 15:1-11 but lets read through verse 15, this is from *The Remedy*:

As they were walking, Jesus saw a grapevine, and pointing to it, said: "I am the vine from which all truth and life originates, and my Father is the gardener who tends the vine. ²You are the branches which have life and grow—as long as you are connected to me. Any branch that does not grow and bring forth the fruit of a transformed character reveals that it is not genuinely connected to me, and therefore my Father will remove it. Any branch bringing forth fruit of a transformed character my Father prunes and disciplines in order to bring forth even more fruit. ³Your hearts have already been cleansed from the lies of Satan as a result of the truth I have revealed to you. ⁴Remain connected and in unity with me, and I will remain connected and in unity with you. No branch can live, grow, and bear fruit on its own; it must remain connected to the vine. Likewise, you do not have life and cannot grow and bear fruit unless you remain connected to me.

⁵"I am the vine from which all truth and life originates, and you, who receive truth and life from me, are the branches. If a person remains connected to me and in unity with me, I will never sever the connection, and they will develop a fruitful, Godlike character; but separated from me—they can do nothing good. ⁶If anyone severs their connection to me and refuses to be reunited with me, they are like a branch that is cut off from the vine and thrown away and then withers and dies. Such dead branches are picked up, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you remain connected and in unity with me, and my character is reproduced in you, ask whatever you wish—in harmony with my methods and principles—and it will be given you. ⁸This healing of damaged hearts and minds, which results in the development of godly character in my followers, brings honor and glory to my Father, as it reveals that his methods are the only methods of life, health, and happiness.

⁹"My love for you is just as free, complete and abundant as the Father's love for me. And just as the Father's love lives in me and flows through me to the world, so you must continue to let my love live in you and flow through you to others. ¹⁰If you value my methods and practice my principles of selfless love, my love will live in you—just as I have valued my Father's methods and practiced his principles of selfless love, and his love lives in and flows through me. ¹¹I have told you this so that you may be completely restored to the Father's original ideal for humankind—to unity with him—and you may then experience the joy I have known in my unity with the Father; and then your joy will be complete also. ¹²My prescription to heal your minds and hearts is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³There is no greater love than this—that a person lay down their life to save their friends. This is the principle of life—the central principle of the kingdom of God. This love is the Remedy for the infection that is destroying



mankind, and the infection is this: Satan's wicked disease of survival-of-the-fittest, which is preferring self so much that a person will kill their friends in order to save themselves. ¹⁴You are my friends if you take my prescription and love one another. ¹⁵I do not want you to be my servants, because servants only do what they are told but do not understand what the master is doing, nor do they understand the master himself. Their hearts are not in harmony with the master, and what they do they do not do freely. I want you to be my friends—to understand what I am doing—and to freely choose to be in unity with me. That is why I have told you about everything the Father and I are working to accomplish, so your hearts and minds will be in harmony with us.

What does it mean for the Father to prune? What kinds of things does the Father cut away? Not only unhealthy desires, habits, and longings—but also our guilt, shame, fear, anxiety, insecurity, misunderstandings!

Are there any elements described here which are required in order to experience the fruit of the Spirit?

Abiding in Christ—which means what?

Here is what the SDA church historically taught about this concept:

To abide in Christ means that you shall be **a partaker of the divine nature**. Humanity lays hold upon divinity, and you have divine power... {General Conference Bulletin, May 17, 1909 par. 20}

Great, but how, what are the elements we must partake of to be partaking of the divine nature? What are the two core attributes of God's divine nature that we must purposefully, actively, willfully choose to embrace and internalize and practice?

Consider these quotes:

The blessed Redeemer has set us an example in **living out the precepts of the law**. [What level of development do you hear this through? Those at level four and below, still operating on the false human imposed law hear this as the 10 Commandments and instantly think of a long list of behaviors and activities we must do—but that is the wrong understanding and not what is meant. Notice the next sentence:] **He says to His followers, "Freely ye have received, freely give."** [What law is this? The design law, living law, of love!] We are to have an open heart to receive the rich treasures of heaven, and **our hearts are to be opened to let those rich treasures out to others**. Oh, we need to abide in Christ, then we will be a constant channel through which God will communicate to our brethren and to the world His own gracious Spirit. . . . {TMK 49.2}



What is the first element of God's divine nature we need to actively participate in in order to be abiding in Christ? —Love! And then the second?

"Except ye abide in me," says Christ, "ye can do nothing." We need him every day; we cannot part with him for an hour. Every faculty of our being belongs to him, and should be dedicated to his service. My brethren, if you know that this union with Christ is required of you, and then neglect to maintain a consistent walk and to live in the exercise of faith, the heart will become hardened in disobedience. The tendency is to become self-important and emboldened in a wrong course. It is your duty to abide in Christ. **We must be daily learners in his school.** [What are the lesson books in His school? Scripture, nature, and experience!] **We must know the way ourselves before we can teach others how to walk in it.** {RH, March 4, 1884 par. 10}

"Search the Scriptures," was the injunction of the Master. Many have lost much because they have neglected this duty. When we search the word of God, angels are by our side, reflecting bright beams of light upon its sacred pages. The Scriptures appeal to man as having power to choose between right and wrong; they speak to him in warning, in reproof, in entreaty, in encouragement. **The mind must be exercised on the solemn truths of God's word, or it will grow weak.** [Why? If we fail to exercise our minds on God's word will God use power to make our minds weak? No this is design law, the law of exertion, we must choose to reason, study, think, contemplate, understand, appreciate and choose truth!] **We have the truth brought out in publications, but it is not enough to rely upon other men's thoughts. We must examine for ourselves, and learn the reasons of our faith by comparing scripture with scripture.** [Notice where EGW points our attention and what she holds up as the standard—the Bible!] Take the Bible, and on your knees plead with God to enlighten your mind. If we would study the Bible diligently and prayerfully every day, we should every day see some beautiful truth in a new, clear, and forcible light. {RH, March 4, 1884 par. 11}

Our ministers are failing here. They are not Bible students, they are weak where they might be strong; for they take things for granted without searching for themselves. They do not become mighty in the Scriptures and in the power of God, because they are satisfied with their present position and attainments... {RH, March 4, 1884 par. 12}

What is the second element of God's divine nature that we must actively participate in in order to abide in Christ? The truth!

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Love and Truth—to abide in Christ means that we abide in His methods, His character, His truth, His principles and thus we love God and others and constantly seek to advance in the truth!

So what interferes with growing up and experience the fruit of the Spirit?



Failure to think for oneself, failure to investigate the evidence for oneself, believing because someone else told you something, resting satisfied on history and failing to put into practice what we understand to be true!

Consider an athlete, who achieves great success, perhaps wins a gold medal, and after winning rests satisfied on that past achievement and quits exercising, what happens?

What happens in our hearts, minds, comprehension, character, if we at one point achieved great spiritual fruit, but then rest satisfied and stop exercising our capacity to love our capacity to understand, think and move forward in the truth?

This is what has happened in all religions, traditions set up, creeds, fundamental beliefs are set down, people are indoctrinated to believe certain things, not to think, not to understand, not to wrestle out the issues and develop within themselves the ability to problem solve, love, comprehend, etc. but to regurgitate answers approved by some ecclesiastical authority.

Religion becomes about the right set of doctrines, rather than the right developmental experience.

Such indoctrinational approaches dwarf the mind, stunt the character and harden the heart!

This is why Come and Reason Ministries never wants to tell you what to think, but to stimulate you to study, to search, to ask questions, to examine evidence, to integrate the various threads of evidence God has provided and be fully persuaded in your own mind! (Rom 14:5)

The lesson states in the last paragraph that “The Holy Spirit will give us power to live victoriously and to develop the virtues that are characteristics of those who are God’s children.”

To live victoriously over what? What does it mean to live victoriously?

By the grace of Christ you can gain the victory over self and selfishness. As you live His life, **showing self-sacrifice at every step, constantly revealing a stronger sympathy for those in need of help, you will gain victory after victory.** Day by day you will learn better how to conquer self and how to strengthen your weak points of character. The Lord Jesus will be your light, your strength, your crown of rejoicing, because you yield your will to His will.
181 {Counsels for the Church 132.2}

MONDAY

Read Galatians 5:22,23:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.



What does this mean?

First what does it mean against such there is no law? What does it mean that love is fulfillment of the law?

Why is love the first fruit listed?

What is the core of God's character, what is the protocol of life, what is it that wins us to genuine trust? Is it not pure selfless love?

The lesson rightly points out that "love is far more than mere human affection."

How would you describe love?

What is the difference between gifts of the Spirit and fruits of the Spirit?

Gifts are abilities—enablings like:

- Organizational ability
- Ability to preach, teach, speak effectively
- Speak in different languages
- Ability to diagnose and treat health problems
- Skills as artisans or craftsman or musicians or artists

Gifts can be bestowed instantly by God, gifts don't change who we are in character, a person can be gifted in many ways yet still be selfish.

Fruits are traits of character, that are the outgrowth of choices—for good or ill, those who choose to partake of Christ, to open their hearts in trust, experience a change in their character from fearful, insecure, selfish, impulsive, impatient to that of love, joy, etc. And those who reject Christ and choose instead the principles of the world also experience fruits of character—but of selfishness, cruelty, fear, insecurity etc.

- Is experiencing God's love dependent upon which organization one belongs?
- Does our method of baptism determine whether we experience God's love or not?
- Does the day we attend church determine whether we experience God's love or not?
- What does impact our ability to experience God's love?
- What about the ideas/beliefs we hold about God?
- What about the ideas we hold about what sin is and how God addresses it?
- What about how we have been treated by others—especially those who claim to be representatives of God?



TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Romans 14:7 reads:...” What does it mean that the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking...?

There is absolute joy in experiencing God’s love, no question about it, to know that you are loved, to experience forgiveness, grace, acceptance, the removal of guilt and shame brings joy.

But, I am a little uncomfortable with this statement in the lesson: “The joy that is rooted in the fruit of the Spirit, however, focuses on God and what He has done for us.”

Is there another element that brings joy, perhaps even more joy, that focuses somewhere other than what God has done for us?

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for **the joy set before** him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Heb 12:2

What does this mean? What joy? Is there joy in sacrificing to bless another? Is there joy in standing for what is right? Is there joy in representing God correctly? Is there joy in giving for another?

What did Jesus mean by this?

So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. ²³ In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ²⁴ Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. John 16:22-24

What is the joy? What is the cause of the joy?

Can one have joy in isolation? Is joy always a product of a love relationship?

Read third paragraph, “Peace is more lasting than joy...” What did Jesus mean when He said:

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to turn “ ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—³⁶ a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’ Mt 10:34-36

How do we reconcile the idea that the fruit of the Spirit is peace, but Jesus said He didn’t come to bring peace?



As we are reconciled to God through Christ and experience the Holy Spirit within to heal and renew etc. where do we experience peace and where do we not experience peace?

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ... Rom 5:1

What does it mean to be justified through faith?

- To be set right in heart—to have a heart changed from distrust, from enmity to God, back to trust and love in God
- Thus those whose hearts are changed from distrust and enmity to love and trust have peace with God

Notice this quotation:

Christ is "the Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6), and it is His mission to restore to earth and heaven the peace that sin has broken. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). Whoever consents to renounce sin and **open his heart to the love of Christ**, becomes a partaker of this heavenly peace. {AG 320.2}

There is no other ground of peace than this. The grace of Christ received into the heart, subdues enmity; it allays strife and fills the soul with love. He who is at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable. **Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmisings will find no room there; hatred cannot exist. The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven** and will diffuse its blessed influence on all around. The spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly strife. {AG 320.3}

What is described as justification by faith? A change of heart—not a legal action!

The false human imposed law construct has led to a false legal idea of justification which has trapped millions into a religion without peace, because they claim legal declarations of being right, even though they are not, and thus there is not peace, because their hearts remain at enmity with God.

The genuine peace of Christ is the peace of abiding in loving unity with God, rather than fear, guilt and shame.

But, as we experience peace with God, we simultaneously go to war with what? We go to war with selfishness, lies and the principles of the world!



So this is MT 10:34,35, from *The Remedy*:

"Don't think that I have come to make peace with a selfish world. I have not come to bring peace with selfishness, but a sword to cut selfishness out of the hearts of people.³⁵ I have come to cut dysfunctional family ties: to free a son from selfish loyalty to his father's ambitions and feuds, to sever a daughter from the control of an oppressive and manipulative mother, to cut through the fear and hostility a daughter-in-law has toward her mother-in-law.³⁶ A person's worst enemies are often members of their own family.

What do you understand patience to be? Is it not trusting God with how things will turn out, trusting His timing?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Kindness..." Is God ever unkind? What about when thundering at Sinai? What about when dealing with rebellion?

Why was it kind to toss Adam and Eve out of Eden? Why was it kind to bring 10 plagues on Egypt?

Why was it kind to throw the moneychangers out of the Temple?

What does it mean to be faithful? Is faithfulness about the right behaviors, a code list of rules, don't go to a restaurant on Sabbath, don't pick up a limb fallen on your driveway on Sabbath, don't run down the aisle in church, don't eat the leftover communion bread...

What is faithfulness? Is it about carrying out the tasks with a certain accuracy, or about having a heart motive to always live up to God's ideals in every way?

I love this quote from the book *Education*:

The greatest want of the world is the want of men--men who will not be bought or sold, men **who in their inmost souls are true and honest**, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, **men whose conscience is as true to duty** as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall. {Ed 57.3}

Would you say this describes faithfulness? What is being described?

How does one obtain such ability? And the next paragraph from the book *Education* leads us to Thursday's lesson. Here is the next paragraph:

But such a character is not the result of accident; it is not due to special favors or endowments of Providence. **A noble character is the result of self-discipline,** of the



subjection of the lower to the higher nature--the surrender of self for the service of love to God and man. {Ed 57.4}

THURSDAY

What is self-discipline?

What is the last fruit of the Spirit? Self-control, *enkratia*, en—within, and *cratia*—authority, like democrat, autocrat. So exercising authority within oneself.

What does it mean that the fruit of the Spirit is *self*-control? It is not Spirit-control; it is self control!

This is huge, profound, and evidence of God's character of love. When we cooperate with God's Spirit the Spirit heals the damage of fear and selfishness, and restores us back to God's original plan for humanity. Beings who are genuinely FREE to exercise governance over themselves—why? Because it is the only way love can be experienced and expressed!

FRIDAY

read and discuss question 1



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

We need HELP! With what? Well, after 10 years of ministry, this website has collected a huge number of articles, blogs, videos, podcasts, and notes that need to be categorized and indexed, so YOU can easily find all that's been said on a particular topic. The problem is, we don't have hundreds of eyes and ears on staff to search, read, listen, and find all these nuggets of truth. So, Come And Reason is calling on you, our faithful supporters, to help us with this task.

What do we need from you? Easy. Whenever you come across an article, blog, video, audio, or note that talks about a specific topic (like wrath, punishment, sanctuary, temple, mind, character, sin, death, etc., etc.), simply go to About > Contact Us and send us a note telling us where you found the information (page # in a document/note, time index in a video or audio file, the exact web address where you found the material, and the TOPIC the citation is talking about). We'll take those TOPICS and arrange them into categories and build a new menu entry to index all these resources.

Thank you, all, ahead of time for your participation and help in this rather significant endeavor!

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

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle Is Real at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcs Summit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

AUGUST 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

Love is more than emotion, more than compassion, more than positive regard for another; love is power—the power to live, heal and be free. Love is functional, operational, with specific design parameters built into the fabric of reality. Love is intelligent and as we intelligently choose to harmonize with how love functions we not only experience greater health, fulfillment and wellbeing, we are transformed to become forces for good in the world. In *The God-Shaped Heart* Christian psychiatrist Dr. Tim Jennings explores the healing power of love, exposes a belief system infecting Christianity that obstructs love, and identifies eternal truths that open the heart to God's transforming power of love.

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

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



The Holy Spirit and Spirituality 1Q 2017 Lesson 8

The Holy Spirit and Gifts of the Spirit

SABBATH

What is the difference between fruits and gifts of the Spirit?

Gifts are abilities—endowments—given directly for the purposes of spreading the gospel—preaching, teaching, prophecy, healing etc.

Fruits are traits of character that are developed within the believer through a trust relationship with God and the indwelling of the Spirit.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “The fruit of the Spirit...” I am concerned that the choice of the word *Author* in this paragraph could lead to misunderstanding. I would have preferred the word “Source.” God is the source of all life, all that is holy, righteous, good, etc. So, if we mean by the word Author—Source, then no problem, but the word Author can also mean the one who writes and when it comes to the development of the fruits and the expression of the gifts is this true?

It is true God is the source—but are we saying we have no part in the development of the fruits or the expression of the gifts? That we don’t also act a role impacting the expression of these gifts and fruits?

Is one of the gifts of the Spirit, the gift of prophecy? And does the gift of prophecy lead some prophets to write Scripture?

Peter says:

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2Pet 1:20,21

Notice, Peter says God is the source—but is Peter saying God is the one who is speaking or writing?

Do you remember this quotation from a few weeks ago?

The Bible is written by inspired men, **but it is not God’s mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented.** Men will often say such an expression is not like God. **But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible.** The writers of the Bible were God’s penmen, not His pen. Look at the



different writers. {1SM 21.1}

So, is God the Author of the Bible? Well... just to ensure I don't get a lot of emails—I thought we should consider this quote?

In the instruction given in our schools, **the natural and the spiritual are to be combined**. The **laws obeyed by the earth** reveal the fact that it is under the masterly power of an infinite God. The **same principles run through the spiritual and the natural world**. Divorce God from the acquisition of knowledge, and you have a lame, one-sided education, dead to all the saving qualities that give true power to man. **The Author of nature is the Author of the Bible**. Creation and Christianity have one God. **God is revealed in nature, and God is revealed in His word**. In clear rays the light shines from the sacred page, showing us the living God, as represented in the laws of His government, in the creation of the world, in the heavens that He has garnished. **His power** is to be recognized as the only means of **redeeming the world from the degrading superstitions that are so dishonoring to God and man**. {CT 395.2}

Wow—so much in this passage—is God the Author of Scripture? Yes, is He the writer of Scripture? No! What does this mean? He is the Source, but not the writer! And, what law did you hear being described in the paragraph above?

Did you notice this author of that statement said “the same principles run through the spiritual and the natural world.” The penal/legal theologians deny this and insist that human methods of sinful beings, imposed rules with coercive enforcement, run through the spiritual. It is a lie!

The author said that God's power is “the only means of **redeeming the world from the degrading superstitions that are so dishonoring to God and man**.”

What does this mean? From what is God's power redeeming the world? Degrading superstitions—and what are degrading superstitions? False beliefs, lies, distortions, which when believed degrade the mind, warp the character and turn beings that were created to represent God's character of love into beings who would kill others as just punishment for sin.

Then what is the power that redeems from superstitions? The power of love and truth!

To bring it all together, I found this quote, what do you think of it?

The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. **The truths revealed are all "given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men.** The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and



those to whom the truth was thus revealed, **have themselves embodied the thought in human language.** {FLB 10.3}

The Lord speaks to human beings in imperfect speech, in order that the degenerate senses, the dull, earthly perception, of earthly beings may comprehend His words. **Thus is shown God's condescension.** He meets fallen human beings where they are. **The Bible, perfect as it is in its simplicity, does not answer to the great ideas of God; for infinite ideas cannot be perfectly embodied in finite vehicles of thought.** Instead of the expressions of the Bible being exaggerated, as many people suppose, the strong expressions break down before the magnificence of the thought, though the penman selected the most expressive language through which to convey the truths of higher education. {FLB 10.4}

God designed the Bible to be a lesson-book to all mankind, in childhood, youth, and manhood, and to be studied through all time. **He gave His Word to men as a revelation of Himself.** . . . It is the medium of communication between God and man. {FLB 10.5}

Do we see God is the Author but not the writer of the Bible, and would this mean that He is the Author, but not the writer of the fruits and gifts in our individual lives?

The lesson makes the distinction between fruits and gifts. The last fruit listed is “self-control” Is the fruit of self-control from the Holy Spirit or from the self?

It is from the Holy Spirit—how then is it self-control?

Because of fear and selfishness (our carnal nature), we, apart from Jesus, are slaves to the impulses of that nature, thus we are unable to control ourselves but will give in to fear and impulse. However, when the Holy Spirit takes what Christ achieves and restores in us Christlike character we love God and others more than self. This gift of God’s love transforms us and enables us to resist the temptation of fear and impulse and we then are set free to exercise our own individuality in choosing to live in harmony with God’s design. This is the only way love can exist!

In the second paragraph, the lesson states, “The gifts of the Spirit are given so that we can serve others and build up the body of Christ, His church.”

What does it mean to build up the church?

Is it talking about a building, properties, equipment so that our facilities have the best sound and recording and broadcast equipment? Or are buildings and other physical materials merely other resources for the actual building up of the church?

So what does it mean to build up the church?



I thought, given the intense energy of many Christians in politics today, and the intense friction between Islam and other religions, including Christianity, that this quote was interesting from the book *The Great Controversy*:

The regulation adopted by the early colonists, of permitting only members of the church to vote or to hold office in the civil government, led to most pernicious results. This measure had been accepted as a means of preserving the purity of the state, but it resulted in the corruption of the church. **A profession of religion being the condition of suffrage and officeholding, many, actuated solely by motives of worldly policy, united with the church without a change of heart.** Thus the churches came to consist, to a considerable extent, of unconverted persons; and even in the ministry were those who not only held errors of doctrine, but who were ignorant of the renewing power of the Holy Spirit. **Thus again was demonstrated the evil results, so often witnessed in the history of the church from the days of Constantine to the present, of attempting to build up the church by the aid of the state, of appealing to the secular power in support of the gospel** of Him who declared: "My kingdom is not of this world." John 18:36. **The union of the church with the state, be the degree never so slight, while it may appear to bring the world nearer to the church, does in reality but bring the church nearer to the world.** {GC 297.1}

So can we build up the church by getting the right politicians elected or the right judges placed on the Supreme Court? How many Christians think they are doing their Christian duty by pursuing such a path?

So, how do we build up the church?

If you walk in the light, you can every one be light bearers to the world. Do not seek to accomplish some great work and neglect the little opportunities close at hand. We can do very much by **exemplifying the truth in our daily life.** The influence which we may thus exert cannot be easily withstood. Men may combat and defy our logic; they may resist our appeals; **but a life of holy purpose, of disinterested love in their behalf, is an argument** in favor of the truth that they cannot gainsay. Far more can be accomplished by **humble, devoted, virtuous lives than can be affected by preaching when a godly example is lacking.** **You can labor to build up the church, to encourage your brethren, and to make the social meetings interesting;** and you can let your prayers go out, like sharp sickles, with the laborers into the harvest field. Each should have a personal interest, a burden of soul, to watch and pray for the success of the work. {My Life Today 220.2}

You cannot build up the church until you are a transformed man. {2T 626.2}

So how do we build up the church?



First we must personally surrender to Jesus and experience Him, know Him intimately and be changed in the heart. We cannot share what we do not know. Then, we can live God's principles and as we do this the power of love combined with truth will be the prevailing power that influences and changes other people bringing them closer to God and His design for life.

Thus building up the church means working to restore God's character and methods within people so that individually and collectively we function in love and truth!

The third paragraph states, "Therefore, spiritual gifts are worthless without the fruit of the Spirit." thoughts?

Again, I prefer another word here, ultimately, eternally, the lesson is correct, without the transformation of character which is evidenced by the fruits, and results in eternal life there is no genuine worth in the gifts. But most people don't think this way and thus when they hear worthless too many think having no worth or value—including earthly worth, so I am concerned the word-choice might lead to some misunderstanding. I would have preferred the word, "pointless" "spiritual gifts are pointless without the fruit of the Spirit."

For example: the gift of languages can have quite a significant worth or value in this world to make money, to negotiate treaties, etc. but it is all pointless if it doesn't result in people being reconciled to Christ and healed from sin and selfishness. What does it profit a man to gain the entire world but to lose his soul?

Same with the gift of prophecy—many cults find the false gift of prophecy, scrying, fortune-telling, etc. to be quite worthwhile, or valuable, but it is all pointless if it hardens the heart and ultimately doesn't have any true worth.

Bottom green question is perhaps the most important question, "Why is love so central to all that we do as Christians?"

Notice in 1 Corinthians, in Chapter 12 Paul lists the spiritual gifts, then in Chapter 13 expounds on love, which is the more excellent way, and then in 14 approaches those who are speaking in tongues telling them the better way is not tongues, but love. Why?

Read 1Cor 13 from *The Remedy*:

If I am gifted to speak the language of people and angels but do not have God's love in my heart, I am only making meaningless noise, because I remain terminal and dying.²If I am gifted with prophetic insight and understand all mysteries and knowledge, and if I am trusted to move mountains but do not have God's love in my heart, I am a fraud because I am still dying in sin and am nothing at all.³If I give away all my possessions to the poor and die as a martyr tied to a



burning stake but don't have God's love in my heart, I am still unhealed and have gained nothing.

⁴Love is the principle upon which life and health are built to operate, and when active in intelligent beings, love is patient and kind. Love gives in order to bless others and does not envy, boast, or promote self.⁵Love is not intrusive, rude, selfish, irritable, or hot-tempered. And love doesn't hold grudges or keep a record of wrongs.⁶Love takes no pleasure in evil but rejoices with the truth.⁷Love always protects, always heals, always restores, builds up, trusts, hopes, and perseveres.

⁸Love originates in God and therefore will never stop and never fail. But one day, prophecies will cease, talking will be paused, and human knowledge will fade.⁹We are finite—knowing just a part of all truth, and prophecy is just a piece of a greater whole.¹⁰But when God restores the universe to His perfect design of love, all imperfection will disappear.¹¹When I was a child, I talked like a child, bragging about myself; I thought like a child, focusing on the dos and don'ts, and I reasoned like a child. But when I grew up, I embraced God's kingdom of love and put the childish ways behind me.¹²Our minds are so darkened by selfishness that we see God's kingdom poorly, like a reflection in a cloudy mirror; but when he returns, we shall see perfectly—face to face! Right now I know only part of God's reality; then—I will have all questions answered and fully know the truth, just as God fully knows me.

¹³So these three endure: trust, hope and love; but the greatest of these is love.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “It is not we...” Do we agree that we do not earn the gifts of the Spirit? Yes, we agree the gifts of the Spirit are not earned. What does it mean to earn something? It means that what is earned is compensation, reward, pay, something *owed* us because of our work and we do NOT earn the gifts of the Spirit.

However, does our *maturity* have anything to do with receiving the gifts of the Spirit?

And does our maturity have anything to do with our choices—our works?

Will parents give the gift a new car to a 12-year-old child? Why not? Consider all the gifts we withhold from our children, not because we are selfish, but because we determine (judge) that they are not mature enough to handle the gift and would harm themselves (and others) if we gave it to them.

Is this a factor in why we don't receive more gifts of the Holy Spirit?

God has in store love, joy, peace, and glorious triumph for all who serve Him in spirit and in truth. His commandment-keeping people are to stand constantly in readiness for service. They



are to receive increased grace and power, and increased knowledge of the Holy Spirit's working. **But many are not ready to receive the precious gifts of the Spirit which God is waiting to bestow on them. They are not reaching** higher and still higher for power from above that through the gifts bestowed, they may be recognized as God's peculiar people, zealous of good works. {8T 247.3}

So one factor in receiving the gifts of the Spirit is our own heart attitudes and maturity, the choices we make to prepare ourselves to be vessels that will use the gifts in harmony with God's methods.

And, then, there is the question of need—even if we are mature do we receive gifts for which we have no need, for which God has no purpose for us to fulfill?

The second paragraph states, “Paul says that the grace of Christ secured the **right** to give us gifts.”

What does this mean? What are they trying to say? What does it mean *secured the right*? From whom? Who had the right if God didn't have it and had to secure it?

Does the Bible actually teach this idea or is this another example where the human law lens has infected Christian thought and created an idea that is not part of God's kingdom?

Here is what Ephesians 4:7 says:

- But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.—NIV
- Each one of us has received a special gift in proportion to what Christ has given.—GNT
- But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.—KJV
- But Christ gives each one of us just what we need in each circumstance for our good and our development.—The Remedy

Does this saying anything about securing rights of some kind?

No, this idea of securing rights is false and based on the idea that somehow Christ did not have the right—think about that—Christ, who is our Creator, has always had absolutely right to love us, to do whatever He can for our good and healing—in harmony with God's methods and principles. Yes or no?

Read the third paragraph, “Innate ability as such...” How can you tell the difference? And does it make a difference if the ability is innate talent or a special endowment from God?

The following is speaking of the parable of the talents:

The special gifts of the Spirit are not the only talents represented in the parable. It includes all gifts and endowments, whether original or acquired, natural or spiritual. All are to be employed in Christ's service. In becoming His disciples, we surrender ourselves to



Him with all that we are and have. **These gifts He returns to us purified and ennobled, to be used for His glory in blessing our fellow men.** {COL 328.2}

Read last paragraph, “The Holy Spirit is the one...” What are the learning points in this paragraph?

- The Holy Spirit determines who is gifted and with what gift
- It is a false conclusion to think only one specific gift is evidence of the working of the Spirit
- Gifts themselves are not the primary evidence of the working of the Spirit in the life; the fruits of the Spirit are the primary evidence!
- Gifts are only given when necessary for the advancement of God’s cause, but fruits are always the result of the working of the Spirit in the life
- No need to be envious because, rightly understood, we would not want the other person’s life, responsibilities, or gifts!

TUESDAY

The first paragraph makes the point that spiritual gifts are for service and building up of the church and fulfilling God’s purposes. Then in the second paragraph they point out: “It is a tragedy when God’s gifts, which are supposed to foster unity in the church, are misused so that only certain individuals are elevated...This fosters disunity and gives way to divisiveness.”

Do you agree? Would this include elevating EGW? Does anyone elevate EGW above others in the church? What should be elevated—the messenger or the message, the health care provider or the antidote? And in this case the message is the message about God and the antidote is Jesus Christ.

So, we don’t value Paul, or Peter or Apollos or EGW or Tim Jennings, we value Jesus and elevate only Him, the Father and God’s kingdom of love and truth!

What is the underlying root that allows for such elevations and divisions to occur? Thinking through imposed law—if we think through design law all of this fades away.

Imposed law, level four and below, always look for some authority to be in charge, to determine right and wrong, to set rules, to make rulings, to give the answers—parents, umpires, referees, judges, kings! It is the thinking of a child and Paul says we must put away childish things and grow up.

When we realize it is all about healing, restoration, recreation of Christlike character, then we realize those with the gifts have more responsibility to carry the remedy and work for the healing of souls. The gifting is not for elevating or exalting an individual but for equipping them to do more work for God’s kingdom.

But regarding divisions, read Colossians 2:13-17:



When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ **having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us;** he took it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

¹⁶ Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

What was nailed to the cross? Something that was against us and stood opposed to us? What was against us? Something that causes division and causes us to judge each other with regard to eating and drinking and worshipping—what would that be?

Was the written law, ceremonial or moral given to cause division or to reveal the gospel? And is the gospel against us or for us?

What about the Sabbath? Would it be correct to read it this way: “Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration but do judge and cause division over the weekly Sabbath day.”

Is the point about the rituals, commandments, or about doing away with judgmentalism and things that cause division?

Does the Sabbath cause division, or does the judgmental attitude people have cause the division?

And what causes the judgmental attitude? Believing God’s law functions like human law and therefore we look at behavior, we look at rules, we make lists of things to do and then begin inspecting others to insure they are doing the right things.

This is legal religion, consider this quote from *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*:

The effort to earn salvation by one's own works inevitably leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, **they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey. All this turns the mind away from God to self. His love dies out of the heart, and with it perishes love for his fellow men.** [Notice rule keeping, legal religion, turns people away from God and destroys love out of the heart] A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions, will **lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard.** The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, and **causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies.** {MB 123.1}



This is the epitome of divisiveness and is NOT the gospel of Jesus Christ which breaks down dividing walls and brings unity.

When we return to design law, we realize the truth of these things. What was nailed to the cross? What causes division? Was it the law God gave us to lead us back to Him? Did the ceremonial system cause division or was it designed to teach us the gospel?

What was the source of division that was against us and was nailed to the cross? Our carnal nature—our selfishness, our fear, our insecurity, that leads to all the pettiness and division.

So Col 2:13-17 from *The Remedy*:

When your condition was terminal, when selfishness reigned unchecked in your minds, and when your hearts were tied to the destructive cravings and practices of the world, God intervened and brought you the life-giving Remedy—Jesus Christ. He reclaimed you from your terminal condition,¹⁴ nullifying the pathology report that certified you as dead in sin; he made it clear that the written code, with its regulations, was only a diagnostic instrument designed to expose our terminal state and teach us the need for a true cure, and he nailed it to the cross.¹⁵ Through his death, he revealed the truth about God and—in his humanity—eradicated selfishness, thus he completely destroyed Satan’s weapons of lies and selfishness, and triumphed over Satan at the cross.

¹⁶ Therefore, don't worry about the opinions of those who promote certain rituals, foods, drinks, holy days or religious festivals as a means of being healed and being reunited with God.¹⁷ We know these are merely symbols or metaphors designed to teach the truth of God's healing plan; but the actual Remedy is found only in Christ.

WEDNESDAY

Are spiritual gifts available today?

But the gifts of the Spirit are promised to every believer according to his need for the Lord's work. **The promise is just as strong and trustworthy now as in the days of the apostles.** "These signs shall follow them that believe." This is the privilege of God's children, and faith should lay hold on all that it is possible to have as an indorsement of faith. {DA 823.2}

“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.” Joel 2:28

Read last paragraph, “The work of God will be completed...” What do you think of the idea that the gifts of the Spirit will never supersede the Bible?



Why? Is this a false comparison? Is the reason the gifts will never supersede the Bible is that they have different purpose or functions?

What is the purpose of the Bible? A revelation of God to man, a lesson book. Are the gifts a lesson book, or are the gifts enablings to improve our ability to distribute the truths found in the lesson book?

This problem has arisen because some people have falsely believed the gifts are the lesson book, that we can receive messages from the gifts that become the lesson book, either through visions, dreams, tongues, or angel visits. However, any gifts in visions, dreams, tongues or angel visits—if these are from God, will be for the purpose of opening our understanding, giving directions for application etc. of the truths found in the lesson book, the Bible.

In other words, when the Bible is available we should not look to the gifts to tell us what has already been revealed in the Bible. This would be like a patient today praying to God for a sign—a miracle—to let them know whether they should quit smoking or not. God will not provide such a sign to a person in our society, because the truth on that question has been revealed, and if they reject the truth a special sign or miracle won't be given.

This is the central point Jesus was making with the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, if they reject Moses and the prophets, then even if a miracle of a dead man named Lazarus being resurrected won't persuade them, something which Jesus proved true shortly thereafter.

Likewise, if we don't value the Bible as our lesson book, but instead look to signs and wonders to replace the Bible as our lesson book, we will be deceived.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph: "While there are genuine..." How can we tell the difference between true gifts of the Spirit and false gifts?

True gifts always harmonize with God's character and design of love, practicing the methods of truth and liberty.

False spirits will undermine truth, and thus the Scripture, and will ultimately undermine liberty, which leads to rebellion and the destruction of individuality.

The third paragraph states "God gives the church the gift of discernment."

I paused on this because while the gift of distinguishing between spirits and the gift of wisdom are listed in 1 Corinthians 12 as part of the spiritual gifts, Hebrews tells us the mature *develop by practice* the ability to discern the right from the wrong.



So, while God gives the gift of discernment, is there a part we must play, i.e. must we cooperate with God and think, practice, reason, evaluate, weigh evidence?

The gold that Jesus would have us buy of Him is gold tried in the fire; it is the gold of faith and love, that has no defiling substance mingled with it. The white raiment is the righteousness of Christ, the wedding garment which Christ alone can give. **The eyesalve is the true spiritual discernment** that is so wanting among us, for spiritual things must be spiritually discerned (RH April 1, 1890). {7BC 965.1}

The eye is the sensitive conscience, the inner light, of the mind. Upon its correct view of things the spiritual healthfulness of the whole soul and being depends. **The "eyesalve," the Word of God, makes the conscience smart under its application;** for it convicts of sin. But the smarting is necessary that the healing may follow, and the eye be single to the glory of God. The sinner, beholding himself in God's great moral looking glass, sees himself as God views him, and exercises repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.... {7BC 965.5}

The Laodiceans . . . were not entirely blind, else the eyesalve would have done nothing to restore their sight, and enable them to discern the true attributes of Christ. Says Christ, **By renouncing your own self-sufficiency, giving up all things, however dear to you, you may buy the gold, the raiment, and the eyesalve that you may see** (RH Nov. 23, 1897). {7BC 965.6}

Do we get spiritual discernment without our repentance, without our dying to self, without our study of God's word?

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions



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What do we need from you? Easy. Whenever you come across an article, blog, video, audio, or note that talks about a specific topic (like wrath, punishment, sanctuary, temple, mind, character, sin, death, etc., etc.), simply go to About > Contact Us and send us a note telling us where you found the information (page # in a document/note, time index in a video or audio file, the exact web address where you found the material, and the TOPIC the citation is talking about). We'll take those TOPICS and arrange them into categories and build a new menu entry to index all these resources.

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The Holy Spirit and Spirituality 1Q 2017 Lesson 9

The Holy Spirit and the Church

SABBATH

Read memory text: “Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:3-5, NASB).

What does it mean “unity of the Spirit”?

In the second paragraph below the lesson states, “The Spirit-inspired Bible is the foundation for the theological unity of the church.”

What does this mean? Is there a difference in “unity of the Spirit” and “theological unity?”

Is the Bible speaking of unity whereas the lesson is speaking of uniformity?

Are unity and uniformity the same?

What is unity in the Spirit? Is it not unity of character, methods, motives, i.e. we love God and others more than self, we practice the principles of being lovers of truth who present the truth in love and leave others free? Yet, we may have different ideas about some points of theology because we are coming from different backgrounds, different perspectives, different levels of maturity? Can persons be united in the Spirit who:

- Were baptized in different ways?
- Attend church on different days?
- Wear and do not wear jewelry?
- Partake of communion in different ways?
- Who have different number of wives?
 - Consider this scenario, which the SDA church grappled with in the 1980s. SDA missionary converts a man with multiple wives to Christ and the man wants to be baptized, but the church leaders tell him he must get rid of all but one wife. But the man says if he does all the women will be outcasts in society, shunned, and perhaps end up as prostitutes. He doesn’t want to treat them in such a way. Who is acting in love and who is not?
 - What if the man says okay, he will keep number two, but the church leaders say no, he must keep number one. But he says, number one was arranged by his parents when he was three and he never chose her nor loved her. He chose number two, but the church leaders say the law is clear, he must only keep his first wife.



- What does unity of love mean? That the men keep all their wives. It is unity of love, doing that which is in harmony with God's principles, not uniformity, not conformity.

Is division—what breaks down unity in Christ—from believing differently about such practices (baptism, communion, day of worship) or from believing differently about God and His law—i.e. believing God's law is arbitrary and that we are righteous when we get our doctrines to harmonize with Scripture, with proper definitions and practice the right behaviors?

Is unity found in agreement on the right definitions of words and rituals or in coming to unity of heart motive that we all love others more than self and grant others freedom to see it differently?

It is immaturity, functioning at level 4 and below, still operating on imposed law constructs that bring disunity—this leads to religions in which the primary issue is one of proclamations, behavior, ritual, attestations to creeds and belief systems, and not about love in the heart. When we have love in the heart then it is primarily about how we treat others, living in harmony with God and His principles and revealing God in our behavior. In other words, it is about how reality functions, not about arbitrary definitions.

Here is a section out of my new book *The God-Shaped Heart* which will be available August 1, 2017 that demonstrates this point:

It is love and love only that unites, that overcomes rules, that transcends arbitrary laws, that supersedes doctrinal differences. It is love that heals the heart!

January 23, 1943 the SS Dorchester sailed from New York on its way to Greenland transporting over 900 soldiers for the allied war effort in WWII. Aboard were four chaplains: Methodist pastor George L. Fox, Roman Catholic priest John P. Washington, Reform Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, and Reformed

During the early morning hours of February 3, 1943 the Dorchester was torpedoed by the German U-boat U-223. As the men were desperate to escape the sinking ship, the chaplains calmed the men and helped organize the evacuation. When the supply of life jackets ran out before each man had one, the chaplains removed their own life jackets and gave them to others. They helped as many as they could into the lifeboats, and then, as the ship went down, the chaplains linked arms and began to sing hymns and pray for the safety of the men.

One survivor's report:

As I swam away from the ship, I looked back. The flares had lighted everything. The bow came up high and she slid under. The last thing I saw, the Four Chaplains were up there praying for the safety of the men. They had done



everything they could. I did not see them again. They themselves did not have a chance without their life jackets. — Grady Clark, survivor¹

The freezing waters didn't differentiate between Protestant, Jew, or Catholic. When Rabbi Goode offered his life jacket to a desperate soldier, it didn't matter what beliefs that soldier held—design law doesn't make distinctions between people. Doctrine didn't matter, liturgy didn't matter, Bible version didn't matter, denomination didn't matter, method of baptism didn't matter—what mattered? Love! Selfless love, love that gives, love that seeks to help others. It is love that heals, love that unites—love that transforms the heart!

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “The Holy Spirit...” What does it mean to be “effectually” united with Christ?

Is this like the United States of America—different states, different people, making a legal bond of unity? Or is our unity with Christ something much more significant than the legal unity of states?

What is the unity we have with Christ?

What do you think of this from the devotional book *Our High Calling*:

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. John 17:21. {OHC 170.1}

The solemn, earnest prayer of Christ . . . reaches down along the line to our time. What a position is this for fallen man to attain through obedience [how do you hear this word, through what law lens? do you hear conformity, obey or else, or in the Biblical sense hypoacua a humble willingness to listen, trust and following instructions to the best of your ability?]-oneness with God through Jesus Christ! To what heights we are permitted to rise if we will have respect unto the recompense of the reward! **We are to receive power from God that human nature, under the divine working,** may not always be perverted and not always be under the depraving, corrupting influence of sin. **Human nature, through Jesus Christ, becomes allied to angels--yes, even to the great God.** {OHC 170.2}

Those who are truly connected with God **will not be at variance** with one another. . . . **His Spirit ruling in their hearts will create harmony, love, and unity. The opposite of this works in the children of Satan; there is with them a continual contradiction. Strife and envy and jealousy are the ruling elements. The characteristic of the Christian is the meekness of Christ. Benevolence, kindness, mercy, and love originate from Infinite Wisdom, while the opposite is the unholy fruit of a heart that is not in harmony with**

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Chaplains



Jesus Christ. . . .In union there is strength. In division there is weakness and defeat. {OHC 170.3}

The most convincing argument we can give to the world of Christ's mission is to be found in perfect unity. . . .In proportion to our unity with Christ will be our power to save souls. {OHC 170.4}

What is the unity? Is it a unity of thought? A unity of doctrine? A unity of worship practice? Or a unity of heart, love for each other and practicing God's methods?

Read second paragraph, "Through the Spirit, we have access..." What building? Is this the same as the heavenly sanctuary which is to be cleansed before the second coming?

The bottom paragraph states, "In every way possible, without compromising what cannot be compromised, we need to seek for unity in the fellowship of believers."

What cannot be compromised?

- The dress code?
- Sabbath behavior—eating out on Sabbath?
- Day of worship?
- Method of baptism?
- Communion?
- Ordination of women?
- Accepting homosexuals into the church?

What cannot be compromised? God's law—which is what? Do we see it as level four and below or level 5 and above?

God's design law cannot be compromised—because it is impossible to compromise it, we can only violate it which always damages us!

But, rituals, metaphors, religious rules, doctrinal definitions—all of those can be compromised as long as the person doesn't compromise God's design for life—which is love!

Consider the story of the Good Samaritan:

- Who was the one person right with God in the story, the priest, Levite or Samaritan?
- Did the Samaritan ever, as far as we know:
 - sacrifice at temple?
 - keep the Sabbath?
 - eat a kosher diet?
 - get circumcised?
- What did the Samaritan do?



- He had a heart renewed in love and sacrificed self for other!

What were all the other observances supposed to teach? God's design of love and His plan to restore us to love, so keeping the rituals without a change of heart is pointless.

MONDAY

First paragraph states, "It is the Holy Spirit who unites us into one body of believers. The public entrance into Christ's spiritual kingdom is through baptism. We are baptized into a specific church body."

What does this mean? It seems a little confusing as the one sentence says we are baptized into Christ's spiritual kingdom, but the next states into a specific church body. Are they saying we are baptized into the church invisible or into a denomination?

Are denominations a part of God's plan, or are denominations evidence of the infection of sin and the disunity in God's church?

Is it God's plan we baptize into thousands of denominations, or that we baptize into Christ?

I think we all agree that we are baptized into Christ, the church invisible when we are baptized—and some organizations merge this with joining their denomination—but not all. So one can be baptized into Christ without being baptized into a specific denomination.

Read next paragraph, "The act of being buried..." Is it a requirement of eternal life to be baptized my immersion in water? Or is this a public ceremony, which has a purpose different than the actual saving of the person?

If we say that immersion in water is a requirement to salvation, what about all the people who lived before the time of Christ? Is there any evidence Enoch or Elijah were baptized by immersion in water? What about the thief on the cross?

What about those heathens who never have the gospel brought, who as Paul says in Romans 2:12 have never heard the law, but are a law unto themselves showing the law is written on the heart—are they baptized by immersion in water?

So, do we have evidence that people, many millions likely, will be saved without ever having been baptized by immersion in water—or sprinkling with water?

But the Bible says there is one faith and one baptism—what does this mean?



Baptism is the transliteration of the Greek word *baptizmo*, and it simply means to immerse—so is their an immersion with which all who are saved must and do experience? Yes! It is the immersion of the heart and mind into the living water of Jesus Christ through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, where the old motives, fears, selfishness are washed away and we are renewed in heart, mind, character to be like Christ—loving others more than self. This is the true baptism, not the water ritual.

Then what is the purpose of the water ritual? Something other than salvation; salvation is achieved in the true immersion of the heart and mind into Christ. Water baptism is the public *ceremony* to **assist the community** in achieving unity by **accepting into fellowship** those who have been living in sin.

What is the point of a public wedding ceremony? In all cultures of the world one of the important functions of the ceremony is community acknowledgement, acceptance, and support of the new status of the couple.

What is the point of various initiation ceremonies whether in tribes, gangs, fraternities, military units? It is to change the status of the person in the community, in the minds of all in that group, such as a bar mitzvah, graduation, or pinning ceremony.

Likewise, the ceremony of baptism is not for the cleansing of the heart of the one being baptized, that cleansing happened when the person's mind and heart was immersed into the living water by the indwelling Spirit. The purpose of the public ceremony is to assist the community of believer, the church, in accepting the new convert and achieving unity in the group.

And of course, the public ceremony also has a solidifying, validating, impact upon the mind and heart of the one being baptized.

The lesson states in the bottom paragraph, "Baptism is a positive step with which all who wish to be acknowledged as under the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit must comply. In other words, baptism marks true repentance, the crucifixion of the old life, and it signals the new birth or conversion."

What do you hear them saying? Why must they comply? In order to be saved, or in order for them to be accepted by the group? The lesson is saying that in order to "be acknowledged" by the group, the church, and be accepted into community, one has to make a public stand and mark themselves and give the public signal that they have already been converted or reborn.

Can there be false signals? In other words can a person go through the public ceremony to achieve acceptance into the group without ever having their hearts renewed by the Spirit? Yes, but is such a person saved? Why not? Because salvation is not legal, it is an actual healing of the inner person and water baptism doesn't heal, it only publicly testifies to what is supposed to have happened in the heart. But man looks on the outward appearance, God looks on the heart.



TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “The primary means...” Do we ever want to undermine confidence in the Bible? Absolutely not! So be sure that in our view the Bible is God’s inspired word to reveal Himself to us. Yet, having accepted the truth about the Bible and trusting the reliability of the Bible, are there ways that the Bible can be used that cause division rather than bring unity?

How? By interpreting the Bible through level four lenses—a codebook of deeds to be done and sins to be shunned; and refusing to harmonize the Bible with nature and experience. For the Bible itself states explicitly that God’s divine nature is seen in what he has made (Rom 1:20) and that we are to taste and see that the Lord is good.

Jesus expounded the truth of God’s kingdom over and over again, and what was Jesus’ primary method of teaching the truth? It was not by primarily quoting Scripture to the people, even though at times He did quote Scripture. No! The majority of the time Jesus taught from nature and in parables of life experiences to reveal the **functional reality** of God’s design law for life, which is the plan of healing!

Quoting Scripture, divorced from design law, i.e. nature and reality, causes arbitrary rules, confusion and inconsistencies that lead people away from God and His kingdom of love. This is why Jesus criticized the religious teachers in His day for searching the Scriptures thinking they would find eternal life, but in reality they were not finding it because they were searching for the wrong thing. They were not searching for reality, but for rules to obey.

Read bottom paragraph, “The Word of God...” Is having confidence in the Bible the same thing as agreeing with what other people say the Bible means—even if those other people are church leaders?

The last sentence says, “Were we to lessen or weaken our implicit belief in the Bible as God’s Word of truth to us, the unity of the church would be destroyed.”

What does this imply? Does it mean that the key to unity is believing implicitly in the Bible? Is our belief, which means trust, to be in the Bible or in Christ?

Did the Pharisees constantly argue for the supremacy of the Bible? How many Christian groups today argue for the supremacy of the Bible yet argue amongst each other and show very little love?

The problem is not resolved by agreeing to the supremacy of the Bible, for many children, those operating at level four and below, what Hebrews says are infants still on milk and therefore “not acquainted with righteousness” attest to the supremacy of the Bible. The problem is they view it through imposed law lenses and therefore divide people through their rules and interpretations. This is what lawyers do, become thought police and focus on proper definitions rather than mature Christlike character.



WEDNESDAY

Read the memory text at the top and then the first paragraph: “One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Eph 4:5,6

“Unity in the faith and doctrine is...” Do you have any concerns about the paragraph after reading the Bible verse?

Does the Bible say unity of doctrine?

Why does the Bible **not** say this? When Jesus comes, do you believe when He appears in the clouds there will be one person, amongst the saved on earth, who will know every text of the Bible with 100% accuracy? No! Not, one, which means what? We are not saved by the right comprehension of Bible facts, by right definitions of doctrines, but by right relationship with God, who through the Spirit takes what Christ achieved and forms right character within.

When Christ returns will ALL the saved have overcome selfishness in a trust relationship with God? Will ALL the saved love God and others more than self? Will ALL the saved present truth in love and leave others free, i.e. refuse to coerce people?

Our unity is not a unity of doctrines, but a unity of character, of God’s methods and principles, and eventually, as we mature, but I don’t think it will happen this side of eternity, we will one day have unity of understanding, of doctrines.

What is the unity of faith? It is a unity of confidence, or trust in God, in His goodness, trustworthiness, love, to always do what is good for His creation.

Why do you think the Bible did NOT say one doctrine? Because the doctrine is the teachings, the rituals, the interpretations, the expression, and people who love and trust God are at different levels of maturity. In a large family, in which all the children love and trust their parents, is there one doctrine for brushing teeth? Or, is there many doctrines—don’t brush get punished, or don’t get a bedtime story, or kids at school will tease, or teeth will decay? The explanation changes, the reason, the purpose is different depending on the maturity of the person. This is exactly like many Christian doctrines, people explain things differently at different levels of maturity—yet there is still only one reality.

Consider parents and love—in God’s design there is one love—but there is not one doctrine, i.e. one expression of love. Love always seeks what is best and therefore will express itself in many diverse ways depending on the child’s need.



In love a parent will:

- hug, kiss and give presents
- dunk in an ice bath if the child is feverish
- stick needles in their legs and inject vaccines
- put in time out
- refuse to give something the child wants if it is not good for the child
- yell and threaten if the child is running toward oncoming traffic

One cannot write a system of rules to account for every situation, there is unity of love, but not uniformity in parenting, likewise there is unity in faith, but there is not uniformity.

Remember the question of the woman at the well when she sought to have Jesus answer a doctrinal question, where is the right place to worship—and what did Jesus say? That doesn't matter, it is about the heart and mind, worshipping God in spirit and truth!

Read third paragraph, “The theological foundation of this unity...”

What is the purpose of our doctrines? Rightly understood all our doctrines are only valuable as they lead us to understand, comprehend, and participate in God and His design for His universe. This means that all doctrines should be viewed as spokes on a wheel that all have their center in God leading us back to unity, or oneness with God and His kingdom of love.

The problem in most organized religions is that the doctrines become divorced from God and instead become stand alone tests of faith or orthodoxy that are in order to protect the organization not heal people. This type of teaching causes people to build their faith on a system of beliefs and loyalty to an institution rather than having faith and loyalty in God.

Read last paragraph, “We have one Lord...” What was the focus of this paragraph? Character building, healing and transforming the person!

THURSDAY

What is the primary purpose and mission of the church? How would you describe it?

Unselfishness, the principle of God's kingdom, is the principle that Satan hates; its very existence he denies. From the beginning of the great controversy he has endeavored to prove God's principles of action to be selfish, and he deals in the same way with all who serve God. **To disprove Satan's claim is the work of Christ and of all who bear His name.** {Ed 154.3}

It was to give in His own life an illustration of unselfishness that Jesus came in the form of humanity. And all who accept this principle are to be workers together with Him in demonstrating it in practical life. To choose the right because it is right; to stand for truth at



the cost of suffering and sacrifice--"this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord." Isaiah 54:17. {Ed 154.4}

All sin is selfishness. Satan's first sin was a manifestation of selfishness. He sought to grasp power, to exalt self. A species of insanity led him to seek to supersede God. And the temptation that led Adam to sin was Satan's declaration that it was possible for man to attain to something more than he already enjoyed, possible for him to be as God Himself. **The sowing of seeds of selfishness in the human heart was the first result of the entrance of sin into the world.** God desires every one to understand the evil of selfishness, and to co operate with Him in guarding the human family against its terrible, deceptive powers. **The design of the gospel is to confront this evil by means of remedial missionary work, and to destroy its destructive power by establishing enterprises of benevolence.** {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 3}

Is the primary work of the church to get people to adhere to the right creeds, doctrines or fundamental beliefs, to practice the right rituals or worship on the right day? No! The primary purpose is to be conveyers of God's love, His character of love in the setting of the Great Controversy so people can understand reality and be freed from fear and selfishness.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 2-4



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The Holy Spirit and Spirituality 1Q 2017 Lesson 10

The Holy Spirit, the Word, and Prayer

Kent Johnson an online listener emailed this EGW quote this week:

Satan deceives and corrupts the world and makes men believe that they are sinless and holy while sinning against God, [how? what would Satan need to do to get people to actively sin, but to think they are holy with God?] but in so doing he is only carrying on his original work. He has introduced no new arguments, he has created no new empire of darkness from which to draw supplies for the furtherance of his deceptions. [what does this mean? it is the same issue he raised in heaven and deceived 1/3 of the angels—which was?] And sin that was sin in the beginning is sin today; and sin, the apostle declares, is the transgression of God's law. [what law? How could Satan get people to transgress God's law while they think they are holy and sinless?] In these days it is **Satan's determined purpose to intensify sin by making it legal in the children of disobedience. He is to reveal to the world and to heaven what is the order and result of a government carried on according to his ideas of administration and law.** [what is Satan doing? Making sin into a legal problem, a legal issue, thus righteousness becomes about being legally right, so people can keep on living out of harmony with God's design but believe they are holy because they have legal payment or keep the legal rules, like the right day of worship.] He is working with secret yet with intense zeal in both Church and State, to cause men to throw off all the restraints of God's law, and take a decided stand with him in the ranks of rebellion; but when his work is accomplished, the Lord will interpose, and vindicate his honor as the supreme Ruler of the universe. {ST April 28, 1890, par. 8}

Incredible insight here—this is exactly Satan's attack, the legal view, not design law, but imposed law. Thus people do things that are "legal" but actually violations of God's law.

Any examples of legal violations of God's law?

- Jesus healing on Sabbath and Pharisees wanting to stone Him. The Pharisees were keeping the legal religion, thinking they were holy, but in actuality were intensifying their sin
- Eating a vegan diet while holding condemnation in the heart toward those who do not—judging them.
- Claiming legal security in salvation by the legal application of the blood of Jesus and being declared righteous by God, but not experiencing an actual change of heart—having the law written on the heart and mind

SABBATH

Read Memory Text: "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which



cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God. (Rom 8:26,27, NKJV)

With whom does the Spirit intercede? For what purpose is the Spirit interceding?

- What is the function, action, of the Spirit?
- Is the Spirit working to inform and educate God, or inform and educate us?
- Is the Spirit working to convict God or convict us?
- Is the Spirit working to influence God or influence us?
- Is the Spirit our representative to God or Christ's representative to us?
- Is the Spirit to take what Christ achieved and reproduce it in God or to reproduce it in us?
- Is the Spirit a translator who translates our thoughts to the Father so the Father can understand them otherwise the Father would have no idea what we are trying to say? Or is the Spirit working to enlighten us about God and God's purposes for our lives?
- Is the Spirit working to penetrate the dark cloud of misunderstanding in the mind of God, or in our minds?

The point: where is the Spirit interceding—in heaven with God, or in our hearts and minds?

To make the point even more clearly our memory text is Romans 8:26,27, listen to what Paul says just a few verses later—and we are focusing on the question of intercession vs. 31-34:

What, then, shall we say in response to this? **If God is for us**, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—**how will he** not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom **God has chosen**? It is **God who justifies**. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of **God and is also interceding for us**. ¹

What is being said here? Who is interceding for us in Romans 8?

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit! Any idea that one member of the Godhead is interceding with another member of the Godhead is not what the Bible is teaching.

If they are all interceding for us—what are they doing? What is the intercession?

God—Father, Son, Holy Spirit intercede in three places:

- In our hearts and minds interceding with us, against our natural desires, against the carnal nature. Gen 3, “I will put enmity between you and the woman” speaking to the serpent. The fact we have a longing for good and are not totally corrupt in selfishness is evidence of the intercession of God—the working of the Spirit in our hearts.
- God intercedes with the powers of darkness, holding at bay evil forces, limiting them from total destruction of all that is good.

¹ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. (1984). (Ro 8:31–34). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.



- God interceded through Christ with the natural outcome of what Adam's sin would result in—eternal death for the human species. Christ altered the outcome, by becoming sin though he knew no sin so that we might become the righteousness of God!

The Spirit is not working to help God with better insight, better understanding, better organization of His thoughts, better realization of His duty, better desire for good, more love, less anger etc. The Spirit is working in us to help us out of the miasma of sin!

Read first paragraph, "True spirituality and prayer go together..." Do we agree that prayer is essential for developing true spirituality, i.e. experiencing God's healing of our hearts and minds? Absolutely!

Then does that mean that practicing vigorous prayer **means** one has true spirituality? Why or why not?

Can one practice vigorous prayer and be hardened against God or develop a false spirituality?

Were the 450 prophets of Baal, whom Elijah confronted at Mt. Carmel, practicing vigorous prayer? Were they developing true spirituality?

Does it matter to whom one prays?

What do you think of this quotation from the book *The Great Controversy*:

In rejecting the truth, men reject its Author. **In trampling upon the law of God, they deny the authority of the Law-giver.** [what law? would replacing design law with human imposed law be trampling upon the law of God?] **It is as easy to make an idol of false doctrines and theories as to fashion an idol of wood or stone. By misrepresenting the attributes of God, Satan leads men to conceive of Him in a false character.** With many, a philosophical idol is enthroned in the place of Jehovah; while the living God, as He is revealed in **His word, in Christ, and in the works of creation**, is worshiped by but few. Thousands deify nature while they deny the God of nature. **Though in a different form, idolatry exists in the Christian world today** as verily as it existed among ancient Israel in the days of Elijah. **The god of many** professedly wise men, of philosophers, poets, politicians, journalists--the god of polished fashionable circles, of many colleges and universities, even of some theological institutions--**is little better than Baal**, the sun-god of Phoenicia. {GC 583.1}

What if one has vigorous prayer to a god possessing the attributes of Satan? Will such prayer help their spirituality?

Prayer is essential, but what is more essential is that one is praying to the true God and not to a false god concept made in Satan's image, which is what much of the modern world does—including within Christianity.



The last paragraph states, “We should not be basing our spiritual life on our unsteady experience and subjective feelings, nor focusing our prayers on suspect contemplative and meditative practices.”

What are they saying?

Are they saying we should not pray when emotional? Or that we should not allow emotions to be the *answers* to our prayers?

Further, are they suggesting we should not take worldly methods of prayer and use those in place of Biblical methods?

What are Biblical methods of prayer?

First and foremost, Bible prayer starts with an actual knowledge of God, if one doesn't know God one cannot have genuine heart to heart communication with God.

So, the root to it all is coming back to a knowledge of God, which enlightens us to His character, methods and principles. When this happens so many ideas are clarified. For instance, what kind of a God would:

- want repetitive mantras that shut down thinking?
 - Would a God of truth want people to limit their growth in truth? Would it be a god that has no truth?
- want followers to empty their minds and not actually have an interpersonal interaction with Him?
 - Would it be a god that, if we got to know we would not like and not trust?
- require prayer to him in order to influence him to be merciful?
 - Would it be a god that had good and love in their heart, or one who did not?
- have prayer be a form, a ritual, a legal checkbox activity that one is required to do in order to get blessed?
 - Would it be a god concerned about the actual condition of his children, or one more concerned with upholding his rules?

But what kind of God would have prayer function as communication between God and humans to open the human mind and heart to the presence of God, in order to heal, restore, recreate, enlighten and renew the created being back to God's ideal? Why?

How does love function? Can love be forced, coerced, commanded, achieved by edict, directive, hierarchical command? No! Love is only achieved by the free exercise of the individual—thus prayer, actually talking with God, is part of God's design for free beings to freely choose to enter into a relationship with God for their growth.



SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Even though clothed...” What is the motive in each of the examples given?

Could one pray for all those things with healthy motives? What does this tell us? What lessons do we learn? Man looks on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart!

Read third paragraph, “Prayer does not change God...” Yes, I think we all agree that the character of God does not change based on our prayers, and our prayers open us to God which is part of the process of changing us back into unity with Him.

However, even though our prayers don’t change God—does God ever change what He states He wants based on our prayers? In other words, if we pray long enough can we get God to agree to do what we want?

What about:

- The quail in the wilderness?
- Kings to rule over Israel?
- Fighting to conquer the promised land?
- Balaam and his request to curse Israel?

Can we persist so long in prayer asking for things God does not want us to experience that God finally says—okay? Why does God say okay—even help us to what He said He didn’t want us to do? Is it because God wants us to experience it or because we insist and will only learn by suffering the results of going against what God has said and if God is helping us it limits our ability to blame God for the problem—and God wants us to learn?

Consider this quotation:

Men and women, in the face of the most positive commands of God, will follow their own inclination, and then dare to pray over the matter, to prevail upon God to consent to allow them to go contrary to his expressed will. God is not pleased with such prayers. Satan comes to their side, as he did to Eve in Eden, and impresses them, and they have an exercise of mind, and this they relate as a most wonderful experience which the Lord has given them. A true experience will be in perfect harmony with natural and divine law. False experience will array itself against science and the principles of Jehovah. The religious world is covered with a pall of moral darkness. Superstition and bigotry control the minds of men and women, and blind their judgment, so that they do not discern their duty to their fellow-men, and their duty to yield unquestioned obedience to the will of God. {RH, July 27, 1886 par. 5}

Balaam inquired of God if he might curse Israel, because in so doing he had the promise of great reward. God said, Ye shall not go; but he was urged by the messengers, and greater



inducements were presented. Balaam had been shown the will of the Lord in this matter, but he was so eager for the reward that he ventured to ask God the second time. The Lord permitted Balaam to go. Then he had a wonderful experience; but who would wish to be guided by such an experience as that of Balaam? There are those who would understand their duty clearly if their duty was in harmony with their natural inclinations. Circumstances and reason may indicate clearly their duty, but when against their natural inclination, these evidences are frequently set aside. Then these persons will presume to go to God to learn their duty. But God will not be trifled with. He will permit such persons to follow the desires of their own hearts. Psalms 81:11, 12: "But my people would not hearken to my voice; . . . So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust; and they walked in their own counsels." {RH, July 27, 1886 par. 6}

Those who are desirous to follow a course which pleases their fancy, are in danger of being left to follow their own inclinations, supposing them to be the leadings of God's Spirit. Some have their duty indicated by circumstances and facts sufficiently clear, but have, through the solicitations of friends, in harmony with their own inclinations, been swerved from the path of duty, and passed over the clear evidences in the case; and, with apparent conscientiousness, they have prayed long and earnestly for light. They have had earnest feeling in the matter, and they interpret this to be the Spirit of God. But they have been deceived. This course has grieved the Spirit of God. They had light, and in the very reason of things, should have understood their duty; but a few pleasing inducements balance their minds in the wrong direction, and they urge these before the Lord, and press their case, and the Lord allows them to have their own way. They have so strong an inclination to follow their own course that God permits them to do so, and to suffer the results. These imagine they have a wonderful experience. {RH, July 27, 1886 par. 7}

What is transpiring? Why does God allow them to have their own way? Why doesn't God use power to stop them? What would happen if God did? What is the only way for God to save people and have them be the same individuals with their identities still intact?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Asking reveals our..." Does the act of asking God mean we trust Him? Or do many ask who do not trust God?

Did the legion of demons ask Jesus to go into the swine? Did that mean they trusted God?

If God knows everything already, and already knows all of our needs, why do we need to ask? Is there something we need we cannot receive without asking? What and why?

Can we receive a new way of thinking, a new heart, a new mind without asking? Why not? Because to change our hearts require our voluntary participation if we as individuals are to remain. God has the power to overwrite us and instill perfect sinlessness into our brain circuits, but to do so would create



programmed robots and our individuality would be destroyed. The only way for our unique selves to be retained is by our willing, voluntary participation, choosing freely with our wills to agree and accept God and His methods into our hearts, minds, lives and practices. Thus we must ask God to come into our hearts, ask Him to teach us the truth etc.

God can provide many things without our asking—like the sunshine and the rain, which Jesus said is a blessing to the righteous and the wicked, but **God cannot transform the heart without the willing consent and active participation of the sinner.**

Read second paragraph, “We truly can ask God for anything...” What about asking God to kill someone, or help you kill someone?

Did Joshua ask God to hold the sun still, to give more time to kill? Did God do it? hmmm... why? Does God like killing? Why did He do it?

What was God’s plan? God would send the hornet and pestilence ahead of Israel and little by little the people would abandon the land and Israel would over the generations slowly take it over without any fighting and no conflict. If that would have happened we wouldn’t have all the fighting still ongoing today.

Who were the ones that were being killed by Israel? Were they following the Spirit of God? If they were what would have happened? Do we have any examples? Yes, Rahab—she was open to the Spirit of God and what happened? What if the entire city responded like Rahab?

Why didn’t they? Because their hearts were aligned with Satan and what was Satan influencing these humans to do? To oppose the plan of salvation, to destroy the avenue through which the Messiah would come. If you lived during the time of the Black Death, bubonic plague where hundreds of millions were dying, and you and your entire family were infected and dying, and you knew there was a remedy to save all who partook, but someone was actively working to prevent the remedy from being delivered, what would you do?

God had a plan to prevent these evil nations from closing the avenue for the Messiah, the pestilence and hornet however, Israel didn’t trust God to follow His plan. They wanted to use the weapons of the world. They wanted to show their strength, they wanted to take revenge and kill.

So, God said, “If you are going to do this, then I want the least amount of killing, the least amount of suffering, the least amount of people scarred by war, suffering with PTSD.” So, do it in one generation, let only one generation of humans experience war and killing, so wipe them all out, leave no one, and then not only will the least number of humans be killed, but the war will stop and we will not have perpetual generations scarred by war. Also, when possible, those who would join and be united in heart with you, don’t kill them accept them into fellowship.”



What about the idea of claiming every promise of the Bible? What does this mean?

Does it mean that God is like a great vending machine, and the promises are the coin to activate it. What we need is to find the right Bible promise, recite the right quotation, claim the correct promise and then God is obliged to give us what He has promised?

How many approach Bible promises like this? And when they do and they don't get what they are claiming, what happens? They lose faith in God, or feel they are not righteous enough, or their faith is not strong enough etc.

Read last paragraph, "Yet, there are some conditions..." Does the statement "All God's gifts are promised on the condition of obedience" mean the same thing as "if we pray selfishly God will not answer our prayers"?

Is it possible, likely even, that if we pray selfishly God may answer our prayer, but we will **not** be able to receive God's gifts?

Do you see the difference?

- Did Israel pray selfishly when they prayed for quail? Did God answer their prayer? Yes—did they receive God's gift? No, they refused the gift of manna, and because they chose the quail many lost the gift of life.
- Did Israel pray for kings? Did God answer their prayer and choose their first two? Did they receive God's gift? No, they lost the gift of God leading them directly, and further lost their wealth in taxes, their sons in military service and their daughters in harems, and eventually lost their freedom as they were conquered by other nations.

Why does God answer such prayers? What is the alternative? God wants to stay connected, to stay in relationship, because God wants to lead rebellious children back to His ideal. Sometimes when rebellion gets to such a point that God must choose to either cut all ties or goes along with them. Sometimes God has chosen to go along allowing people to experience what He warned them against, but He does not abandon them. He stays close to heal and restore all who learn and turn to Him.

Consider Ester and Mordecai—where did God command the Israelites to be? Back in Israel, to return home and rebuild the temple. But these people did not obey, they stayed in Persia—and did God abandon them?

Now we don't know all the reasons why they didn't return to Jerusalem, only that they didn't. Perhaps they had elderly relatives or friends that were too feeble to make the journey and they stayed to care for them. Regardless, they weren't where God instructed the Israelites to be and God stayed with them and helped them.



TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Asking alone is not enough...” The lesson states, “we have to believe that He will do what is best for us in His time.” If we don’t believe this does that mean God won’t do what is best for us?

Or, does God always do what He determines is best, whether we understand it or not? But does our asking open up avenues for God to work which might not be available if we don’t ask? Why?

What is God working to accomplish? Healing of the hearts and minds of people, our asking opens our minds to His working in ways that are not opened when we don’t ask. Further, our prayers open opportunities for God to act in accordance with the freewill principles of His government without abusing power, without being dictatorial, in interceding in the lives of others.

The lesson asks us to read James 1:6-8:

But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. (NIV)

But when you ask, ask with the sure and confident knowledge that he longs to give you what you ask: do not waver back and forth in fear and uncertainty like a fishing bobber tossed about on ocean waves, for your fear will obstruct your ability to receive what he longs to give you. ⁷ Those consumed by fear will not think they can receive anything from the Lord: ⁸ they are unstable, controlled by emotions, and can't make up their minds about anything. (Remedy)

read third paragraph, “In the Bible...” Faith is trusting and trusting is only safe when trust is placed someone trustworthy—so what is the key to faith or trust? Coming to know God, this is life eternal that they might know you the only true God. John 17:3

What causes us to doubt? Is it not the lies and distortions about God that we believe? The primary one, the root lie of all, is that God’s law functions like imposed human law—this lie is the root to the entire Great Controversy and sadly, it is still being promulgated in the church today!

Did you notice the last portion of the paragraph, where it says “Faith knows that for God nothing is impossible.” But just before it said, “Faith knows that ‘it is impossible for God to lie.’”

Are some things impossible for God? Yes, there are some things impossible for God—like what?

- For God to lie
- For God to be selfish
- For God to fail to love



- For God to be the source of evil
- For God to be the source of death
- For God to be untrustworthy
- For God to save a person against their will
- For God to violate His own character, methods and principles

Do you agree? I have misstated anything here?

WEDNESDAY

read second paragraph, “The third aspect of Bible prayer is reception...” What does it mean to receive it? What are we to receive? Is it more than receiving an idea? What?

The third paragraph states, “As God’s children we are to live on God’s promises, not on His explanations.” thoughts?

What is this suggesting? Is it suggesting that God doesn’t explain things? Is it suggesting that God doesn’t want us to understanding or ask questions? Is it suggesting we don’t think?

What about Isaiah 1:18—come let us reason together...

What about God telling Abraham He was going to destroy Sodom—could this be considered a “promise”? Should Abraham have just said okay?

What did Jesus tell His disciples in John 15:15?

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. NIV

Has God been seeking to explain Himself, His kingdom, His methods, His purposes, His actions to His intelligent creatures for all eternity?

Then why suggest we don’t go on explanations if God is explaining Himself?

Because of imposed law—imposed laws often don’t have reasons, it is obey because the one in charge said so. But design law is how life is built to function and the Designer wants intelligent obedience, which requires we understand.

What do you think of this quotation?

"All whom God has blessed with reasoning powers are to become intellectual Christians. They are not requested to believe without evidence; therefore Jesus has enjoined upon all to



search the Scriptures. Let the ingenious inquirer, and the one who would know for himself what is truth, **exert his mental powers to search out the truth** as it is in Jesus. Any neglect here is at the peril of the soul. We must know individually the prescribed conditions of entering into eternal life. . . . We cannot allow these questions to be settled for us by another's mind, or another's judgment. . . . We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to ministers, to idle traditions, to human authorities, or to pretensions. . . . **The Lord positively demands of every Christian an intelligent knowledge of the Scriptures.**" *Review and Herald*, March 8, 1887 (2RH 117:1:1 - 2:0); *The Medical Missionary*, May 1, 1892

or this quote:

"Teachers should lead students to think, and clearly to understand the truth for themselves. It is not enough for the teacher to explain or for the student to believe; inquiry must be awakened, and **the student must be drawn out to state the truth in his own language, thus making it evident that he sees its force and makes the application.** By painstaking effort the vital truths should thus be impressed upon the mind. This may be a slow process; but it is of more value than rushing over important subjects without due consideration." *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 154 (1900); cf. CT 434; IMCP 365

Does such understanding mean there are explanations being given? And who is the source of all truth and the explainer of all truth?

Now to be sure, God doesn't explain Himself to us in the sense of accountability or seeking permission, like a child explaining their actions to a parent. But God explains to us the truths about His character, nature, kingdom, principles, methods, purposes and how He has built reality to work—in love.

What is the primary limiting factor in God explaining things to us? Our capacity and readiness to comprehend!

THURSDAY

Praying for the Holy Spirit—what does this mean? What does it look like? When the Holy Spirit is received what is the evidence?

Truth and love manifested in a character like Christ!

FRIDAY

Discuss questions 2 and 3



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

We need HELP! With what? Well, after 10 years of ministry, this website has collected a huge number of articles, blogs, videos, podcasts, and notes that need to be categorized and indexed, so YOU can easily find all that's been said on a particular topic. The problem is, we don't have hundreds of eyes and ears on staff to search, read, listen, and find all these nuggets of truth. So, Come And Reason is calling on you, our faithful supporters, to help us with this task.

What do we need from you? Easy. Whenever you come across an article, blog, video, audio, or note that talks about a specific topic (like wrath, punishment, sanctuary, temple, mind, character, sin, death, etc., etc.), simply go to About > Contact Us and send us a note telling us where you found the information (page # in a document/note, time index in a video or audio file, the exact web address where you found the material, and the TOPIC the citation is talking about). We'll take those TOPICS and arrange them into categories and build a new menu entry to index all these resources.

Thank you, all, ahead of time for your participation and help in this rather significant endeavor!

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

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle Is Real at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcs Summit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

AUGUST 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

Love is more than emotion, more than compassion, more than positive regard for another; love is power—the power to live, heal and be free. Love is functional, operational, with specific design parameters built into the fabric of reality. Love is intelligent and as we intelligently choose to harmonize with how love functions we not only experience greater health, fulfillment and wellbeing, we are transformed to become forces for good in the world. In *The God-Shaped Heart* Christian psychiatrist Dr. Tim Jennings explores the healing power of love, exposes a belief system infecting Christianity that obstructs love, and identifies eternal truths that open the heart to God's transforming power of love.

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

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



The Holy Spirit and Spirituality 1Q 2017 Lesson 11

Grieving and Resisting the Spirit

SABBATH

Correction: I want to thank Mary Lou Resendes, an online listener, who helped me uncover an idea that I have held for many years which turns out to be incorrect. I said in Lesson 8 of this quarterly that the gift of tongues at Pentecost was the gift of hearing upon the listeners. But, this was incorrect, the gift instead was from the movement of the Spirit upon the disciples and they were gifted with the ability to speak new languages. This resulted in them breaking into groups and speaking different languages to different groups, which sounded, to those uninformed, like they were drunk. So, Thank You Mary Lou, for clarifying this for me! EGW and the SDA Bible commentary also come to this conclusion.

This is a good example how each of us have beliefs that we have formed throughout are life which may not be entirely accurate. I am constantly seeking to remove ideas which are inaccurate and update my data base with the most accurate understandings!

Read first paragraph, “The Holy Spirit has a unique...” While there is nothing wrong with this paragraph do you have any questions or is this paragraph completely clear? Do you notice any word choices that suggest certain assumptions, or perhaps lend themselves to subtle misunderstanding?

For instance, did you notice “He also awakens in us a desire to accept Jesus and *His* forgiveness of our sins.”? While it is certainly true, is there a subtle difference if it said, “to accept Jesus and God’s forgiveness of our sins?”

Does saying “his forgiveness” fit better with the false legal/penal view that Jesus forgives and persuades the Father?

Yes, Jesus forgives us, but whose mission was Jesus fulfilling? The Father’s, and

- Jesus was an exact representation of the Father
- Jesus said He will not pray the Father for us because the Father loves us Himself
- God was in the Son reconciling us to Himself
- If God is for us who can be against us
- For God so loved the world...
- For unto us a Son is born and His name shall be called, Wonderful, Counselor, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace

Do we believe that God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit all forgive us? And did their forgiveness come before or after Christ died?



If before, then what was the purpose of Christ's death?

- To destroy sin and Satan
- To destroy death
- To destroy Satan's work of effacing the image of God in man by restoring the image of God in man
- All of which fix what sin has done to this creation and secure the unfallen beings in loyalty

What is the "matchless power" of the Holy Spirit, the power that is not matched by any other power?

Is this speaking of physical power—the Holy Spirit is God and therefore has creative power, the power of physical might on an infinite scale and thus His power is unmatched? Is this what the lesson is referring to?

What is the matchless power to accomplish? Character transformation, healing of hearts and minds, removal of sinfulness, selfishness, fear and restoration of purity, holiness, love—can this be accomplished by physical power?

Is it the power of the law? God gave the written law at Sinai and God thundered with power as the law was given, is this the power?

Consider what Paul wrote in Romans 8:1-4:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. ³ **For what the law was powerless** to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, ⁴ **in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.**

What does this mean? How was the law powerless? What did Christ do and how is the Holy Spirit involved?

Here is Romans 8:1-4 from *The Remedy*:

Therefore, those who trust in Christ Jesus are no longer destined to die,² because through Christ Jesus the law of love has cleansed and healed them from the law of selfishness and death.³ The written law was powerless to restore trust, as it could merely diagnose the infection of distrust and selfishness pervading us all. God accomplished this restoration of his character of love in humans by sending his own Son in human flesh to eradicate



selfishness from humanity, reveal the truth about God, expose the lies of Satan, and reveal what happens when the infection of sin is not cured. And so he condemned the infection of selfishness as the destroying element in sinful humanity⁴ in order that the law of love—the principle upon which life is based—might be fully restored in us, who no longer live according to selfish desires, but in harmony with the Spirit of love and truth.

Do you think *The Remedy* captures the meaning of Romans 8:1-4? What then is the matchless power?

It is the combined power of truth and love. Are we comfortable with this conclusion? Is there Scripture to support it?

- Zech 4:6: Not by might nor by power but by my Spirit says the Lord
- The Spirit is the Spirit of what? Truth and Love
- Jesus said what would set us free? Truth John 8:32
- What is the greatest commandment? Love for God and man, all law hangs on these.

How do love and truth function?

- Do love and truth change the laws of health, or gravity, or thermodynamics?
- Do love and truth coerce?
- Do love and truth force their way? –Why not? What happens if someone tries to force another to believe something?
 - Either destruction of individuality—persons believe based on fear of reprisal and thus become afraid to question, afraid to inquire, afraid to disagree, and slowly become empty shadows fearful of punishment so just agree.
 - Or, people rebel and go to war, flee, leave, but the relationship is terminated

Do you remember this quotation:

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and **truth and love are to be the prevailing power.** {DA 759.1}

How are truth and love power? What do they do? Do truth and love require the action, the choice, the willful involvement of the individual to have transforming power upon them?

In other words, for truth to have impact does a person have to think, reason, and choose the internalize and apply the truth? For love to have impact does the person have to respond to it and then share it with others? What happens in the mind, character, heart, soul of a person who



values and pursues truth and experiences and shares love? Does it have transforming power upon them?

Is any sinner on earth the source of either truth or love? No, so our active participation with God, via the Spirit of Truth and Love, is not saying that we save ourselves, but that the only method for God to save us is by our active choice to participate with Him. This is God mechanism, way, method for our healing and if we refuse something quite dreadful happens. Consider this quote:

If we mistake the wisdom of man for the wisdom of God we are led astray by the foolishness of man's wisdom. Here is the great danger of many in ----- **They have not an experience for themselves.** They have not been in the **habit of prayerfully considering for themselves**, with unprejudiced, unbiased judgment, questions and subjects that are new and that are ever liable to arise. *[Notice, they are not exercising their ability to think, to reason, to weigh evidence, like Heb 5:14 says the mature do. This is design law, if you don't use it you lose it, so notice what happens to them]* **They wait to see what others will think.** If these dissent, that is all that is needed to convince them that the subject under consideration is of no account whatever. Although this class is large, it does not change the fact that they are inexperienced and weak-minded through **long yielding to the enemy**, *[Who is the enemy? How have they been yielding? By refusing to think, refusing to evaluate truth. Satan is the father of lies, if we refuse to evaluate truth who are we yielding to?]* and will always be as **sickly as babes, walking by others' light, living on others' experience, feeling as others feel, and acting as others act.** They act as though they had not an individuality. Their identity is submerged in others; **they are merely shadows of those whom they think about right.** *[what is happening to their individuality? Why? Is this inflicted by a powerful potentate? What causes it? What would prevent it? Would it be the exercise of their abilities and embracing truth and love? And what agency of the Godhead is involved in bringing truth and love? Then what agency is resisted if we refuse to process and grow in truth and love? The Holy Spirit, this is grieving of the Holy Spirit.]* **Unless these become sensible of their wavering character and correct it, they will all fail of everlasting life;** *[Why do you think? Will it be because they didn't confess sin? They didn't ask for forgiveness? They didn't claim the blood payment of Jesus? They weren't baptized or didn't partake communion? No! listen why:]* **they will be unable to cope with the perils of the last days. They will possess no stamina to resist the devil, for they do not know that it is he. Someone must be at their side to inform them whether a foe or a friend is approaching. They are not spiritual, therefore spiritual things are not discerned. They are not wise in those things which relate to the kingdom of God.** *[What are they not wise in? Design law, how reality functions, they don't think for themselves, reason things out, but instead look for some authority, some creed, some institution, pastor, theologian, professor to tell them the answer.]* **Neither young nor old are excusable in trusting to another to have an experience for them.** Said the angel: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and



maketh flesh his arm." A noble self-reliance is needed in the Christian experience and warfare. {2T 129.2}

It is critical that we engage our own wills to choose to participate in God by not accepting Jesus as a concept, as a legal payment, as an idea, but accepting the truth that He revealed and choosing to trust Him, to think, to understand, to choose to apply His methods in how we live, to invite Him into our hearts, to love Him, to rejoice in Him, to celebrate God and God's ways. By making such choices we participate in God's kingdom, God's universe, God's methods and unite ourselves with Him and are changed in the process.

Satan, works to replace real experience, with false legal theology in which we claim legal payments but don't practice God's methods. In fact, we are taught not to think, just believe, just take it on faith, which instead of participating in God's methods, cut us off from God and His methods.

Read next paragraph, "At the same time..." How do feeble sinner resist the powerful and mighty Holy Spirit?

What mechanisms does Satan use to get people to resist the Holy Spirit?

- accepting lies—not just the obvious ones that there is no God but the less obvious ones like
 - God is severe and gets angry if we ask questions
 - God's law is imposed and God keeps track of sins
 - God is the source of inflicted punishment
 - Sin is bad deeds that need legal pardon
 - Jesus died to pay penalties so we won't have to

All such constructs divert people away from participating in reality, in God's kingdom and keep them trapped in legal regimens that have a form of godliness but no power!

Read the next paragraph, "Sin is very alluring..." What is the lesson suggesting the devil does to get us to resist the Holy Spirit?

Active sin, choosing to participate in sinful behavior—which is certainly one way to resist the Spirit and one way in which the conscience is seared and we become less sensitive to the movements of the Spirit of God. No doubt about it.

Any other mechanism? How about what we read just above? How about through the false law lens getting religious people to live in fear of punishment from God, and thus they are afraid to ask questions, afraid to think, surrender their individuality to the properly constituted church authority and allow someone or some committee in the church to tell them what they are to think and believe?



Have any of you ever been called in by the pastor and church board and told that you must submit to church authority and stop teaching certain idea?

What would you do if you were so instructed by your church board?

- Did church authority try to silence Jesus?
- Did church authority try to silence the Apostles?
- Did church authority try to silence the Reformers?
- Did SDA church authority try to silence EGW?

Did God in heaven silence Satan to prevent Satan from telling His lies, when God knew with 100% certainty that Satan was lying? Did Jesus use power or authority to silence people on earth who were lying about Him?

If God would not use His divine authority to silence the father of lies, why have church leaders throughout history done so? Because they have been deceived. Whenever you see leaders using such methods you can be certain that they are not practicing God's methods.

We read a paragraph from DA a few minutes ago about the prevailing power is truth and love and God would not use coercive power. Here is the paragraph that follows:

It was God's purpose to place things on an eternal basis of security, and in the councils of heaven **it was decided that time must be given for Satan to develop the principles** which were the foundation of his system of government. He had claimed that these were superior to God's principles. Time was given for the working of Satan's principles, **that they might be seen by the heavenly universe.** {DA 759.2}

- What is being described?
- What method is God using?
- What is the purpose of using this method?
- Why did God want the heavenly universe to see Satan's methods exposed?
- What impact would seeing the truth have?
- What kind of power is God wielding in doing things this way?
- Should we as Christians use power similarly or should we use coercive power?
- Why?

SUNDAY

Second paragraph states, "As powerful as God is, He does not force Himself upon our free will. He respects our choices."



First, what do we call it when a person “forces” themselves upon another? Rape—so if we teach God uses compelling power to force His way, then we are making God into a cosmic rapist.

The lesson is quite right God does not force Himself upon anyone. How is this truth denied in Christianity. In other words, what doctrines are taught in Christianity which put God in the role of using force, coercion, threat, intimidation etc.?

- Any doctrine which has God as the source of inflicted pain, suffering, torture or punishment for sin
- The entire legal accounting system of keeping records that God will review and then God will inflict punishment upon those not claiming the legal payment of Jesus
- The traditional views of hell as a place God created to torture and punish sinners
- God as inflicting sickness upon those who don’t follow Him
- others?

Such teachings incite fear, shut down thinking and either destroy individuality or create rebels!

The lesson states in the third paragraph, “While everyone is responsible for his or her own decisions, we also have a corporate responsibility: we should encourage one another to be faithful, to obey God’s Word, and to stay close to Jesus (Heb 10:24,25).

Heb 10:24,25:

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.²⁵ Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Do we have a different responsibility corporately than we do individually? Or, is our responsibility over what we do in governance of ourselves in relationship to others whether in the church, in the community, or in the family? In other words, are we individually responsible if the corporate church rejects the truth? No, but are we responsible for our conduct in presenting the truth in our circle of influence as effectively as God enables?

Consider Jesus, was He responsible that the corporate church of His day rejected Him? No, He was responsible for how He conducted Himself in His personal life, but also in His interactions with the church. He did not isolate and neglect those in the community of that dark tradition, but was the light of the world constantly seeking to enlighten them to the truth of God’s kingdom.

Likewise, our responsibility is not for how the corporation responds, but for our conduct in interacting with those in the corporate church as the Spirit leads us in our circumstances.

Now the lesson is suggesting that we never stop associating with those in the church—however, did Christ give different counsel?



Here is Christ's instructions for His apostles:

“Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶ Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. ⁷ As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give... ¹⁴ If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, **shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town.** Mt 10:5-14

To whom did Jesus send them? To Israel, which was the church of Christ's day. Did Jesus teach that we should stay where we are rejected and not wanted and where people refuse to listen? No, move on to other groups who are receptive to the truth.

Does this apply to us today?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “The Holy Spirit...” Why does the Holy Spirit hate sin? Is it because God is personally offended that sin breaks His law and shows Him disrespect?

Or, is it because God's laws are design laws and sin deviates from how God built life to operate and damages and destroys His children, those He loves?

Read last paragraph, “Whenever we allow...” What is being described? Is the Spirit being fatigued, worn down, getting personally perturbed, exhausted, tired, irritated, so that if we persist in sin over time the Spirit finally says, “I’ve had enough. I can’t take this any more. I am over these people. You have broken my heart and hurt me too much to continue trying to help you. I am leaving you on your own!”? Is this what happens? No, notice this quotation from EGW:

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. **His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.** {1SM 235.2}

This is design law, how we are constructed. Our choices impact upon us and change us and we slowly destroy the faculties that are sensitive to truth and love, and since truth and love are the powers that the Spirit use, if we destroy those faculties we are no longer able to be reached by the Spirit.



It would be like someone burning out their eyes—they are no longer able to see, to read, so that avenue is closed to them. No amount of visual signals will have any impact upon them.

Neuroscience actually confirms this is true.

Delta Fos B, is a protein that alters gene expression, and its expression alters various brain circuits. This has been well documented in addictions.

In our reward pathways the brain releases dopamine and there are neurons, called medium spiny neurons, that register the rise in dopamine in our Nucleus Accumbens (reward center) and send a signal back to the cell bodies that are producing dopamine in the Ventral Tegmental Area telling them, enough, don't release any more.

In addictions, Delta Fos B, will shut these feedback neurons off, thus causing increased dopamine release in reward pathways, which subsequently cause desensitization of the reward circuits, driving increased cravings for more substance.

This change occurs in both the reward pathway and the motor pathways, which result in persons with addictions both craving more substance, and becoming more physically active in seeking more substance.

In the front part of the brain, the part above the orbit of the eye, called the orbital frontal cortex (OFC), is where we get a conviction of wrongdoing and we redirect ourselves away from unhealthy and inappropriate things.

When the OFC fires it inhibits the activity of the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex DLPFC, where we think, reason, plan, strategies. This means that when we are feeling guilty it is harder to think clearly. Think about why God might have constructed things this way? If you were planning on doing something in violations of God's design law then the OFC fires and it becomes harder to plan and think clearly.

When addictive drugs are administered either by oneself or by a third party via IV, delta fos B expression changes occur in the reward and motor pathways. But delta fos B expression changes only occur in the OFC if the substances are *self-administered*. This means while we can be addicted physically to substances by someone administering it to us, our OFC won't be changed unless we self administer. Our consciences can only be changed by OUR CHOICES!

- Initial cocaine use results in cognitive impairments
- Chronic use is associated with loss of cognitive impairments and OFC volume loss
- Indicates that with purposeful use, genes change, shut down OFC feedback – guilt goes away
- Conscience is being seared!



TUESDAY

The first paragraph states: “That the Holy Spirit can be grieved tells us that God is not indifferent to us and what we do. God is affected by what we decide and how we live.”

When you hear the idea the Spirit is grieved, do you think primarily that the Spirit feels sad, loss, grief emotions—or are you hearing the idea that our connection with the Spirit is slowly eroded and eventually broken?

The primary thought I have had throughout my life is the second. While I believe the Spirit is saddened by our actions, because He loves us, the way I have always understood the grieving of the Spirit is the process of pushing the Spirit away, severing our tie with the Spirit, which occurs because we are destroying the faculties which respond to truth and love.

What of the idea that our actions affect God? Do you agree? How do our actions affect God? Do our actions change God?

Has Satan tried to use the reality that the actions of God’s created beings can affect God to induce a change in God? Didn’t Satan try to get such a change by inducing humans to reject and abuse Jesus, thereby attempting to induce a change in Jesus’ character, actions, choices? And perhaps Satan was even trying to get God to throw in the towel and abandon earth to him?

Praise God, Satan’s attempts failed! God was definitely affected by the choices of Satan and our choices, but God never changed His character, nor His purposes to save, heal and restore His children and universe.

I thought the lesson made an excellent point with this statement: “we delight the Holy Spirit when we speak the truth in love!”

Read last paragraph, “It is interesting...” What does unity of the Spirit look like?

Does it look like everyone believing the same things? Or everyone loving others more than self and respecting the individuality of others?

Does it mean we can be united while we believe certain things differently? There is a difference between the unity of level four and below and level five and above.

Unity at level four is the unity of conformity—the unity of agreed definition to words, doctrinal statements, rituals practiced, creeds, fundamental beliefs, dress codes, diet etc. It is saying we are united in our similar practice of baptism, communion, day of worship, belief in the specialness of



our organization. It is the unity of all human clubs, gangs, union, league, sorority, fraternity—they have a code of conduct, when you join you agree to their code.

But the unity of level five and above, is a unity of heart, a unity of love, a unity of friendship, a unity of principle, a unity on how life operates. It is a unity of the Spirit, therefore we realize that true baptism is the immersion of the heart and mind into the truth and love of God via the Holy Spirit, not a certain ritual done in a certain way. We unite with all those who have been united in character to be like Jesus—have the law written on their heart and mine—regardless of their method of ritual baptism. We allow people to have different explanations for things, but work to help them learn to know God in His true character as revealed by Jesus, and to ever grow in their understanding and practice of God’s design protocols for life—His law.

This is the unity of love! We never condone actions which deviate from God’s design because such actions are destructive, but we love those who are deviating and we seek to bring them back to harmony with God and His design.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson focuses on quenching the Holy Spirit, what do you understand this to be? Is this different from grieving the Spirit?

Would grieving the Spirit be the action of personally burning out the faculties that respond to the Spirit, as we have already discussed, and the quenching of the Spirit be obstructing the work of the Spirit in the larger community and in the lives of others?

The first paragraph states, “We should remember that the Holy Spirit does two significant things for us: He gives us knowledge of sin, and He gives us power to overcome sin.”

As I read this I immediately thought of the Spirit of truth and love. The knowledge of sin comes from the truth and the power to overcome is when the truth is combined with love. Do you agree?

Then if the power of the Spirit is truth and love, how would that power be quenched?

What quenches truth? The belief in lies, so teachings that misrepresent God would quench truth—all the penal substitutionary legal imposed law constructs are part of the lies that are quenching the Spirit of truth.

And what quenches love? Selfishness, discord, arguments, resentment, bitterness, fear. Believing lies, promoting lies, writing books, papers, and going on record with a false view of God, then one becomes fearful for one’s reputation and is afraid of truth which exposes the error less one be embarrassed and their reputation, position, tenure be threatened, so one quenches the Spirit of



truth and love by clinging to false theories and then using methods of power over to silence critics.

Last paragraph states, “Many who profess to believe that the Bible is the Word of God interpret it in ways that all but denude the Scriptures of any real authority, robbing them of any real power in their lives.”

How does this happen? Is it by denying the inspiration of Scripture? It could be, but could people who profess they believe in Scripture still do this? How? By having a false filter they read Scripture through. By failing to read through God’s character of love and His design law for the universe and instead placing Satan’s imposed law construct over their minds and reading Scripture through that lens!

THURSDAY

What is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and why can it not be forgiven? Which law lens are you answering this through?

If level 4 and below, imposed law, then blasphemy is speaking wrong words, teaching wrong ideas about the Spirit, not claiming the legal payment of Jesus or denying the Trinity.

But, design law understands reality is that humans are infected with a condition which is terminal, Jesus came and procured the Remedy to our terminal condition and the Spirit is the One who administers it, thus to reject the Spirit is to reject the only means to apply to our lives the remedy to our condition.

If a person finds the Spirit of truth and love reprehensible—such that they think honesty, fidelity, and truthfulness are weak and despicable, and love for others is cheap sentiment, and they reject such principles and motives—yet claim belief in God and the blood payment of Jesus, what happens in them?

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is not merely saying that one doesn’t believe in the Trinity or in the Holy Spirit; it is the functional rejection of the presence of the Holy Spirit who brings the perfection that Jesus wrought into our internal worlds (hearts and minds)—the perfection of truth, honesty, integrity, love, fidelity, and so on. Rejecting this and choosing evil is the true blasphemy of the Spirit, and there is no healing for this.

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “The mere fact...” What do you think about what they say a person should do? Read and discuss questions 1, 3, 4



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

We need HELP! With what?

Whenever you come across an article, blog, video, audio, or note on our website that talks about a specific topic (like wrath, punishment, sanctuary, temple, mind, character, sin, death, etc., etc.), simply go to About > Contact Us and send us a note telling us where you found the information (page # in a document/note, time index in a video or audio file, the exact web address where you found the material, and the TOPIC the citation is talking about). We'll take those TOPICS and arrange them into categories and build a new menu entry to index all these resources.

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

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle Is Real at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcsummit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

AUGUST 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

Love is more than emotion, more than compassion, more than positive regard for another; love is power—the power to live, heal and be free. Love is functional, operational, with specific design parameters built into the fabric of reality. Love is intelligent and as we intelligently choose to harmonize with how love functions we not only experience greater health, fulfillment and wellbeing, we are transformed to become forces for good in the world. In *The God-Shaped Heart* Christian psychiatrist Dr. Tim Jennings explores the healing power of love, exposes a belief system infecting Christianity that obstructs love, and identifies eternal truths that open the heart to God's transforming power of love.

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

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



The Holy Spirit and Spirituality 1Q 2017 Lesson 12

The Work of the Holy Spirit

This week I received an email from an online listener, Dr. Robert Reiswig, with the following quote from one of the founders of the SDA church on what unity actually is, from MS 24, 1892:

We cannot then take a position that the unity of the church consists of viewing every text of scripture in the very same light.... When as individual members of the church, you can love God supremely and your neighbor as yourself, there will be no need of labored efforts to be in unity, for there will be a oneness in Christ as a natural result.

Isn't that brilliant?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Jesus has called..." Isn't this a great paragraph—the Holy Spirit is NOT the accuser...who is?

What is the difference of being an accuser and convicting of sin?

- Motive and purpose—the accuser wants to get the sinner in trouble, wants to prove they are deserving of punishment, not worth the effort to save etc.
- And the accusations if brought to the person are done so to manipulate the them in some way with guilt or fear, or if brought to others to hurt the person's reputation, standing, or status—to get them in legal or some other trouble.
- But conviction is brought to the heart and mind of the one who is in the wrong for the purpose of converting, healing, restoring, healing, and saving that person!

Great distinction, which would you find helpful—an accuser or conviction of heart?

Read second paragraph, "Only a comforter..."

Why do people do this? Why do people become accusers of others? Are there certain beliefs, certain doctrines, certain ways of thinking that lead people to become accusers?

Remember people operating at level four and below are consumed with self, with rules, and with fairness and thus they become, like children consumed with the rules and watching for breaks in the rules, often becoming tattletales. But level five and above focus on the good of the person, on what is needed and thus will ignore the rules if it is better to do so for the welfare of the person.



Does the fact that we are not to be accusers of other people mean that we never speak to anyone about sin when we see them in sin?

What are the times and places we do speak to people about their sin?

- When we have some loving relational responsibility to them
 - a parent and child
 - siblings
 - a friend
 - a doctor to their patient
 - a church member with concern for the welfare of others in the church?
 - I have seen the great sacrifice which Jesus made to redeem man. He did not consider His own life too dear to sacrifice. Said Jesus: "Love one another, as I have loved you." **Do you feel, when a brother errs, that you could give your life to save him? If you feel thus, you can approach him and affect his heart;** you are just the one to visit that brother. But **it is a lamentable fact that many who profess to be brethren, are not willing to sacrifice any of their opinions or their judgment to save a brother.** There is but little love for one another. A selfish spirit is manifested. {1T 166.2}

Read third paragraph, "We are His witnesses, not His prosecutors..." What is the difference between a witness and a prosecutor?

What does the prosecutor try and do?

What do witnesses do? And what are we to be witnesses about and on whose behalf? We are not, in the church, to be witnesses of other's sins, but witnesses of God's character and kingdom of love and God's plan to heal and save.

What is the difference between the witness of someone at level four and below and level five and above?

1. **Reward and Punishment:** Obey or God will punish! God is offended and angry if we do not obey and only Jesus' life would satisfy His offended holiness and wrath. So you better claim the blood of Jesus or God will punish.
2. **Marketplace Exchange:** God rewards those who obey and if you do the right rituals, worship on the right day, pray the right prayer for 30 days then God will reward you with health and wealth, but if you don't you won't get your reward. And if you do sin God will make you poor and sick.
3. **Social Conformity:** God is fair and will only punish exactly what people deserve, you can trust God to get it right.
4. **Law and Order:** God's law was broken and the law requires the death of any law breaker. God killed His Son to uphold the integrity of the law and all who accept the legal payment of



His Son God won't have to execute. But if you refuse the payment. God will not only execute you but torture you as much as your sins deserve before He kills you.

5. **Love for Other:** God loved us too much to let us go so He sent Jesus to prove His trustworthiness and win us back to a love relationship with Himself. But if we refuse, God won't inflict punishment, He will let us go, but when the lifegiver lets go we die and He will be sad.
6. **Principled Based Living:** God does love us and sent His Son to win us to trust, but to also fix the terminal condition Adam infected this species with. All who trust God will not only be reconciled in heart, but transformed and conformed back to God's original design and live in harmony with God and His protocols for life. All who refuse die a terrible death as a result of unremedied sin in their lives.
7. **Friend of God:** Knows that God not only loves us and provides remedy through Christ but His work has secured the entire universe into security so no rebellion will ever arise again.

Consider this quote from the book *The Great Controversy*:

We cannot know how much we owe to Christ for the peace and protection which we enjoy. **It is the restraining power of God** that prevents mankind from passing fully under **the control of Satan**. The disobedient and unthankful have great reason for gratitude for God's mercy and long-suffering **in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one**. But **when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but he leaves the rejecters of his mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown**. Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, **is a seed sown, which yields its unfailing harvest**. The **Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan**. (p. 36)

What is being described? Which level of moral development? Is this imposed law of design law?

Read fifth paragraph, "The idea here is not that the Spirit will list specific erroneous acts. Instead, He goes to the most fundamental sin of all: unbelief in Jesus Christ (John 16:9)..."

What do you think of this idea that the most fundamental is not believing in Jesus? John 16:9 states "in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me" what does this mean?

Is the most fundamental sin not believing in Jesus? Did the angels who rebelled in heaven fail because they didn't believe in Jesus?

Did Adam and Eve sin because they didn't believe in Jesus?



Or was it not that they didn't believe in Jesus, but they didn't believe the truth about God and Jesus?

Hmmm.... what did the angels get tempted with and what did Adam and Eve get tempted with? Did they get tempted with the idea that Jesus didn't exist, or that God and Jesus couldn't be trusted?

And is this what it means not to believe in Jesus, to not trust Him? And to trust Jesus does one have to call Him Jesus? What if one calls Him Joshua or Immanuel or El-Shaddai, or Elohim—what if someone doesn't have a name for Jesus but believes in the Great Spirit, or a supreme being **who is like Jesus in character** and prays to Him and trusts Him?

James wrote: "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder." James 2:19

Does the belief of demons in the one God save them? Why not?

Jesus said,

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" MT 7:21-23

To whom are these people praying and state their belief in? Jesus, yet they are not saved, why? Because they conceive of God and Jesus in a different character that Jesus revealed; they don't know Jesus and thus while they might use the name "Jesus" they are not actually followers of Jesus.

So, is the most fundamental sin not believing in Jesus—if it means broken trust in God and not knowing Jesus then yes. But if it means some legal claim of belief in the moniker "Jesus" then no, it doesn't mean that. And it doesn't even mean believing that Jesus is God's Son, the devils believe that.

To believe in Jesus means to know Him, love Him and His methods of love, truth and freedom, and trust Him with your entire being.

Read the last paragraph, "The fundamental problem of all sin is that we do not believe in Jesus."

True or false? It depends on what one means by these words. I find these words very unhelpful as they lead to a false religion and false understanding.

The devils believe in Jesus, but they don't trust in Him. In our modern world it is trust that most closely conveys the Bible meaning of belief. Belief can mean believing the facts of Jesus, but one can believe that Jesus exists and is God's Son but believe such wrong things about His character and



methods that they still don't trust Him. Such are the ones who Jesus condemns as being workers of iniquity.

Further, this seems to fail to understand the problem with sin, what Jesus accomplished to save us and the role of the Holy Spirit in our salvation. Most likely because they see this through false legal lenses.

So, let's ask some basic questions:

- Can any human being be saved without the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ? –No! Impossible, why? Because the truth of God would not be seen AND there would be no remedy for the terminal condition of sinfulness.
- So what was Jesus' role? The member of the Godhead who partook of humanity to reveal perfectly the truth, expose the lies and restore God's law of love back into the species thus destroying the infection and healing the condition—procuring the remedy.
- What is the role of the Holy Spirit in our salvation? To reveal truth, convict us of our terminal condition, convict us of our duty, and when we open the heart, to apply in our hearts/minds what Jesus accomplished.
- Can a person be saved without the work of the Holy Spirit? No!
- Can a person claim a legal acceptance of Jesus' blood payment but never let the Holy Spirit into their hearts to renew them? Are such people saved?
- Can a person be enlightened to the truth of God's methods of love, truth, liberty without ever hearing about the historical Jesus and open their heart to the Spirit and experience the Spirit take what Christ achieved and renew them to be like Christ in character? Are such person's saved? See Rom 2:12-14, Heb 8:10
 - “Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. **Through the influence of the divine Spirit** they have been a blessing to those about them. **Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears,** they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. **Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish.** Though ignorant of the written law of God, **they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God.**” {DA 638.2}

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “Unconverted people...” Are unconverted people found only outside the Christian church? Or are there many unconverted people on the active membership list?

Why will obedience to the law never justify someone before God?



What does it mean to be justified before God?

When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus what did He tell him? That “unless a man is justified...” Is being born again different than justification?

What is necessary to be saved? What is the problem that causes someone to be lost that Jesus resolves via His life, death and resurrection?

Do we view it through level four and below, legal ideas, or level five and above design protocols for life?

If we have a legal religion in which legal requirements must be met, including paying a death penalty, then are we being saved by obedience to the law—just someone else’s obedience?

What did Christ achieve that saves us?

Read the fourth paragraph, “But the righteousness of Jesus is sufficient for us. It meets the claims of the law of God. It counts with God the Father. And we can claim it for ourselves through faith in Jesus Christ alone.”

What does this mean?

Is it saying that the righteousness of Jesus does something to God, that God counts it in someway and God’s counting of Jesus’ righteousness is what saves us?

What does the law claim?

The incarnation of Christ is a mystery. The union of divinity with humanity is a mystery indeed, hidden with God, "even the mystery which hath been hid from ages." It was kept in eternal silence by Jehovah, and was first revealed in Eden, by the prophecy that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, and that he should bruise his heel. To present to the world this mystery that God kept in silence for eternal ages before the world was created, before man was created, was the part that Christ was to act in the work he entered upon when he came to this earth. And this wonderful mystery, the incarnation of Christ and the atonement that he made, must be declared to every son and daughter of Adam, whether Jew or Gentile. His sufferings perfectly fulfilled the claims of the law of God. [what does this mean? How do we understand it, through what law lens? The law of God claims to be the foundation upon which life is built. It claims there is no other way of operation in which life is eternally secure and sustainable. How did Jesus suffering fulfill this claim? By restoring that love into the human being as the method of operating and demonstrating that love is more powerful than selfishness and His resurrection was its proof.] None of the apostles could have filled the deficiency, had there been any. {ST, March 25, 1897 par. 8}



What does this fulfillment of the law do for us? How does Christ's fulfillment of the law of love save us? Did He reveal something about Himself and the Father that we needed to understand in order to participate in what He accomplished? What?

The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, **coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. - The Desire of Ages, pg. 762

The Lord Jesus loves His people, and when they put their trust in Him, depending wholly upon Him, He strengthens them. **He will live through them,** giving them the inspiration of His sanctifying **Spirit, imparting to the soul a vital transfusion of Himself.** He acts through their faculties and causes them to choose His will and to act out His character. With the apostle Paul they then may say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). - That I May Know Him, pg. 78

This is reality—Christ came to reveal the truth to win us to trust and provide a perfected humanity that we can receive via the Holy Spirit transfusing the perfection of Christ into us, so that it is no longer "I that live but Christ lives in me."

Read fourth paragraph, "The righteousness that is demanded..." First why does the law of God demand righteousness? For the same reason the law of respiration demands we breathe—it is how life is built by God to operate.

What about the idea that Jesus lives to intercede for us? What does this mean?

What does it mean He applies the merits in our behalf? What are His merits?

It depends on the lens through which you view it. Let's contrast the two lenses:

Penal/Imposed Law

Merits = Credits/Points/Payment
Presented to God to earn favor
Offered to earn pardon

Healing/Design Law

Merits = traits of character
Presented to us to earn trust
Offered as remedy to cure hearts



Applied to record books

Reproduced in people

Here is a quotation from a founder of our church. Consider how this is most frequently understood, and how do you understand it or explain it?

The world's Redeemer possessed the power to draw men to Himself, to quiet their fears, to dispel their gloom, to inspire them with hope and courage, to enable them to believe in the **willingness of God to receive them through the merits of the divine Substitute**. As subjects of the love of God **we ever should be grateful that we have a mediator, an advocate, an intercessor in the heavenly courts, who pleads in our behalf before the Father.** {LHU 320.2}

What do you hear being described? What law lens? Does God need someone to plead to Him to persuade Him, to legally permit Him, to remind Him, to convince Him? Is there something wrong with God that needs fixing?

Does this quote from the same person give additional insight to what might have been meant?

While Jesus, our Intercessor, pleads for us in heaven, the Holy Spirit works in us, to will and to do of His good pleasure. All heaven is interested in the salvation of the soul. Then what reason have we to doubt that the Lord will not and does not help us? . . . {2MR 37.1}

Does “all heaven” include the Father?

When Jesus left what did He say about the Comforter?

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears... Jn 16:13

To whom is the Holy Spirit listening? To Christ and to whom is Christ pleading? To us, and who is communicating what Christ is pleading? The HS, and to whom is this happening before? God, because whose plan is being carried out? God's plan, thus God is overseeing, supervising, directing the, agreeing, counseling, conferring, confirming the work of the Son and Spirit, “God was in the Son reconciling the world unto Himself.”

- We are the ones who doubt God's goodness.
- We are the ones burdened by guilt and shame and lies to think we are too far gone, too sinful, too wicked, too unholy for God to still love.
- We are the ones who doubt that Christ's love, Christ's righteousness could still be for us.
- We are the ones who are confused, groping in the darkness of this world seeking for the light and Christ from heaven that pleads, through the Holy Spirit, to you and to me, “I love you. Don't give up! Listen to my voice. Follow me. I will never leave you nor for sake you. Trust me, let me into your heart, choose me and I will heal you!”



Consider this quotation, how do you understand it?

Under the new covenant, the conditions by which eternal life may be gained are the same as under the old--perfect obedience. Under the old covenant, there were many offenses of a daring, presumptuous character, for which there was no atonement specified by law. In the new and better covenant, **Christ has fulfilled the law for the transgressors** of law, if they receive Him by faith as a personal Saviour. "As many as received him, to them gave he **power to become** the sons of God." Mercy and forgiveness are the reward of all who come to Christ trusting in His merits to **take away their sins**. In the better covenant **we are cleansed from sin** by the blood of Christ (Letter 276, 1904). {7BC 931.10}

Where does He apply His merits? In the believers to take away their sinfulness and cleanse them from sin—not in record books and not to the Father!

TUESDAY

John 16:8-11 states:

"When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; 10 in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; 11 and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned."

And the lesson asks "What judgment is Jesus referring to?"

The lesson suggests it is not the future judgment, but the fact Satan has already been judged at Calvary.

I think the lesson is partially correct but are missing a much deeper reality.

If the Holy Spirit is convicting of the judgment of Satan, who is being convicted? What functionally then is happening? The Spirit of truth is enlightening the minds of people about God, Jesus and Satan so that people can make accurate judgments about each, thus Satan stands judged *in the minds* of enlightened people. This is the judgment, our ability to make accurate assessments of reality, i.e. judge things rightly is what the Spirit enables us to do.

The last paragraph leads us to understand this point more fully when it states, "Satan knows that he was decisively defeated at the cross. Yet, he stubbornly fights and tries to devour as many as he can."

How does Satan fight? What is his primary weapon? Are there any Bible prophecies which speak of this increased warfare against the saints?



Daniel 7:21,22 gives insight:

As I watched, this horn was **waging war** against the saints and **defeating them, until** the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

The above rendering is from the NIV which many, who assume the legal model, prefer. But does the meaning of the passage change when we read from the King James Version?

Until the Ancient of days came, and **judgment was given** to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Daniel 7:22

Which translation is more accurate?

The Hebrew word translated “pronounced” actually means “to give” or “to impart” and thus the KJV would be more accurate in this context. Why do the saints of God need judgment (another word for discernment) imparted to them?

The Daniel text tells us the horn warred against the saints and was defeating them. What kind of warfare was going on?

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2 Cor 10:3-5

What kind of war? Where is it being fought? This is a war between truth and lies, centering on God’s character, and being fought in our minds!

Amazingly, Paul makes the connection to the cleansing of the Temple even closer and shows how the Temple is connected to this war going on in our minds:

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God. 2Thes 2:1-4

Paul is describing the exact same events as Daniel 7 in which evil powers war against the saints and oppose God. In the aftermath of Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, did this man



of lawlessness ride into heaven overthrow God, set himself up in God's temple in heaven, and proclaim himself to be God? No, where did this happen? In the Spirit Temple! In our minds! Therefore, the cleansing of the temple, as described in the Bible, is the cleansing of our minds from the lies about God, which wins us back to trust and results in our cleansing from sin.

Daniel is told in vision that an evil power would arise that would lie, distort, misrepresent God, and defile the Spirit Temple by getting humans to accept, worship, and teach a false picture of God. According to our understanding of interpreting prophetic time, it would take 2,300 years before enough truth would be recovered for Christ to empower His people on earth with judgment (discernment) to break free from the lies and be cleansed in their minds and characters.

All of this is confirmed for us by the other text describing the same event as Daniel 8:14, Malachi 3:1-3:

Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.

What is getting cleansed during the investigative judgment? The Levites. And who are the Levites? The Priesthood of believers (1Pet 2:5,9).

God is cleansing His people from what?

- 1) the lies about Him which keep us from trusting Him and
- 2) when we are won back to trust, He cleanses us from sin. God writes His law of love into our hearts. He restores His character of righteousness in us.

This is what is happening during the investigative judgment.

How does this happen?

By our investigating the truth about God as revealed in Christ, rejecting the lies, and clinging to the truth and trusting God!

Thus Satan is making war by attacking our understanding of God and His character by infecting our ideas with human imposed laws, such that we falsely interpret the Bible and God's prophecies and create a heavenly legal investigative system going over record books, rather than the truth that the Holy Spirit imparts discernment, judgment to us so we can judge God and His methods correctly.

Fear God and give glory to him for the hour of *his* judgment has come. Rev 14:7



WEDNESDAY

The first paragraph states: “The Holy Spirit is the One who leads sinners to Jesus. Jesus’ substitutionary death has reconciled us to God. Jesus’ forgiveness sets us free to live a new life as God’s adopted children. Now we are no longer God’s enemies (Rom 5:10), but walk according to the Spirit (Rom 8:4) and set our thinking on the things of the Spirit (Rom 8:5).”

Is Jesus our substitute? Absolutely—but for what? How? He is the second Adam, which means what?

When did God and Jesus forgive, before or after Jesus died?

Could God forgive us without the death of Jesus? What do we mean by forgiveness? Was God personally able to extend divine forgiveness without the death of Jesus? Would that have set us free?

The lesson says the forgiveness of Jesus sets us free—but does it?

If the forgiveness of Jesus sets us free, then from what does it set us free? In other words what would be holding us captive that forgiveness frees us from? Guilt? Condemnation? Condemnation of who? Emotional or legal guilt? Will God’s forgiveness free someone from guilt who doesn’t forgiven themselves?

Did Jesus in John 8:32 say something else sets us free? Truth, from what does truth set us free? Lies! Where do lies have their power? Where is the truth applied?

Do we also need freedom from temptation—from where are we tempted? Our own evil desires.

Does the death of Christ do anything to free us from lies and our own evil desire? How?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph “The Holy Spirit is the One who has poured...” What does this mean?

Why is the Holy Spirit so important?

What is the Spirit doing in us?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1, 3, 4.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle Is Real at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcs Summit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

AUGUST 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

Love is more than emotion, more than compassion, more than positive regard for another; love is power—the power to live, heal and be free. Love is functional, operational, with specific design parameters built into the fabric of reality. Love is intelligent and as we intelligently choose to harmonize with how love functions we not only experience greater health, fulfillment and wellbeing, we are transformed to become forces for good in the world. In *The God-Shaped Heart* Christian psychiatrist Dr. Tim Jennings explores the healing power of love, exposes a belief system infecting Christianity that obstructs love, and identifies eternal truths that open the heart to God's transforming power of love.

June 23,24, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar for the Samaritan Counseling Service in Sarasota FL. For more information www.samaritangulfcoast.com
(T) 941-926-2959 (F) 941-929-0849

July 14,15, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Lakeport SDA church, in Lakeport CA.

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

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

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



First and Second Peter Lesson 1 2Q 2017

Introduction to the Study Guide

Read third paragraph, “Besides Peter’s warnings about...” What does it mean that Jesus took our **sins** in His body when He died on the cross?

The lesson references 1Pet 2:24:

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

What does this mean? Our sins in his body? Does this mean a record of our sins, so every theft, murder, adulterous act, lie, evil deed were tattooed to Jesus body? Does it mean that trillions and trillions of bad deeds were physically punished in Jesus body? Do you think it is possible for all the hundreds of trillions of sins of the billions and billions of people to be adequately punished in one human body over the course of less than 24 hours? For those who think so, then why is it—if the sins of all humans could be adequately punished in one person in under 24 hours that it is taught the wicked will suffering many days or eternally to pay for their sins?

The Greek word translated “sins” according to Strong’s Lexicon:

ἁμαρτία [*hamartia* /ham·ar·tee·ah/] n f. From 264; TDNT 1:267; TDNTA 44; GK 281; **174 occurrences; AV translates as “sin” 172 times, “sinful” once, and “offense” once. 1** equivalent to 264. 1a to be without a share in. 1b to miss the mark. 1c to err, be mistaken. 1d to miss or wander from the path of uprightness and honour, to do or go wrong. 1e to wander from the law of God, violate God’s law, sin. **2** that which is done wrong, sin, an offence, a violation of the divine law in thought or in act. **3** collectively, the complex or aggregate of sins committed either by a single person or by many.¹

So we have a choice when translating this word, we can translate it as “sins” or “sin.”

What is the difference between Jesus bearing our “sin” and bearing our “sins”? Sin connotes the condition of sinfulness, whereas sins connotes bad deeds. Why do you think the translators chose “sins”?

Could it be because they have accepted the lie that God’s law functions no differently than human law, rules imposed which require imposed punishment? And this results in seeing sin as acts rather than a state of being? And if we see sins as acts, needing punishment, which is level four and below thinking, then we interpret the cross as God punishing His Son to fulfill the law, pay the penalty and create a

¹ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



legal loophole which we sinners, who in that view deserve punishment can slip through. Thus, subtle legal distortions like this get brought into the translations.

If sin is primarily acts, legal wrongs, breaking imposed law, then what would Jesus say to Nicodemus about what is required to be saved?

“Unless a man have his sins punished and the legal debt paid he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.”

To which Nicodemus would have replied, “How can a man be executed for sin and still enter heaven?”

And Jesus would have said, “By having someone else killed in your place and claiming to be legally accounted as righteous, even though you are still just as wicked.”

And this is the corrupt gospel taught to our students, who then become pastors and professors and keep perpetuating the lie.

But if sin is a state of being out of harmony from that which God constructed life to operate upon, which results in destructive actions, what would Jesus tell Nicodemus? Exactly what He did, “Unless a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.”

The paragraph also said that Jesus’ death brought nothing less than freedom from eternal death caused by sin. This is absolutely true—but why does Jesus’ death free from eternal death? Why does sin result in death and how did Jesus’ death fix the problem so we don’t have to die? In the legal model it is because death is the punishment from God and Jesus took our punishment, so God doesn’t have to punish anyone else. The problem is God, who gets fixed by Jesus’ death.

In the healing reality it is because the sinful condition is one that is out of harmony with how life is built by God to operate and therefore is terminal and Jesus cured the condition. All who trust Him partake of the divine nature and are reborn, renewed, recreated, etc. and are restored into harmony with God’s design for life and will live eternally.

1Peter 2:24 from *The Remedy*:

He took upon himself our sinfulness (our terminal condition) and in his own person carried it upon the cross so that we could be freed from sin and live the right way—loving God and others more than ourselves. You have been healed by the Remedy procured by his painful ordeal.

Read the next paragraph, “Peter says that Jesus not only died...” The lesson says that Jesus will return to usher in the judgment of God, and they reference 2Peter 3:10-12, which states:



But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.

So what are they saying the judgment of God is? They are saying God's judgment is inflicted destruction. They are teaching that God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering, destruction and death and they call it God's judgment.

They note that God will destroy all sin and cleanse the earth with fire, referencing 2Pet 3:7:

By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

What are the lesson authors missing that cause them to describe Peter's writings in such a way as to make God the source of pain, suffering and death?

They are missing the truth of God as Creator and His laws as design laws.

Most people, who view things through how human governments work, imposed laws with imposed penalties, read Peter and think God is inflicting this as a punishment that would not otherwise be received. How do you hear it and is there Biblical evidence to support a different view?

Before we give the evidence to answer those questions, here is a quote from one of the founders of the SDA church regarding God's judgments:

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

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

"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and,



he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of." Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

What is God's judgment at the end of time? Setting people free—this is design law, when the life giver lets go what happens? Only the immature, those still on milk, those who have not understood God's law but instead cling to Satan's false view of God's law teach God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death as a punishment for sin.

Consider Revelation 20:14:

Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.

So death and the grave are thrown into the lake of fire and they are killed/destroyed there. How does one destroy death?

Adolf Hitler gassed and burned millions of people, was Hitler destroying death? Are we saying that God acts like Hitler, yet when God does it, it is not bringing death but bringing life and destroying death?

Can you kill death by killing people? How would one destroy death? What destroys death? Is it not life that destroy death?

Now the Bible says that by Jesus' death he destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light. (2Tim 1:10) How? How was Jesus' death able to destroy death, and how is this related to destroying death at the end of time?

Would it be helpful to understand the basis of life and what is the cause of death?

This is the problem with the legal/penal view. In that view, having accepted the false law construct, the proponents wrongly believe that death is an inflicted punishment to fulfill the requirements of the law. In other words, in that view death isn't the natural outcome of sin, but the legal infliction from God.

What does these quotations say about God's law and the basis of life?

Jesus, the express image of the Father's person, the effulgence of His glory; the **self-denying Redeemer**, throughout His pilgrimage of love on earth, was a living representation of **the character of the law of God**. In His life it is made manifest that **heaven-born love, Christlike principles, underlie the laws of eternal rectitude**. . . . {RC 68.6}

Those principles that were made known to man in Paradise as the **great law of life** will exist unchanged in Paradise restored.--Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pp. 48-51. {RC 68.7}



Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary **it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven**; that the love which "seeketh not her own" **has its source in the heart of God**; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. {DA 19.2}

But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that **it is the glory of our God to give**. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. **In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe**. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the **Father's life flows out to all**; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. **And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete**, representing the character of the great Giver, **the law of life**. {DA 21.2}

What is the basis of life? What is the law upon which God's government operates? What kind of law is this? And if life is built to operate upon this principle, what is the result of choosing to break it? Why?

So what would be needed if someone did break it? A legal payment or restoring to design?

Thus Jesus took our sinful, terminal state upon Himself and fixed it.

What then of the fire in the end and how does this fire destroy death?

Isaiah 33:14,15 The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: "Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?" He who walks righteously and speaks what is right, who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes, who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil...

Where does this love, this principle of giving originate? In God, and flows out from God and it is God's glory, and what does God's glory look like? Fire:

The Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze.

¹⁰ **A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.** Dan 7:9,10



So who lives in the consuming fire? The righteous—how is this? Because the fire is God's life-giving glory!

This is the fire that destroys sin—what is sin made out of? Matter? No, at its root sin is made out of lies and selfishness. What destroys lies? Truth, and what destroys selfishness, love. And what is the basis of life, truth and love. When the Spirit fell at Pentecost, they saw two streams of fire, truth and love.

Are we starting to penetrate the veil of lies, primarily over God's law, that has obscured our understanding of reality and has caused billions to teach God is the source of inflicted suffering and death, when in reality God is the source of life and death only results from deviating from God and His design laws upon which life is constructed?

What about the suffering of the wicked in the end in the eternal fire? What causes greater suffering, physical or mental anguish? For Jesus what was His greatest suffering crucifixion weekend? What about the wicked in the end?

What happens to those solidified in lies and selfishness when they are bathed in infinite truth and love?

So consider this historical description written in the Signs of the Time April 14, 1898:

"We read of chains of darkness for the transgressor of God's law. We read of the worm that dieth not, and of the fire that is not quenched. Thus is **REPRESENTED** the experience of every one who has permitted himself to be grafted into the stock of Satan, who has cherished sinful attributes. When it is too late, **HE WILL SEE** that sin is the transgression of God's law. **HE WILL REALIZE** that because of transgression, his soul is cut off from God, and that God's wrath abides on him. **THIS is a fire unquenchable**, and **BY IT** every unrepentant sinner will be destroyed. Satan strives constantly to lead men into sin, and he who is willing to be led, who refuses to forsake his sins, and despises forgiveness and grace, will suffer the result of his course" (ST, April 14, 1898 par. 13).

What is being described? What is the fire according to this author? The fires of truth and love, which penetrate the lies and distortion and the suffering is the suffering that reality, that their own condition brings upon them when they can no longer hide from the truth of what they have done to themselves! It is not a physical fire, it is the fire of God's life giving glory! Sin kills, God is the source of life!

Here is another quote, what do you think?

This case [Pharaoh] is placed on record for our benefit. Just what took place in Pharaoh's heart will take place in every soul that neglects to cherish the light and walk promptly in its rays. **God destroys no one. The sinner destroys himself by his own impenitence.** When a person once neglects to heed the invitations, reproofs, and warnings of the Spirit of God, his



conscience becomes seared, and the next time he is admonished, it will be more difficult to yield obedience than before. And thus with every repetition. Conscience is the voice of God, heard amid the conflict of human passions; when it is resisted, the Spirit of God is grieved. – {5T 120.1}

What is being described, an infliction, or a natural result? What kind of law is at work? Design law!

We want all to understand how the soul is destroyed. **It is not that God sends out a decree that man shall not be saved.** He does not throw a darkness before the eyes which cannot be penetrated. But man at first resists a motion of the Spirit of God, and, having once resisted, it is less difficult to do so the second time, less the third, and far less the fourth. Then comes the harvest to be reaped from the seed of unbelief and resistance. Oh what a harvest of sinful indulgences is preparing for the sickle! – {5T 120.2}

Again, what kind of law is described?

Then what about where Peter says the elements will melt in the fervent heat? Isn't this a fire of combustion?

Absolutely! The question is when does the fire of combustion occur—while the wicked are still alive, or after the fires of love and truth have occurred and after they are already dead and the fires of combustion are the fires which recreate the physical matter back to its sinless perfection?

In the OT sacrificial system—when did they ever burn animals alive? Never, only after the animals were dead did the bodies get burned. Yes, there will be a physical fire, but only after all the wicked have died. And what is the cause of the death of the wicked? Their own voluntary choice surrender their lives. When they come into the full unveiled glory of God and can no longer hide from truth and love, they find the reality of their condition so awful that they choose to surrender their lives rather than live in God's presence. As Scripture says, "They called to the mountains and the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne...'" Rev 6:16

Or as EGW puts it:

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. **He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love.** He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And **all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes.** {GC 541.3}

The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God. Christ declared that He taught nothing except that which He had received from His Father. The principles of the divine government are in



perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, "Love your enemies." **God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited. He would make them happy if He could do so in accordance with the laws of His government and the justice of His character.** He surrounds them with the tokens of His love, He grants them a knowledge of His law, and follows them with the offers of His mercy; but they despise His love, make void His law, and reject His mercy. While constantly receiving His gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that He abhors their sins. The Lord bears long with their perversity; but the decisive hour will come at last, when their destiny is to be decided. **Will He then chain these rebels to His side? Will He force them to do His will?** {GC 541.4}

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power are not prepared to enter the presence of God. Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become **fixed in their characters.** Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish. What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? {GC 542.1}

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,-- every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,--could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? **Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no;** years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; **but they have never trained the mind to love purity;** they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction,** that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. **Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves,** and just and merciful on the part of God. {GC 542.2}

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that the wicked are incurable.

This is design law, this is reality, this is not an infliction by God, but something God has been using His power to delay, hold at bay, prevent, cure and heal. But those who refuse healing, who have solidified themselves in such a state God will not use His power to keep them alive in a tormented and tortured situation. He respects their freewill choice to pass from existence, and they voluntarily die.



As we study the book of Peter, let us be diligent to view what Peter wrote through the lens of God's design law, and reject the false human impose law concept which puts God in the role of cosmic executioner and source of pain and death.

The Person of Peter

SABBATH

When you think of Peter what comes to mind? Do you find that Peter is a person who encourages you? What in Peter's life do you find encouraging?

Did you notice Peter seems to be impulsive?

- He blurts out answers—some good “you are the Christ” some not so good, “Far be it from you to go and die”
- He jumps out of the boat and swims to shore
- He says things that make no sense, “lets build some tents for you and Moses and Elijah”
- He asks Jesus if he can walk on water with Him
- He denies knowing Jesus
- He runs to the tomb
- He pulls back from associating with uncircumcised

Peter had a heart that wanted to do good, but often allowed the impulse of the moment to lead to actions without first thinking it through, considering, and reasoning it out—and with a heart unconverted many of his actions were not helpful. He even occasionally struggled with this same issue after conversion—remember when Paul had to confront him?

What was the root impulse, with which Peter struggled, that caused him to come up short? Where is it most effectively exposed for us to see?

In the upper room, Jesus tells the disciples that they would all run away and what does Peter say? “Not me!” Was Peter lying? In other words, was Peter planning on running away, but telling Jesus he wouldn't? Or did Peter mean what he said and was speaking his honest intentions?

So, Peter was not lying, he honestly intended to not run... so then, could Jesus trust him? What did Jesus tell him? Before the rooster crows you will deny me 3 times.

What is going on here?

Did Peter love Jesus? Yes...**but he still loved himself more!** This is the problem, when there was no pressure on self he declared his love and loyalty to Jesus. But when his own life was threatened, having not died to self, he denied Jesus to protect self. So Jesus said to him in the upper room:



Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat: ³² But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. Lk 22:31,32 KJV

What is the lesson here?

Prior to that night, had Peter gone on missionary journeys for Christ? Had Peter been used to perform miracles? Had Peter professed Jesus as Lord and Savior? Yet, he was still unconverted—because what is conversion? It is not a vocal acknowledgement of Jesus; it is not a legal adjustment for those who have claimed the blood. Conversion is an actual change of heart, where we surrender our survival drive and our lives into Jesus' hands, we die to self and are willing to give our lives for others. We love God and others more than the need to protect ourselves. And this is only possible because of what Jesus accomplished as a human 2000 years ago.

Peter represents beautifully the life of us all, the struggle of us all and the possibility for us all, to, despite coming up short, experience genuine change of heart and reconciliation with God.

Do you notice the contrast with Judas—what is the difference between Peter and Judas? Peter surrendered self and Judas did not. Why? Peter really did love Jesus and valued Jesus' character and methods of truth and love. Judas found Jesus' methods weak and detestable and didn't want to be like Jesus. but wanted to use Jesus for his own agenda.

The last paragraph states “Most important, Peter knew what it was to make mistakes, to be forgiven, and to move forward in faith and humility.”

What do you understand this to mean?

What was the forgiveness Peter so desperately needed? Was it a legal pardon in the courts of heaven? Or was Peter distraught because he had betrayed someone important to him, and **Peter was afraid** that Jesus' might reject him, might hold his betrayal against him, might not want Peter on the team any more? **So Peter needed to know** that Jesus personally forgave him. It was not a legal forgiveness Peter needed, but a personal, relational forgiveness that Peter needed.

Why? Because one of the natural results of sin is internal fear, condemnation and shame—this is what sin does. And this causes us to falsely believe that others, if they knew of our sins, would not be able to like us, value us, cherish us, or want to be associated with us. That others would hold our wrongs against us—much more so when the wrong was a betrayal of trust. So, part of the healing and restoration to righteousness is to experience God's forgiveness. And this forgiveness is freely extended from God to all sinners.



What happens if someone doesn't get "forgiven"? What is the problem for a person who doesn't experience forgiveness? What happens in the heart, mind and character of the sinner who remains in a state of unforgiveness?

Think about those who crucified Christ—did Jesus forgive them? Yes, did they receive it? No, and what happened to them? Did they have more or less fear? Did they have more or less peace, more or less compassion, more or less love and joy?

Unremedied sin in the life destroys the character and incites fear and increased selfishness.

Forgiveness is not a legal issue, but a relational issue!

SUNDAY

The last paragraph states "Whatever his faults, and they are many, Peter was a spiritual man who was ready to follow the Lord, regardless of the cost."

What does this mean? What does it mean to be spiritual?

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: 1Cor 2:14,15

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; ⁷ the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. Rom 8:6-8

What does this mean? Why is the mind of the sinful man death and the mind controlled by the Spirit life? What is the basis of life? God's law of love, which we partake from the Spirit.

But the sinful man doesn't submit to God's law, what does this mean?

So what does it mean to be spiritual? It means to be reborn from a life of fear and selfishness to a life of trust and love, in which one practices the principles of truth, love and liberty—the methods of God as enabled by the Spirit.

Do we see that Peter became such a person? Yes!

Was Peter right on every point of doctrine? No! Paul had to correct him, yet he was still a spiritual man—how do we know? Because he responded to truth, he accepted correction when the correction was in harmony with the truth and Peter was not. In other words, Peter after conversion did not



suddenly become omniscient and know all realities, but had a heart that loved God and God's principles and thus was open to being corrected.

The unconverted man isn't willing to step back, allow the Spirit of truth and love to enlighten, bring to conviction and then willingly choose to apply what the Spirit has revealed.

This is true today—are we “saved” by getting the right doctrines? Are we saved by obeying the right rituals? Are we saved by trusting Jesus and experiencing a change in heart motive so that we follow where He leads, value His methods and choose His principles?

Much of Christianity, because of accepting the false law lens, has fallen into the trap of believing that salvation is dependent upon getting the definitions right, the doctrines right, the rituals right, the behaviors right, rather than getting the heart right!

But it has always been about transforming the heart, healing the inner being back into God's original ideal. When Christ returns there will be millions saved who have errors in their understanding of Bible facts, who disagree on various interpretations of Scripture, but none will be saved who harbor selfishness and lies while rejecting love and a hunger for truth.

Turn to **WEDNESDAY's** lesson and read third paragraph, “As we know, Christian history is soiled...” thoughts?

What does it mean to compromise crucial truths? The lesson points to Revelation 14:12: “This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.”

What are they saying are the important truths that cannot be compromised?

Are they saying doctrines, rituals, worship days, dress, diet, style of music?

What are the crucial truths that cannot be compromised? Is it not the truth of God's character of love and truth and His design law for life—His methods of running His universe?

So, could someone who worships on the right day, eats the right food, baptized in the right way, but because they view God's law as imposed, and that justice requires punishment, use such methods on their fellow human beings? In other words, seek to control human governments to enforce their religious views? And if the doctrines, say baptism, or day of worship, were Biblically sound, what would it mean if the methods of enforcement were not God's methods?

Is it about right doctrines or participating in reality as God constructed it, which eventually will lead to right doctrines?



The bottom pink section asks, “How can we learn to forgive those who have greatly disappointed us, as Peter disappointed Jesus here?”

Is there a difference between forgiving someone and trusting someone? What is the difference?

What helps you to forgive?

- Is it fear that if you don't God won't forgive you?
- Is it obligation, God said we must so I do?
- Is it love for the person, you genuinely want to see them transformed?
- Is it realization that sin destroys the sinner and you don't have to hold a grudge they are destroying themselves, so you can forgive and feel compassion for them?

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read MT 16:13-17, this is where Jesus asks them who people say He is, and then who they think He is and Peter replies with “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Did this public declaration, confession that Jesus is the Savior, mean Peter experienced salvation at that moment? Are people saved by making this declaration?

Jesus rightly responded that this awareness wasn't from Peter's own intelligence or database, but from insight provided to Peter from the Holy Spirit.

But, for salvation this awareness that Jesus is the Savior requires a response, a choice of the soul to surrender to Jesus, to align with Jesus, the mere acknowledgement of the fact doesn't result in salvation—don't the devils acknowledge this fact?

And did the acknowledgement of the fact that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, mean the disciples then understood God's character, methods, the problem of sin, what Jesus was there to accomplish? Or, despite recognizing Jesus as Messiah, they still didn't understand what was wrong that sin caused that Jesus was here to fix?

How many Christians today are in the same boat, they recognize Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God, but still don't understand why He came, what the problem that sin caused that Jesus came to fix, and how Jesus did fix it?

Read next paragraph, which is a quote from *The Desire of Ages* p. 415: “The disciples still expected Christ...” thoughts?

Why? Was the truth of what the Savior was to accomplish kept from them by God? Or, was there truth revealed all through the OT that taught Christ was to come and suffer and die in order to resolve the sin problem?



What about:

- the sacrificial system—who did all the sacrificial animals point toward?
- Abraham and Isaac and Mt. Moriah
- Isaiah 53
- Ps 22:16-18: they have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

Was there evidence in Scripture that was sufficient to teach that Jesus would have to suffer and die?

Then why did they not consider this possibility? Because of their traditions, because of what they were taught in church school, sermons, because of the accepted orthodoxy of their religious system. They were told false meanings to the Scripture and the symbolic system that obscured their ability to comprehend the truth of Christ's mission.

Do we struggle with similar problems today?

TUESDAY

What would you do if you were on a boat and saw someone walking out to you on the water? And it was someone you knew—would your first response be to ask to walk out to them on the water?

Read fourth and fifth paragraph, “The usual lesson of the story...” What do you think of the question, “Could not Jesus have kept Peter afloat regardless of Peter's fear?”

If we are talking only about physical issues of gravity and water, then the answer is yes, but is something more going on? What?

Is there an object lesson here?

It wasn't about the physical contact, it was about the reaching out from the heart for something that one cannot provide for themselves.

Why didn't Peter simply turn and swim back to the boat? He could swim because he jumped out of the boat and swam to shore in another place, why didn't he just do that? He was in “deep water” at night, with waves and wind and it was evidently more than he believed he could handle.

Have you ever been in circumstance in life in which you felt overwhelmed and about to drown—did you reach out with your heart to Jesus?

Is this a metaphor for our ability to heal our hearts from fear and selfishness?



THURSDAY

The lesson points out that Peter was a leader in the early church. How do you respond to those who say that the church was built upon Peter?

How about simply agreeing with them by quoting Ephesians 2:19-22:

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, ²⁰ **built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.** ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

So, yes, the church is built on Peter, along with the other Apostles, with Jesus as the chief cornerstone.

The lesson points out that Peter was influenced by Judaizers and pulled back association with uncircumcised Gentiles until Paul confronted him. What lessons do we learn from this?

Are there lessons in regard to how we relate to those with the special gifts of the Spirit, including the gift of prophecy?

If someone is gifted with the gifts of the Spirit are they infallible? If they are not infallible can and will they get some things wrong? Did Peter get this wrong? Does that mean Peter was not inspired? Does that mean we should not value what he wrote in Scripture?

Should we surrender our judgment to another human, including a prophet or apostle? Romans 14:5 Paul says every person should be fully persuaded in their own mind—so is it okay to disagree with someone, even an apostle of the Lord, as long as one does it based on principles of God's kingdom, in harmony with God's methods of truth and love? Did Paul do this? Would you have been able to stand up to Peter? What about EGW?

Are there things written in Scripture and the writings of EGW that are very appropriate for the people of that time, but are not applicable to us today?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Korean and Polish Translations: A publisher in Korea has contracted to translate *Could It Be This Simple?* (CIBTS) into Korean, and a publisher in Poland has contracted to translate *The God-Shaped Brain* (GSB) into Polish. We will let you know when these are available. Currently CIBTS is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and German and GSB is available in English and Korean.

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event “The Struggle Is Real” at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcsummit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

June 23,24, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar for the Samaritan Counseling Service in Sarasota FL. For more information www.samaritangulfcoast.com
(T) 941-926-2959 (F) 941-929-0849

July 14,15, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Lakeport SDA church, in Lakeport CA.

AUGUST 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings’ new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

Love is more than emotion, more than compassion, more than positive regard for another; love is power—the power to live, heal and be free. Love is functional, operational, with specific design parameters built into the fabric of reality. Love is intelligent and as we intelligently choose to harmonize with how love functions we not only experience greater health, fulfillment and wellbeing, we are transformed to become forces for good in the world. In *The God-Shaped Heart* Christian psychiatrist Dr. Tim Jennings explores the healing power of love, exposes a belief system infecting Christianity that obstructs love, and identifies eternal truths that open the heart to God’s transforming power of love.

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

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

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.



First and Second Peter Lesson 2 2Q 2017

An Inheritance Incorruptible

SABBATH

Read Memory Text:

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. 1Pet 1:22 NIV

What does this mean to you?

First, according to this text, what is the result of purification, or what does purification do to a person? It results in a change in heart where people genuinely love others.

What does this mean regarding purification?

Is purification legal or is it something that actually happens within the person?

What did the Jews think purification was? Ritualistic, ceremonial washings, etc. Do Christians today ever struggle with the idea that spiritual purification is found in rituals or ceremonies? Is it?

So what does it mean to be purified? It means a pure heart and right spirit, a change in the inner man to be like Christ. Consider this quote:

Co-workers with Christ will manifest no harshness, no self-sufficiency. These elements must be **purified** from the soul, and the **gentleness of Christ take possession**. {Christian Leadership 8.1}

So we understand that being purified is important and necessary for salvation, and that purification is a change in heart from selfishness to love, but how are we purified?

Peter says “you purified yourselves by obeying the truth” What does this mean?

Consider this quote from *Evangelism*:

There is a vast amount of rubbish brought forward by professed believers in Christ, which **blocks up the way to the cross**. [What might that be? Is it only pleasure seeking, or any method of the world, such as the world's system of legality being taught in the church as the means of salvation?] Notwithstanding all this, there are some who are so deeply convicted that they will come through every discouragement, and will surmount every obstacle in order to gain the truth. But had the **believers in the truth purified their minds by obeying it**, had they



felt the importance of **knowledge and refinement of manners in Christ's work**, where one soul has been saved there might have been twenty.--Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 68. (1876) {Ev 110.3}

This quote from evangelism agrees with Peter “believers in the truth purified their minds by obeying it...” what does this mean?

Is Peter saying that we are saved by our works? Where does faith come in?

What law lens are you looking through?

If you believe God’s law functions like human law, imposed rules that require imposed punishments, then serious false ideas emerge, like:

- Being purified means being purified from the legal guilt of the sins we have committed and saved from the punishment of sin
- Purification is when we trust in the blood payment of Jesus we are declared to be pure, even though we are not
- Purification is purifying our heavenly record by purging our records of the recorded sins when we accept the legal payment of Jesus
- But to ensure the records remain purged of our bad deeds we must obey all the rules He has given or else our sins will be retained on the books and God will punish us.

However, if you return to the truth of God’s law, that God is Creator and His laws are the protocols upon which reality function—in all domains—then you realize that sin is being out of harmony with how life is constructed. Such a condition is terminal, and only Christ could restore humankind back to God’s design. Thus, Jesus came and revealed the truth about God to win us to trust, exposed Satan as a liar and fraud to free us from being duped by him, and provided a genuine remedy for our condition.

Thus, Jesus provides the truth which establishes our faith, or trust, and in faith/trust we choose with our wills to not only trust Him, but to apply to our lives what He has instructed, to partake of Him and His methods of truth and love. In so doing, we abide in Him, experience a transforming power to renew and empower us. But it is our choice, to partake or not, to obey or not. And it is by the exercise of our wills to trust and follow that we retain our individuality while the Holy Spirit changes the heart motives.

Thus, the Remedy was achieved by Christ alone; our works could never cure the condition, nor add to anything to what Christ has achieved. However, we must choose to trust, choose to partake, choose to apply what Christ has achieved to our own individual lives—just as if you had a disease and a remedy was available, you did not create or produce the remedy, but you must choose to take it.

So what does it mean to obey?



The Greek for obey or obedience is:

5218 ὑπακοή [*hupakoe* /hoop·ak·o·ay/] n f. From 5219; TDNT 1:224; TDNTA 34; GK 5633.¹

The first part is hypo, as in hypoglycemia, or hypotension and means under, or low, or lowly, and the second half is akoe from which we get acoustic and means to listen, to hear. It means a humble willingness to listen and to do.

So an obedient person is one who eagerly listens for the voice of God and has the desire to hear, to understand, and to fulfill God's instructions and therefore chooses to do so to the best of their ability. It is not about perfect performance, it is about heart attitude.

So, with this in mind consider some of these quotes:

It is through faith in Jesus Christ that the truth is accepted in the heart, and the human agent is purified and cleansed. . . . [What do you hear? Truth wins to trust, but in trust the truth moves beyond comprehension, beyond ideas understood, into the heart and becomes part of the building blocks of our values, character, identity, thus the truth transforms us—as we choose to believe it and apply it! The truth becomes more than facts but leads to the truth about reality itself, including the ultimate Truth—Jesus Christ!] He has an abiding principle in the soul, that enables him to overcome temptation. [What truth is more than fact but also a principle? Would it not be the truths of God's laws—design protocols—the primary one being love!] "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not." 1 John 3:6. God has power to keep the soul that is in Christ who is under temptation. . . . {FLB 130.2}

A mere profession of godliness is worthless. It is he that abideth in Christ that is a Christian. . . Unless the **mind of God becomes the mind of men, every effort to purify himself will be useless; for it is impossible to elevate man except through a knowledge of God.** [What does this mean? In 17:3 life eternal = knowing God. What does this knowledge mean? Is it by studying in seminary? Is it by speaking the ancient languages? What? Personal knowledge, experience with God for oneself.] {FLB 130.3}

The question you need to put to yourselves is, "Am I a Christian?" **To be a Christian is to be far more than many understand.** It means more than simply having your name upon the church records. **It means to be joined to Christ.** It means to have simple faith, unwavering reliance upon God. **It means to have childlike confidence in your heavenly Father through the name and merit of His dear Son.** [What does this mean? It means our confidence in God is based on the evidence Jesus revealed of God's trustworthiness—we can trust God, have confidence or faith in Him!] **Do you love to keep the commandments of God, because the**

¹ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



commandments of God are God's precepts, the transcript of His character, and can no more be altered than can the character of God? [What are the commandments? Transcript of His character, which is what type of law? Design law of love—do we love who God is and do we love how He constructed reality to operate and do we love to live in harmony with it?] Do you respect and love the law of Jehovah? {FLB 130.4}

Every individual, **by his own act**, either puts Christ from him by refusing to cherish His spirit and follow His example, or he enters into a personal union with Christ by self-renunciation, faith, and obedience. [What does this mean? Does our choice make a difference in our eternal destiny? Is it a one time choice or ongoing choice? Why? Because of design law—design law is about how life actually operates and we either choose to operate in harmony with God's design or not—and either choices changes us one way or the other] We must, each for himself, choose Christ, because He has first chosen us. This union with Christ is to be formed by those who are naturally at enmity with Him. It is a relation of utter dependence, to be entered into by a proud heart. **This is close work, and many who profess to be followers of Christ know nothing of it.** They nominally accept the Saviour, but not as the sole ruler of their hearts. {FLB 135.2}

The evil tendencies of mankind are hard to overcome. The battles are tedious. [Have you experienced this reality?] Every soul in the strife knows how severe, how bitter, are these contests. **Everything about growth in grace is difficult, because the standard and maxims of the world are constantly interposed between the soul and God's holy standard.** [What are the standards and maxims of the world? 1) If it feels good do it 2) the strong survive by defeating the weak 3) it isn't wrong if you are not punished which is based on the imposed legal law construct. 4) justice requires inflicted punishment - this false penal/legal substitutionary theology which is based solely on human law construct obstructs the healing power of God in many lives!] **The Lord would have us elevated, ennobled, purified, by carrying out the principles underlying His great moral standard, which will test every character in the great day of final reckoning.** {FLB 135.3} [What is the test on the great day of reckoning? Is it a test of our records—whether the records have been purified? Or is it a test of our character? And what would that test look like? Rev 12:11 “These are they who do not love their life so much as to shrink from death” What is being described? A situation in which their character is tested—do they love others more than self, or would they lie, cheat, steal, kill, gossip, manipulate all in order to protect themselves? It is a test of the actual condition of the heart!

So what is salvation? It is purification—it is healing, it is transforming the inner person and this requires are active participation with God!

Here is another quote:

Christ gave His life to make it possible for man to be restored to the image of God. [What is God working to achieve? Not legal outcomes but transformational ones!] It is the power of His grace that draws men together in **obedience to the truth.** [Can one be purified, healed, in



violations of the laws of health—design law? No! Does claiming one believes they are legally justified mean that such a person has been transformed to God's image? No! In other words, the legal model creates the atmosphere for perpetual sin and obstructs God's plan to heal and restore people!] {Amazing Grace 103.4}

God desires us to reach the standard of perfection made possible for us by the gift of Christ. He calls upon us to **make our choice** on the right side, to connect with heavenly agencies, **to adopt principles that will restore in us the divine image**. In His written **Word and in the great book of nature** He has revealed **the principles of life**. [What are these principles? The law of love, liberty, worship, sowing and reaping, exertion i.e. design law!] **It is our work to obtain a knowledge of these principles, and by obedience to cooperate with Him in restoring health to the body as well as to the soul.** {AG 103.5}

Men need to learn that **the blessings of obedience**, [What does this mean? Rule keeping? No! It means living in harmony with God's design for life. As we do we are experience transformation of heart and mind, peace with God and each other] in their fullness, can be theirs only as they receive the grace of Christ. **It is His grace that gives men power to obey the laws of God.** It is this that enables him to break the bondage of evil habit. This is the only power that can make him and keep him steadfast in the right path. {AG 103.6}

To the heart that has become purified, all is changed. . . . **The Spirit of God produces a new life in the soul, bringing the thoughts and desires into obedience to the will of Christ; and the inward man is renewed in the image of God.** [Who is the transforming power? The Spirit of God, which takes Christ's victory and reproduces it in us. then what is our work? To investigate the evidence/truth and choose what we believe, and what we cherish by choosing what we do, what we take into our hearts this is partaking of the divine nature.] Weak and erring men and women show to the world that the redeeming power of grace can cause the faulty character to develop into symmetry and abundant fruitfulness. {AG 103.7}

SUNDAY

Peter was an apostle, which the lesson tells us means “one sent.” What do you understand an apostle to be?

Do you think the term “ambassador” is a reasonable synonym? A person sent to represent and fulfill the plans, aspirations, mission, directives, goals of the one who sent them?

Does apostle mean one had to spend time in the physical presence of Jesus being trained by Him?

Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” ²⁶ Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles. Acts 1:25,26



And while Paul spent 3 years in the desert learning from God, it was not likely that it was a one on one with the physical presence of Jesus as the other apostles experienced.

What are the similarities and differences between an apostles and a prophets?

Similarities:

Both are inspired by the same Spirit, represent the same God, operate upon the same methods, teach the same eternal truths, work for the same eternal agenda, teach the same principles of God's kingdom of love. Both can experience gifts of the Spirit as the Spirit deems necessary to their individual mission.

Differences:

The biggest difference is one of focus. Apostles are like ambassadors, primarily sent out from an organization to represent and fulfill the mission of the organization whereas prophets are typically brought up within the organization to address needs within the organization.

The message of the apostles are often to those who don't yet know or identify with the message or the organization, whereas the message of the prophets are often to those who do identify with the organization yet need correction, clarification, redirection, etc.

But because both apostles and prophets teach the same principles of God's government here is obvious overlap between the two groups. And we can benefit from the teachings of both.

The lesson points out that there is debate over whether the Epistles of Peter were directed mostly to Jewish or Gentile believers.

With this in mind read the last paragraph, "Some commentators argue..." thoughts?

What do you think of this question, "After all, would Peter really have written to the Jews about the 'futile ways inherited from your ancestors?'"

Hmmm.... what do you think? Do these words of Jesus add anything to what Peter wrote?

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous.³⁰ And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.'³¹ So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets.³² Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers!

³³ "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? ³⁴ Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill



and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. ³⁵ And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. ³⁶ I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation. Mt 23:29-36

Was Jesus suggesting anything about futile ways inherited from their ancestors?

Or what about question from the lesson: “would he have said to Jewish readers, ‘For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.’”

Would he have written this to Jews? Does the OT give us any insight? Is there record of the Jews getting caught up, over and over again, in pagan fertility rights with their orgies and drunken revelries? Hmmm... so could this have absolutely been written to the Jews?

So, it doesn't seem unreasonable to me that Peter was writing to both Jews and Gentiles. What do you think?

MONDAY

What does it mean to be elected to salvation or to be the elect of God or “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (1Pet 1:2)?

I am going to read a quotation from *Christian Education* and I would like the class to decipher, interpret, and describe what it means:

Here are the **conditions** upon which every soul **will be elected** to eternal life. **Your obedience to God's commandments will prove your right** to an inheritance with the saints in light. **God has elected a certain excellence of character; and every one who**, through the grace of Christ, **shall reach the standard of his requirement**, will have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of glory. All who would reach this standard of character, **will have to employ the means that God has provided to this end**. If you would inherit the rest that remains for the children of God, you must become a **co-laborer with God**. You are **elected to wear the yoke of Christ**, --to bear his burden, to lift his cross. You are to be diligent "to make your calling and election sure." [2 Peter 1:10.] Search the Scriptures, and you will see that **not a son or a daughter of Adam is elected to be saved in disobedience to God's law**. The world makes void the law of God; but **Christians are chosen to sanctification through obedience to the truth. They are elected to bear the cross, if they would wear the crown.** {CE 118.1}

What does it mean?



Let's go through phrase by phrase and see if we can comprehend the meaning. The first question to ask as we start is: which law lens are we reading through, imposed human law or God's design law?

Here are the **conditions** upon which every soul **will be elected** to eternal life. [what does "conditions" connote? Factors, if one is viewing it through human imposed law, one thinks "the legal conditions of legal payment and being baptized in the right way and claiming the blood payment." If one is viewing this through design law then one realizes conditions are those aspects of reality upon which God constructed life and which the outcome depend] **Your obedience to God's commandments will prove your right** to an inheritance with the saints in light. [what commandments? Does this mean behavior? Does it mean day of worship? Does it mean the commandment to love God and others? Is obedience primarily about performance, or the NT Greek *hypoacuae* and it means a humble willingness to listen and choose to incorporate, internalize, apply and do? And what happens to the believer when we do this? By beholding we are changed, this is design law, law of worship, law of exertion, law of sewing and reaping. This is God working through His design laws to heal and restore, but to retain our individuality we must choose to actively participate!] **God has elected a certain excellence of character; and every one who**, through the grace of Christ, **shall reach the standard of his requirement**, will have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of glory. [When did God elect a certain excellence of character? Originally in His creation, but then again in the person of Jesus. Romans 3:21 from the Remedy "But now God has revealed a healthy state of being—a character that is right and perfect in every way—that did not come from the written code, but is exactly what the Scriptures and the Ten Commandments were pointing your minds toward." Why did God elect this excellence of character? Because it is the only character that lives in God's universe of love.] All who would reach this standard of character, **will have to employ the means that God has provided to this end**. [What means has God provided? Truth and love in freedom wins us to trust and in trust we open the heart and the Spirit provides a new heart/character developed by Christ, and the Holy Spirit to enlighten and transforms as we choose to seek, cooperate and apply.] If you would inherit the rest that remaineth for the children of God, you must become a **co-laborer with God**. [What does this mean? how are we to labor?] You are **elected to wear the yoke of Christ**, --to bear his burden, to lift his cross. [What is a yoke? an instrument that binds to together to **SHARE** the burden, and the yoke that binds us to Christ is the yoke of love! We must love God and Christ and that connects us to Him and shares the burden of life with Him] You are to be diligent "to make your calling and election sure." [2 Peter 1:10.] Search the Scriptures, and you will see that **not a son or a daughter of Adam is elected to be saved in disobedience to God's law**. [Why? For the same reason no son or daughter is elected to live in violations of the laws of health] The world makes void the law of God; but **Christians are chosen to sanctification through obedience to the truth. They are elected to bear the cross, if they would wear the crown**. [We must die to selfishness if we are to live in love] {CE 118.1}

What is election? Election is God's choice to provide Christ to reveal truth and procure the remedy, and our choice to trust God and participate with Him in His plan to heal and restore us.



Read last paragraph, “God’s foreknowledge of the elect...” Their example is not an effective example, because the mother doesn’t know what her child will do based on knowledge of the future, but based on knowledge of the character and motivations of the child. So the mother is ***predicting*** what is most likely to happen, given her knowledge of previous experiences with the child. This is **NOT** the same as God’s foreknowledge.

This type of foreknowledge is often wrong and often leads to many problems in relationships as people presume to know what another will do before they do it and therefore prejudge people and not give others the opportunity to grow, transform, make a new decision but anticipate people to do what they have always done. This is not foreknowledge.

True foreknowledge is entirely different, it is knowing the future before the future happens.

Any evidences from Scripture that would demonstrate God does know the specific choices of people before they make them?

- Noah and the ark—preached offering a place on the ark for all who would want a place, but building only one ark
- Prophecy of soldiers rolling dice for Jesus’ clothing
- Prophecies of Daniel, the rise of the various nations
- Israel would be unfaithful and end up in captivity for 70 years
- Cyrus as one who would release Israel to return home
- Judas betraying Jesus
- Peter denying Jesus, but repenting and feeding the sheep

Anyone uncomfortable with God knowing what you will do before you choose to do it?

If God knows before we do it is that the same as causing us to do it? What informs God of what we will do? Our choice in doing it! God doesn’t know it if we don’t do it—but because God lives outside time He is aware of what we choose, but only because we choose it.

TUESDAY

One of the key themes is the resurrection of Jesus Christ—why did Jesus predict so confidently He would rise from the dead?

Was Jesus prediction of His resurrection based on foreknowledge?

In the book *The Desire of Ages* the author says Jesus could not see through the portals of the tomb (753). If Jesus couldn’t see through the portals of the tomb, then was His prediction based on foreknowledge? Or was His prediction based on something else?



Was it based on **real knowledge**—the knowledge of God’s character, the nature of sin, what causes death, what the solution for death is, and that He knew He would destroy the cause of death and restore the basis of life into the humanity of which He partook? Thus He could predict the outcome accurately, that He would die, but knew His death would destroy death—the infection of selfishness which causes death, and restore the law of life (God’s design) back into the humanity He assumed, and therefore He would rise in a perfected and immortal humanity?

So, what would the basis of His prediction? The truth of God’s character and design law!

WEDNESDAY

What does it mean to “gird up the loins of your mind”? It means to exert purposeful governance over your mind, specifically:

- Examine your beliefs and rid yourself of beliefs that are erroneous and establish beliefs based on truth
- Control your thoughts and bring them into line with truth
- Govern your imagination, don’t let feelings control the imagination
- Process your emotions through your good judgment and make decisions based on truth, facts, principles, not on emotions

The lesson points out three elements that motivate Christian behavior:

1. God’s character—God is holy and we must be holy
2. Fear of God’s judgment, as the holy God He must judge unholiness
3. We have been bought with a price

What does it mean that God is holy? God is the source of all perfection, purity, righteousness, the very basis of life itself and thus God is the source of all healthiness. And those who are saved will be healed, perfected, restored to perfect harmony with God, thus we will be holy, i.e. healthy, as He is.

What do you think of the second motive, fearing God because He will judge wickedness?

Is fear a good motivator?

What do you understand God’s judgment to be? Is it God determining the outcome of each soul or God diagnosing accurately the condition of each person’s heart?

What determines if a person has a renewed healed heart or a heart hardened in selfishness? What did we read earlier?

Every individual, **by his own act**, either puts Christ from him by refusing to cherish His spirit and follow His example, or he enters into a personal union with Christ by self-renunciation, faith, and obedience.



So, is it God's judgment of us that determines our eternal destiny, or is it our judgment of God—whether we judge God someone we trust or distrust?

And God's eternal judgment then would simply be His accurate diagnosis of the true condition of each person's character, which has resulted from their choice to either trust Him or not.

What about the third one, because we have been bought with a price, how do you understand this language?

What is a mature and healthy way to understand it?

It cost God—Father, Son and Spirit—an infinite amount, beyond our comprehension, to fix the problem sin caused and provide us with the remedy which cures us.

What is an immature way of understanding it? Sin requires punishment and someone had to pay the price so God won't punish us. Jesus paid that price.

THURSDAY

What does it mean to love one another? What does it not mean?

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle Is Real at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcs Summit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

AUGUST 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

Love is more than emotion, more than compassion, more than positive regard for another; love is power—the power to live, heal and be free. Love is functional, operational, with specific design parameters built into the fabric of reality. Love is intelligent and as we intelligently choose to harmonize with how love functions we not only experience greater health, fulfillment and wellbeing, we are transformed to become forces for good in the world. In *The God-Shaped Heart* Christian psychiatrist Dr. Tim Jennings explores the healing power of love, exposes a belief system infecting Christianity that obstructs love, and identifies eternal truths that open the heart to God's transforming power of love.

June 23,24, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar for the Samaritan Counseling Service in Sarasota FL. For more information www.samaritangulfcoast.com
(T) 941-926-2959 (F) 941-929-0849

July 14,15, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Lakeport SDA church, in Lakeport CA.

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

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

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



First and Second Peter Lesson 3 2Q 2017

A Royal Priesthood

SABBATH

Read memory text: "But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" 1Pet 2:9 NKJV

What does it mean? Are "chosen generation," "royal priesthood," "holy nation," "special people" different groups, or descriptions of the same group?

Is this group of people determined by:

- genetics?
- geography?
- ethnicity?
- national citizenry?
- denomination?
- dress code?
- dietary habit?
- day of worship?
- a certain combination of the above?

What determines the makeup of this special people? Character—and what kind of character? Like Jesus and how do people obtain such character?

Consider this quote:

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." Christ has called you to be His followers, **to imitate His life of self-sacrifice and self-denial**, to be interested in the great work of the redemption of the fallen race...**Christ is your pattern**. That in which you **are deficient is love**. **This pure and holy principle** distinguishes **the character** and conduct of Christians from those of worldlings. **Divine love** has a powerful, purifying influence. **It is to be found only in renewed hearts**, and naturally flows out to their fellow men. {2T 169.2}

"Love one another," says our Saviour, "as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." **Christ has given us an example of pure, disinterested love... Without the spirit of love, no one can be like Christ. With this living principle in the soul, no one can be like the world.** {2T 169.3}



Who is it that makes up this group? Those who are like Christ in character. And are there any end-time Bible texts that reference these same people?

Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus. Rev 12:17

What are the distinguishing features?

- Hold to the commandments—which means what?
 - That they worship on a certain day?
 - Can persons worship on a certain day and still not keep the commandments of God?
 - What is the requirement to be a commandment keeper? To keep the law of love, to have the law of love written on the heart!
 - Thus those who keep the commandments of God are those that live in harmony with God’s design principles of love!
- Hold to the testimony of Jesus—which means what?
 - They accept and share the same testimony Jesus gave about His Father—“if you’ve seen me you’ve seen the Father.”

What does it mean to be called out of darkness into His marvelous light?

What is the darkness? How would you describe it? What is the light?

Here is a powerful quote I came across preparing for this week’s lesson, from 5 Testimonies 738, see if you agree or disagree. This touches on what darkness is, what the light is:

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Hence he has sought to **misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him**. The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the **attributes of the prince of evil himself,—as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving,—that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men**. [What is Satan’s agenda? What method does he use? What does it mean to be arbitrary? What kind of law is arbitrary? So what teaching today represents God like this? Penal substitution theology is the theology based on arbitrary law and represents God as all of these.] **Satan hoped to so confuse the minds** of those whom he had deceived that they would put God out of their knowledge. [Has this happened? Has the arbitrary imposed law construct which infected Christianity resulted in philosophies that now dominate the world which teach there is no God? And then, when Satan gets people to reject God, what is his ultimate goal?] **Then he would obliterate the divine image in man and impress his own likeness upon the soul**; he would imbue men with his own spirit and make them captives according to his will. [Is this happening in the



world? Is it happening in the lives of those who still claim a belief in God, but who, having rejected the truth about God, worship the dictator god?] {5T 738.1}

It was by falsifying the character of God and exciting distrust of Him that Satan tempted Eve to transgress. By sin **the minds of our first parents were darkened, their natures were degraded, and their conceptions of God were molded by their own narrowness and selfishness.** [How many religious people today still have a god molded after their own selfishness?] And as men became bolder in sin, the **knowledge and the love of God faded from their minds and hearts.** "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God," they "became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." {5T 738.2}

At times Satan's contest for the control of the human family appeared to be crowned with success. During the ages preceding the first advent of Christ the world seemed almost wholly under the sway of the prince of darkness, and he ruled with a terrible power **as though** through the sin of our first parents the kingdoms of the world had become his by right. [Sadly those who still hold to the imposed law concept within Christianity teach the earth did become Satan's legally, by right when Adam sinned. But this is not true. The earth is Christ's and Satan is a thief and usurper and claims that which is not his.] Even the **covenant people, whom God had chosen to preserve in the world the knowledge of Himself,** had so far departed from Him that they had lost all true conception of His character. {5T 738.3} [What were the covenant people to do? Preserve a knowledge of God—has that mission changed today, or is it the same?]

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, full of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. The thick darkness with which Satan had endeavored to enshroud the throne of Deity was swept away by the world's Redeemer, and the Father was again manifest to men as the light of life. {5T 738.4}

When Philip came to Jesus with the request, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," the Saviour answered him: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" **Christ declares Himself to be sent into the world as a representative of the Father. In His nobility of character, in His mercy and tender pity, in His love and goodness, He stands before us as the embodiment of divine perfection, the image of the invisible God.** {5T 739.1}

What is the darkness? The lies about God, that God is like Satan in character and God's law is imposed making God the inflictor of punishments upon the disobedient.

And what is the light? That God is love, the source of life. God is not the source of death. God's law is design law, the protocols He built life to operate upon and death comes from breaking that design and



God through Christ has been working to dispel the lies and restore His creation back into His design—unity, at-one-ment with Him.

SUNDAY

What does it mean to live as a Christian?

Read second and third paragraph, “Peter uses two separate...” So is Peter suggesting that when we become Christian we stop criticizing, faultfinding, gossiping, etc.?

Will we avoid making statements that deliberately damage another’s reputation? What about if it is true? If it is true then is it okay to say it?

Did Jesus reveal the sins of the people who brought the woman caught in adultery—or did He protect their reputation? Why? Because Jesus loved them and wanted them to love Him and let Him heal them.

Do we love others? If we love others, even if they are doing wrong do we want to broadcast it?

Consider this quote from 2 Testimonies 109, while it is specific to SDA denomination, think more broadly, could this occur in any denominational group:

I was shown that those who are trying to obey God and purify their souls through obedience to the truth are God's chosen people, His modern Israel. [What does this mean? Who can be part of this group?] God says of them, through Peter: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." As it was a crime for Amalek to take advantage of the children of Israel in their weakness and weariness, to annoy, perplex, and discourage them, so it was no small sin for you to be closely watching to discover the weakness, the haltings, the errors and sins of God's afflicted people, and expose the same to their enemies. You were doing Satan's work, not the work of God. Many of the Sabbathkeeping Adventists in ----- have been very weak. They have been miserable representatives of the truth. They have not been an honor to the cause of present truth, and the cause would have been better off without them. You have taken the unconsecrated lives of Sabbathkeepers as an excuse for your occupying a position of doubt and unbelief. It has also strengthened your unbelief to see that some of these unconsecrated ones were professing strong faith in the visions, vindicating them when opposed, and defending them with warmth, while, at the same time that they professed so much zeal, they were disregarding the teachings given through vision and were going directly contrary to them. In this respect they were stumbling blocks to Brother U, and were bringing the visions into disrepute by their course of action. {2T 109.1}



What do you hear is going on here? Can people join a denomination and not be converted? Can people claim to represent Christ in any church organization yet fail to apply Christ's principles to their lives and thus misrepresent Him?

Is it acceptable to look at the failings of people in the church as a cause for our lack of trust in God—i.e. our unbelief? Why or why not?

Our trust is not to be in people, but in God. The only person we are to look to in order to establish our trust in God is Jesus!

If we see people in the church failing to live as Christ would live, is it okay to broadcast to others their personal shortcomings?

Is the fact we are not to hurt others' reputations by pointing out their sins, the same as presenting the truth about God, which might conflict with someone else's teachings about God? What is the difference?

The second point Peter makes is the metaphor of a baby hungry for milk, meaning the true Christian not only avoids the negative but hungers for spiritual milk?

He tells them like newborn babes to crave spiritual milk—but why would Peter say this and Paul say that people should get off milk and onto meat, and those on milk are not acquainted with righteousness?

If you see what Peter is saying in verse 1 of chapter 2, he is dealing with people who have just been converted, thus they are newborn babes in Christ, so it is timely and appropriate for them to crave milk. However, it would be expected as they grow and mature to move past milk.

What is the core issue that will result in maturation, and continued spiritual growth? The true Christian develops a heart/mind attitude of loving truth and eager to grow in truth at the earliest possible moment.

In fact the wicked are lost because they did not love the truth and thus be saved or healed. We are not saved by right cognitive knowledge, but by a right trust relationship with God, which is based on the truth of who He is as revealed in Jesus.

And God is the God of truth and those who have come to know Him have developed character traits like His, one of which is a desire for truth. We also have a humility about ourselves and know that we are not all knowing and that we can and do have some things wrong, but are willing to give up our wrong ideas when the truth is persuasive.



MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read 1Peter 2:4-8 and asks what crucial truth is Peter referring to here?

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” ⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,” ⁸ and, “A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

What is Peter teaching?

An easy one—who is the cornerstone? Jesus, of course.

But what is being referred to as living stones? What is being suggested?

What is the house for the Lord?

Read second paragraph, “Pete’s point is that even...” Is this spiritual house the same thing as the heavenly sanctuary or something different?

When you think of the cleansing of the sanctuary—what comes to mind?

Does history need to be cleansed from the facts of what transpired, the record of Satan’s rebellion in heaven, the lies told, the sins human beings have committed, or do sinners need to have their hearts and minds cleansed from sin—from lies and selfishness and restored to truth and love?

What is the danger of concluding the heavenly sanctuary is built out of inanimate matter rather than being built out of living beings?

What kind of theology does one teach if one believes the heavenly sanctuary is built of gold, silver, stone etc.?

How could such substances be contaminated? Can gold and silver and stone sin? Then, what might be taught if people thought concretely? Might some think up an idea that what contaminates the heavenly sanctuary is a record, written deeds of sins committed by people stored in archives? And if this is what contaminates then what is needed to cleanse? To remove the records of history from the books in the building in heaven, which leads to what kind of theology?



A legal theology, in which the problem is the broken rules, which get recorded in the books, and God, in such a theology, is the one keeping track, spying on our every move to keep an accurate record and God becomes the one who inflicts the punishment for those who haven't had their legal status changed.

And thus we create theologies to get legal pardon in order to get the record of the bad deed erased from the record books in heaven, so the building in heaven can be cleansed.

Does any of this sound just ridiculous? Well it is—it is all based on Satan's lie about God and God's law and built on a failure to see past metaphor to the reality which the metaphor was designed to teach.

Can anyone give a more accurate understanding of cleansing the sanctuary?

First, what is the heavenly sanctuary constructed out of? As Peter is telling us, living souls, we are the building blocks.

And what has contaminated the building blocks of this sanctuary? Sin in us. What needs to be cleansed? Our hearts and minds, our characters need to be renewed to be like Jesus.

When we experience conversion, get a new heart and right spirit, have the law written on the tablets of our hearts—does the history of our lives get changed? No! We get changed. Will the recorded history of the universe reveal the circumstances of our birth—that we were born in sin conceived in iniquity? The reality of our childhood, youth and adulthood—including all our sins and shortcomings? But will history also reveal, for the righteous, the acceptance of Jesus and the actual renewal of heart, mind and character to be like Christ—i.e. that we have been cleansed?

Are you comfortable with this conclusion, based on Scripture and sound reason, or do you struggle because of statements like this on in the book *The Great Controversy*:

As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin offering and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary, so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary. And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, **so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded.** But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement. **The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation—a work of judgment.** This work must be performed prior to the coming of Christ to redeem His people; for when He comes, His reward is with Him to give to every man according to his works. Revelation 22:12. {GC 421.3}



Is this clear language or still symbolic language? Who doesn't know something that they need to investigate to discover—God and Jesus, or us sinful humans?

What do we believe the sanctuary is constructed out of? Living stones—people. Then what is the medium upon which the sins are recorded, and from which they need to be removed? Would it not be the individuality, the characters of the people who make up the sanctuary?

Do you hear that in this statement above, or does the statement above tempt you to think concretely and think in human imposed law trails with judges and pronouncements?

Sin is not primarily about deeds; it is about motive and character—what is actually stored in the sanctuary in heaven? The individualities/characters of all the saved. And what needs to be removed from all the saved? The infection of selfishness, the carnal propensities, the lies and distortions that we have believed.

Who removes this? How is it removed? So where is Christ working during this time before His second coming? In the hearts of His believers preparing them for His return. So, from the same author consider this in regard to what is recorded in heaven:

Remember, **your character is being daguerreotyped [photographed] by the great Master Artist in the record books of heaven**, as minutely as the face is reproduced upon the polished plate of the artist. **What do the books of heaven say in your case?** Are you conforming your character to the Pattern, Jesus Christ? Are you washing your robes of character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb? "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" [Revelation 22:12]. . . . {TSB 62.1}

Every passing hour of the present is shaping our future life. These moments spent in carelessness, in self-pleasing, as if of no value, are deciding our everlasting destinies. The words we utter today will go on echoing when time shall be no more. **The deeds done today are transferred to the books of heaven, just as the features are transferred by the artist onto the polished plate.** They will determine our destiny for eternity, for bliss or eternal loss and agonizing remorse. **Character cannot be changed when Christ comes**, nor just as a man is about to die. Character building must be done in this life. We fear that repentance will come to the self-indulgent, tainted soul all too late. A few resolves, a few tears, will never reverse a guilty past life **nor blot out of the books of heaven the transgressions, the willful, knowing sins** of those who have had the precious light of truth, and can explain the Scriptures to others, while sin and iniquity are drunk up like stolen waters. As though written with an iron pen, they may be found lead in the rock forever. {TM 429.3}

Do you recognize when you read about cleansing the records in heaven, you are actually reading about cleansing the characters of the saved?

If those quotes are not enough then from the same author:



The first tabernacle, built according to God's directions, was indeed blessed of Him. The people thus were preparing themselves to worship in the temple not made with hands--a temple in the heavens. The stones of the Temple built by Solomon were all prepared at the quarry and then brought to the Temple site. They came together without the sound of ax or hammer. The timbers were also fitted in the forest. The furniture was likewise brought to this house all prepared for use. {3MR 231.3}

Even so, the mighty cleaver of truth has **taken out a people from the quarry of the world and is fitting this people, who profess to be the children of God, for a place in His heavenly temple.** We want the cleaver of truth to do its work for us. **We are taken from the quarry of the world. The material must not be a dead substance but living souls, and these souls must be brought out of the quarry of the world, where the hand of God can fit them for the temple in heaven.** We are here as probationers, and we must pass under the hand of God. All rough edges and rough surfaces must be removed and **we must be stones fitted for the building.** We are brought into church capacity with defects of character, but we must not retain them. **We must be fitted and squared for the building. We must be "laborers together with God," for we are "God's husbandry," we are "God's building."** In view of this we must see that our temple is not defiled with sin. We should be lively stones, not dead ones, but live ones that will reflect the image of Christ. We must be worshipers in spirit and in truth. {3MR 231.4}

The bottom pink section asks, "What does it mean to offer spiritual sacrifices?"

What do you think of this quote?

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:5. {HP 281.1}

The church on earth is God's temple, and it is to assume divine proportions before the world. This building is to be the light of the world. **It is to be composed of living stones** laid close together, stone fitting to stone, making a solid building. All these stones are not of the same shape or dimension. Some are large and some are small, but each one has its own place to fill. In the whole building there is not to be one misshapen stone. Each one is perfect. And each stone is a living stone, a stone that emits light. The value of the stones is determined by the light they reflect to the world. {HP 281.2}

Now is the time for the stones to be taken from the quarry of the world and brought into God's workshop, to be hewed, squared, and polished, that they may shine. This is God's plan, and He desires all who profess to believe the truth to fill their respective places in the great, grand work for this time... {HP 281.3}



In this world we are to shine in good works. **The Lord requires His people . . . to reflect the light of God's character, God's love, as Christ reflected it.** As we look unto Jesus, all our lives will be aglow with that wondrous light. **Every part of us is to be light;** then whichever way we turn, light will be reflected from us to others. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. **In Him is no darkness at all; therefore, if we are in Christ, there will be no darkness in us.** {HP 281.5}

The church on earth is to become the court of holy love. . . . Christian fellowship is one means by which character is formed. Thus selfishness is purged from the life, and men and women are drawn to Christ, the great center. Thus is answered His prayer that His followers may be one as He is one with the Father. {HP 281.6}

What is the plan? For renewal of Christlike love, character, God's original design, God's law into each and every one of us!

TUESDAY

Read first two paragraphs, "Peter is writing..." What is the covenant? Who are the covenant people?

Covenant is an agreement between two parties—how would you describe the covenant between God and man?

Are there many covenants that God has with man, or is there one overriding covenant, and under the umbrella of that overriding covenant God has made other situational covenants in the fulfillment of that one overriding covenant?

What is the overriding covenant and when was it made and with whom?

Overriding Covenant is God's promise to be true to Himself: God is love—and God will always be love, and He will never deviate from His methods of love—ever.

This covenant was given to all creation, but in the Bible we find it given in Eden when Adam and Eve were created and God gave them: Life, Liberty, Procreative Ability, Dominion, access to the Tree of Life, which means eternal life as long as they remain in harmony with Him and His design for life.

What are the lesser covenants?

Covenant of Grace: When man fell into sin, God being true to Himself and His methods of love, stepped in to provide remedy and rescue humankind from eternal death. This covenant was given to all humanity after the fall, when the seed of the woman was promised to crush the serpent's head.



Covenant to the post flood world: Covenant to never again destroy the entire world with a flood. Articulated to Noah, but given to all humanity post-flood.

Abrahamic Covenant: God's promise to fulfill His covenant of grace specifically through the family of Abraham, which was accomplished in Christ, and was the same covenant given to Adam of the seed crushing the serpent's head.

Mosaic Covenant: God's promise to be true to Himself and His design law and thus promised the people if they live in harmony with His design laws they will reap benefits, but if they don't they will reap suffering. And, if they choose to keep Him first in their hearts He will stay with them, but if they choose to reject Him, He will be true to Himself and give them what they have chosen.

Davidic Covenant: God's promise to fulfill His covenant of grace through a descendant of David, same promise given to Adam and later to Abraham, but now specifically a descendant of David.

New Covenant: which is the restating of what has been the same covenant of grace all along, that God, through Christ will eradicate the infection of sin and restore His perfect design (character of love) back into the hearts of all who trust Him.

Here is a quote from EGW:

As the Bible presents two laws, one changeless and eternal, the other provisional and temporary, so there are two covenants. **The covenant of grace was first made with man in Eden, when after the Fall, there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.** To all men this covenant offered pardon, and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God's law. Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation. {FLB 77.2}

This same covenant was renewed to Abraham in the promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Genesis 22:18. This promise pointed to Christ. So Abraham understood it, and he trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness. . . . {FLB 77.3}

The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the "second," or "new," covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant. {FLB 77.4}

The covenant of grace is not a new truth, for it existed in the mind of God from all eternity. This is why it is called the everlasting covenant. {FLB 77.5}



WEDNESDAY

What was the role of the priest in the OT sanctuary service?

What was symbolized?

How does it apply to reality?

Who are the priests today and what is our responsibility?

Read third paragraph, “Spiritual house, chosen generation...” Who are the descendants of Abraham?

Were the promises to Abraham ever promises made based on genetics, or were they based on something else?

What were they based upon? Character, those who trust like Abraham trusted are heirs to the promises.

Any Biblical evidence that it was based on character, those who, in a trust relationship with God overcome sinfulness in their life?

Jacob and Esau—what is the genetic inheritance? Esau, but why was Jacob chosen for the promises? What happened in his life?

He was a deceiver, driven by selfishness, always seeking to get ahead for himself, which is a right representation of the carnal heart, at enmity to God. Yet, he wrestled with the angel, which was Christ, and it wasn't that he wrestled against the angel, Jacob was wrestling against self, against his fear, insecurity, own need to be in control, on self-sufficiency; he was wrestling to surrender all of it to God. And he finally did, and when he finally overcame the drive to survive and surrendered his life to God, his name was changed from Jacob/deceiver to Israel, one who with God overcomes.

This is evidence of who is Abraham's true descendant, not based on genetics, but based on trusting God sufficiently to overcome self and receive a new heart and right spirit within.

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, “Ancient Israel...” What obstructed ancient Israel from fulfilling its mission?

- Egocentrism?
- Nationalism?
- Prejudice and racism?
- Baal worship—which is what? Accepting the lie that God's law is imposed and God functions as the imposer of penalties and must be appeased.



- Sensualism and hedonism

Do we struggle with any of these issues today as Christians?

The Bible calls us to be separate from the world—what does this mean? Does it mean live in monasteries? Or become like the Stylites? How are we to be in the world but not of it?

What about pledging allegiance to a national flag? Do you think early Christians pledged allegiance to Rome? Is it because the Roman emperors claimed to be a god? Or did they have other reasons?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle Is Real at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcs Summit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

June 23,24, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar for the Samaritan Counseling Service in Sarasota FL. For more information www.samaritangulfcoast.com
(T) 941-926-2959 (F) 941-929-0849

July 14,15, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Lakeport SDA church, in Lakeport CA.

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

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

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



First and Second Peter Lesson 4 2Q 2017

Social Relationships

SABBATH

Read Memory Text: “Above all things have fervent love for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’” (1Peter 4:8 NKJV)

What does this mean? Love covers a multitude of sins? Does it mean:

- cover over
- cover up
- cover for
- To hide
- to erase from memory
- to purge from court documents
- to not hold accountable
- to remit punishment
- to legally pardon

What does it mean love will cover a multitude of sins?

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

At its root what is sin? Lies and selfishness, which are the opposite of truth and love.

What do lies and selfishness cause or result in? Rebellion—from what? From how God constructed reality to operate.

What does love do to selfishness?

When Jesus loved those who persecuted Him—did their selfishness, their evil, their sin become more difficult or easier to see?

Did Jesus’ love for them cover up, cover over, erase, eliminate, hide, or in any other way obscure their sin?

Or did Jesus’ love make their sin more easily seen?

When Stephen was being stoned and he responded with love, did his loving response cover over selfishness and sinfulness of his persecutors? Did it make their sin more difficult to see or easier to see?



So, does love hide, obscure, cover over, make sin more difficult to see or make the contrast easier?

Any idea that love erases facts, obscures history, purges record books, is false. Jesus said:

For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. Lk 8:17

So, what does it mean that love covers a multitude of sins? What does love actually do to sin?

Our memory text from *The Remedy*:

Above everything, love each other completely, because love destroys sinfulness.

When God writes His law on our hearts and minds—what is actually happening?

Is the law written on our hearts the law of love, the design protocol of God's own nature and character? And when this happens, what happens to the motives of selfishness? Are they being purged, erased, destroyed from where? Out of the character! Sinfulness in the soul being destroyed, and what is doing it? Truth and love!

Here are a couple of quotes, what do you think—agree or disagree?

The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. **If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul**, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? **When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled**, "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." Hebrews 10:16. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? **Obedience--the service and allegiance of love--is the true sign of discipleship.** {SC 60.2}

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." [take away sin, or take away punishment for sin? And from where is sin taken away, the record books or the character? Does He take away the record of sin or the sinfulness itself?] By beholding Him, **we may be changed into His image.** [Where is the purifying happening? In people!] The promise has been made, "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." Through disobedience man forfeited holiness, **accepting in its place the principles of unrighteousness.** [In its place—where? Where is the place from which the principles of holiness were lost and unrighteousness was put? The hearts and minds of people! What metaphor describes the rewriting of God's law into the heart? The cleansing of the sanctuary.] But by breaking the yoke that Satan has fastened upon him, and taking the yoke of Christ, learning of Him His meekness and lowliness, **man is created anew.** Christ has promised to



write in the heart of every repentant sinner His law, which is holy, just, and good. **He promises to renovate the soul, through the medium of truth. He diffuses His own life through the entire being.** Thus the sinner is born again, and henceforth, in a life of loving service, he is to work out the grand, **ennobling principles** that he can take with him into the heavenly courts. **There is placed upon him a new mould of character**, which the world knows not, but which all must receive who obtain entrance into the courts above. {ST, June 28, 1905 par. 6}

Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul... {COL 311.3}

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us... When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

What does it mean that love covers a multitude of sins? I think it means that love destroys sinfulness out of the hearts and minds of those who trust God!

Read first paragraph, "Peter's letter also tackles..." How should Christians live with oppressive and corrupt governments?

Should we identify our own selves with the governments of the world? Should we be proud to be a citizen of an earthly government, or should we be proud our citizenship is in heaven?

Is there a difference in being a law abiding, tax-paying, good neighbor and citizen, and identifying yourself with your nation?

SUNDAY

The lesson is about the relationship between church and state.

The lesson points out that Bible writers encouraged the Christians to obey the laws of the human governments, thoughts?

Read second paragraph, "In some cases, it's pretty obvious..." The lesson is suggesting that when the case arises in which the choice is either obey the laws of human governments or the laws of God, we must choose the laws of God.



Do you agree?

Is this always clear or are there many areas of gray and personal interpretation? Is this one of those areas where “every person must be fully persuaded in their own mind?”

Consider the following possibilities:

- God’s command: Thou shall not kill—what about:
 - A police officer carrying a weapon, and using it to kill a criminal?
 - A soldier in war? Desmond Doss took a particular stand on that one, do all Christians come to the same conclusion as Desmond?
 - Participating in executing a convicted criminal? The medical profession has found it unethical for physicians to participate in executing people, should Christians have less standards than doctors?
 - Euthanasia? Should we assist people with terminal conditions in ending their own lives?
 - Abortion—while many Christians believe abortion is murder, some Christians do not believe abortion is murder—do we allow each person to be persuaded in their own mind, or do we seek to force our beliefs on others?
- Marriage—God’s design in Eden was one man and one woman—what about:
 - polygamy? Do we find Bible writers admonishing an end to polygamy?
 - What of more modern societies?
 - What about same sex marriages—should we obey the laws of the land and leave people free to engage in same sex marriage, or should we disobey the law and seek to obstruct them?
- Slavery—God’s design is for human freedom
 - Did Bible writers advise slaves to leave their masters?
 - In the OT God built into the Hebrew system the legal freeing of slaves ever 49 years. But why didn’t God just outlaw slavery rather than limiting how long one could be a slave? Do we ever find Bible directions that outlaw slavery?
 - **FRIDAY’s** lesson read the first paragraph, “Ellen G. White advocated...”
 - Did the Bible writers take the same position that EGW took on slavery?
 - Was EGW right or wrong in her position? I
 - s EGW to be taken over the Bible?
 - Why the difference in counsel between EGW and the Bible on the issue of slavery?
 - Was there some aspect of culture that was different? What?
 - If all slaves were set free in first century Rome, what would have been a likely result? Greater order, or disorder, anarchy, crime, starvation, etc. etc. Would the condition of many of the slaves been worse in that day had they suddenly all been set free?



- What would have happened to the gospel and the message of Christ had the Christians began advocating for changes in social order rather than changes in the hearts of people?
- Was Christianity well established in the 19th century, but just emerging in the first? Does this play a role in the different attitude?

What are your thoughts on the relationship between the church and state?

Do you think the church can achieve God's purposes by working through the state institutions? Why or why not?

What methods to states always use? They always use coercion. Can God achieve His goal of changing hearts by the use of coercion? No! Coercion will never work to transform hearts—only love truth in freedom!

Can we run sinful human governments with God's methods—why or why not?

What are God's methods? Truth, love and freedom—which have their primary impact where? And what do they result in? They have their impact on the heart to win to trust and transform the person back to God's design for life. Thus God's methods change people—putting them into harmony with God so they can live in His unveiled presence.

Will truth, love, freedom, without coercive pressure, work in a world populated by people who have rejected truth, who have solidified their hearts in selfishness and are operating on fear and survival mode? Why or why not?

What happens in a sinful world without coercive law enforcement? When law enforcement breaks down—the aftermath of Katrina—what happened? Why does this happen?

So, is the Bible saying that God permits earthly governments to arise in order to provide restraint on evil humans who have rejected the principles of love, truth and freedom, in order to create order and atmospheres where the gospel can be shared and people set free from sinfulness?

Does this mean that God endorses the governments of the earth?

TUESDAY

Read 1Peter 3:1-7:

Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, ² when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. ³ Your beauty should not come from outward



adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. ⁴ Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. ⁵ For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, ⁶ like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

⁷ Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

The lesson asks "How is what is said relevant to marriage in today's society?"

Do we ever hear, in Christianity, about wives submitting to their husbands? What does this mean?

What is Peter's focus here? Is Peter's concern to establish hierarchical command structure within the family? Is Peter's concern to define lines of authority? In Peter's day, was there already an accepted hierarchy within families—pagan, Jew and Christian?

What was the accepted hierarchy across all groups in Peter's day? Husband's ruled in their homes—wives were subservient.

So, is Peter establishing or in any other way commenting about the lines of authority within the home, or is Peter's focus on something entirely different?

What is Peter's focus? Is it not on the salvation of husband and wife? Is it not on the healing of the inner persons from sinfulness and bringing both members to conversion, which leads both to experience the marriage relationship as God originally intended, mutual other-centered love and self-sacrifice!

From *The Remedy*:

In the same way, wives, by your conduct, actively seek to reveal God's true character to your husbands, so that even if they don't believe the Scriptures, they may be won over by your humble, loving service² when they see genuine, selfless love in action.³ The beauty that emanates from God cannot be revealed in outward trappings such as hairstyle, jewelry or designer clothes, so don't get tricked into making your external appearance your main concern.⁴ Instead, real, godly beauty is found in a heart, mind and character that has been healed to be like Christ's—gentle and loving—and is of the highest worth in God's sight.⁵ This is how the holy women of the past, who trusted God, made themselves beautiful: they lovingly sought the godly best for their husbands,⁶ like Sarah, who graciously supported Abraham and called him "my hero and leader." You are truly heirs of Sarah if you give of yourself in love to build up your husband, and not give into fear and selfishness.



⁷If you are a husband, then be sure to always consider the needs of your wife and treat her with love, sacrificing yourselves for her good. Respect her as the weaker partner, but remember her equality to you as an heir of God's gracious gift of life. Do this so that you may experience the unity of love, and nothing will then interfere with your conversations with God.

Is this how you have most commonly heard Peter's words? What has prevented this focus from coming to the forefront? Could it be the acceptance of the imposed law lens with its focus on rules, rather than understanding God's design?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Paul addresses some..." What does it mean rulers are appointed by God? Does it mean that God chooses every ruler?

Was Nero chosen by God? Was Hitler chosen by God? When the little horn power arises and wars against God and against God's people, is God the one who set up that power? Or does the Bible say that this power gets its authority from the dragon? So did God set up this little horn power?

Even in ancient Israel, were all kings set up by God?

But Israel has rejected what is good;
an enemy will pursue him.

⁴ They set up kings without my consent;
they choose princes without my approval.
With their silver and gold
they make idols for themselves
to their own destruction. Hosea 8:3,4

Even in ancient Israel God did not set up all kings.

So, does God appoint all rulers or set up all governors or governments? No!

Then how do they get into power? What is God's role? God permits people to set up their governments, under the umbrella of His rule, which is liberty, and then reap the consequences.

The closing years of the ill-fated kingdom of Israel were marked with violence and bloodshed such as had never been witnessed even in the worst periods of strife and unrest under the house of Ahab. For two centuries and more the rulers of **the ten tribes had been sowing the wind; now they were reaping the whirlwind.** King after king was assassinated to make way for others ambitious to rule. "They have set up kings," the Lord declared of these godless usurpers, "but not by Me: they have made princes, and I knew it not." Hosea 8:4. **Every principle of justice was set aside;** those who should have stood before the nations of earth as the



depositories of divine grace, "dealt treacherously against the Lord" and with one another.
Hosea 5:7. {PK 279.1}

Do we do God a disservice by teaching that all kingdoms are set up by God?

What is the Christian response to rulers, governments that operate out of harmony with God's principles?

Should the church use its energy to try and reform governments?

Which government abused human rights more—today's US government or Rome at the time of Christ and the first century?

Did Christ, or any of the Apostles, seek to change the government of Rome? Did they petition for a new governor in Palestine? Did they seek to get new senators in the Roman senate? Did they advocate for changing the laws of Rome?

Where did Christ and the Apostles focus their energy? On changing the hearts of people—why? Because when people love each other how do they behave?

In our society today do we see love?

When we love someone who disagrees with us, how do we treat them?

Do we see in society today people treating those who disagree with them with kindness, respect, tolerance, a willingness to listen and try to understand? Do we see those who disagree giving opponents the benefit of the doubt, interpreting their words in the most gracious light, or instead instantly putting the worst possible interpretation upon them?

What is the greatest problem in society today? Is it not the lack of love for each other?

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, "Peter was not being..." What is the principle being espoused? To seek to live in harmony with God's design and apply God's principles in our actions, which would mean seeking to bless and help others.

Could two people, who both have concern for others in their hearts, seek to implement governmental policies that are opposed to each other?



For instance, could one person seeing poverty and wanting to help those without food, shelter, education, suggest a program which provides money for those individuals to spend to purchase food, clothing shelter etc.?

Could another person, equally concerned, suggest a program that provides work, job training, employment but ties the money to work?

Could the two people end up fighting, yet both initially have the same goal?

What ends up complicating such altruistic actions being implemented through human governments? The inevitable involvement of people who are not converted to love others and who will exploit the system for selfish gain.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question

#1 “Should Christians never stand up for their rights? As you do, consider this question, as well: Just what are our rights?”

Why did Jesus say turn the other cheek when struck unjustly? Why did Jesus say if someone takes your coat give them your shirt as well? What was Jesus trying to teach?

How do we overcome selfishness? Can we overcome selfishness by acting selfish? Can we drive out sickness with disease?

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.”—Martin Luther King Jr., Strength to Love (1963)

Question #2: “What are examples in which the impact of Christians on society has been a powerful force in changing society for good?”

- Charitable organizations (Red Cross, Salvation Army, Samaritan Center etc.)
- The constitution of the USA, liberty of conscience, separation of church and state
- End to slavery
- Health, wellness and anti-addiction programs
- Justice systems that seen genuine fairness
- Movements that seek equality of all human beings
- Others?

Question #3: “What are examples in which Christians, instead of helping change the ills of society, acquiesced to those ills and even helped justify them?”

- Inquisition—unjust



- Crusades and wars (Rwanda, Nazi Germany)
- Intolerance of beliefs
- Promoting the Divine right of Kings
- Subjugation of women
- Seeking to control the state to advance the gospel



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle Is Real at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcs Summit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

June 23,24, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar for the Samaritan Counseling Service in Sarasota FL. For more information www.samaritangulfcoast.com
(T) 941-926-2959 (F) 941-929-0849

July 14,15, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Lakeport SDA church, in Lakeport CA.

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

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

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987

Fax: (714) 534-3877

Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



First and Second Peter Lesson 6 2Q 2017

Suffering for Christ

SABBATH

Read Memory Text: “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.” 1Pet 2:21

What does it mean that we were called to suffer? Why?

It says because Christ suffered for us—why did Christ suffer for us?

What was the cause of Christ’s suffering?

Were any of the following the cause Christ’s sufferings:

- Physical mistreatment and abuse?
- Failure of people to recognize and respond to truth?
- Seeing His creation ravaged by sin?
- Rejection by people—especially those claiming to be His followers?
- Rejection and abandonment by His disciples?
- Betrayal by Judas?
- Going without food in the desert, physical fatigue and exhaustion?
- The human condition that He assumed and came to cure?
- The separation He felt from His Father during crucifixion weekend?
- The fear of dying and the agony and temptation to stop death from taking Him?
- The fear He might never rise again?

Can we categorize the various types of suffering?

First, all suffering only happens because sin exists in the world, yet is all suffering due to some act of sin by the one suffering? No!

So what categories can we break suffering into?

- Suffering of righteous people who are being attacked by unrighteous forces, whether people or demonic agencies.
 - This is what Peter is referring to in our memory text—being mistreated by people
 - Jesus suffering this way, as have many righteous people throughout history
 - Why did Jesus say when this happens we should turn the other cheek?
 - When is it proper not to turn the other cheek but to act to prevent the attack?
 - Parents whose children are trying to hit them—why is it better to intervene to stop the child? Because love seeks what is best, and it is greater love to



- discipline the child to prevent the formation of such unruly character traits. Note the act to intervene here is obviously not an act to retaliate, to destroy, to injure, but to protect the child and promote healthy development.
- Psychotic patient who is seeking to hit you—why is it better to intervene to stop them? Because they are incapable of comprehending right from wrong and need protection from themselves and the witness of love would do them no good. Note the act to intervene here is obviously not an act of vengeance, retaliation, or to destroy, but to restore to mental wellness.
 - So, when does Jesus' directive apply? When the action of turning the other cheek exposes the evil of unjust violence and exploitation and serves to promote the principles of love and respect for all human beings. The non-Christian Gandhi perhaps demonstrated this principle most effectively on a societal basis.
- Suffering that occurs because of disease and decay in nature
 - disease, aging, poisons, toxins, accidents, injuries
 - Suffering that occurs because of sin destroying that which we love
 - see animals suffer
 - see loved ones rebel and destroy themselves in unhealthy living
 - Suffering that occurs because of our carnal nature tempting us and God's healing solution being applied?
 - Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. 1Pet 4:1
 - What does this mean?

What caused Christ the greatest suffering?

He went a little distance from them--not so far but that they could both see and hear Him--and fell prostrate upon the ground. **He felt that by sin He was being separated from His Father.** The gulf was so broad, so black, so deep, that His spirit shuddered before it. **This agony** He must not exert His divine power to escape. **As man He must suffer the consequences of man's sin. As man He must endure the wrath of God against transgression.** {DA 686.3}

Again the Son of God was seized with **superhuman agony**, and fainting and exhausted, He staggered back to the place of His former struggle. **His suffering was even greater than before.** As the agony of soul came upon Him, "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." The cypress and palm trees were the silent witnesses of His anguish. From their leafy branches dropped heavy dew upon His stricken form, **as if nature wept over its Author wrestling alone with the powers of darkness.** {DA 689.3}

...a light shone forth amid the stormy darkness of the crisis hour, and the mighty angel who stands in God's presence, occupying the position from which Satan fell, came to the side of Christ. **The angel came not to take the cup from Christ's hand, but to strengthen Him to drink it, with the assurance of the Father's love.** He came to give power to the divine-human



suppliant. **He pointed Him to the open heavens**, telling Him of the souls that would be saved as the result of His sufferings. He assured Him that His Father is greater and more powerful than Satan, that His death would result in the utter discomfiture of Satan, and that the kingdom of this world would be given to the saints of the Most High. He told Him that He would see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, for He would see a multitude of the human race saved, eternally saved. {DA 693.3}

Christ's agony did not cease, but His depression and discouragement left Him. The storm had in nowise abated, but He who was its object was strengthened to meet its fury. He came forth calm and serene. A heavenly peace rested upon His bloodstained face. **He had borne that which no human being could ever bear; for He had tasted the sufferings of death for every man.** {DA 694.1}

Why did Christ experience it?

- He experienced the agony of being disconnected from God the source of love, life, and truth
- He experienced the full weight of what the carnal nature does—it tempts with fear and selfishness and Christ's humanity felt this terrible fear and agony

Why didn't Christ put a stop to it?

- If Christ's uses His divine power to stop death from taking Him, who does He save? Self, this would be exactly what Satan would like, for Christ to use His power in self-interest. Satan claims that love is not real and that God is selfish, thus God's character would have been undermined and misrepresented had Christ chosen to save Himself.
- Second, the infection of selfishness in the heart/mind of humanity would not be overcome and a new human character/nature would not have been developed if Christ chose to save Himself

The foe who in the wilderness had confronted Christ assailed Him now with fierce and subtle temptations. **Had Jesus yielded for a moment, had He changed His course in the least particular to save Himself, Satan's agencies would have triumphed, and the world would have been lost.** {DA 486.1}

If Jesus suffered in our place why do we have to suffer?

Once there is brokenness there are no pain-free options! If you have a broken leg and do nothing you don't avoid pain, and you have permanent disability. If you go to the orthopedic surgeon, get a pin, and then physical therapy there is pain, but the process leads to healing, resolution of pain and restoration of function. But, there are no pain free options.

Is it any different for humanity broken by sin?

Christ achieved the Remedy to sin that no other human could achieve, however, that Remedy still must be applied into the lives of every person who is saved. The application of that Remedy results in



suffering when love confronts selfishness, when truth confronts the lies we have cherished, when destructive habits are resisted and overcome by the presence of God's indwelling Spirit.

We will all suffer because we are all damaged by sin—the only question is will our suffering be in harmony with God's healing plan, which leads to restoration and eventual freedom from all suffering, or not?

SUNDAY

The lesson is about the first couple of centuries after Christ and the persecution of Christians by the various civil governments. What is your understanding of why this happened?

Were Christians being persecuted because they were inciting rebellion, like the Jews who constantly sought to overthrow the Romans and which led to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70?

Were Christians carrying out acts of terrorism?

Were Christians desecrating pagan worship centers and painting graffiti on Roman statues?

Were Christians calling for boycotts of Roman businesses?

What were Christians doing? They were preaching Christ—and in an empire with many gods—12 primary gods: Jupiter, Juno, Mars, Venus, Minerva, Neptune, Ceres, Vulcan, Diana, Bacchus, Mercury, Vesta, and minor household spirits that were worshipped, who the Romans believed protected each home and later other gods such as Isis, Pan and Mithras came to be worshipped.

So in a culture with so many gods, why were Christians persecuted for adding another God to the mix?

Because there is a Great Controversy between God and Satan and there are only two versions of God—the truth of God who is love as Jesus revealed, who is Creator and whose laws are design laws, and gods who function like Satan alleges, with Satan's characteristics, like sinful beings. And how do sinful beings govern? Impose rules that require punishment and/or some form of payment or appeasement.

Christianity presented a God that stood in marked contrast to all the other gods in the world—a God who was not merely powerful, but who was selfless love and whose laws were design laws! This, Satan could not allow—so Satan inspired his followers to try and eliminate the knowledge of the true God.

Jesus said those living in darkness don't want to come into the light lest their evil deeds be exposed. Love and truth is offensive to those operating on lies and selfishness.



MONDAY

Read first paragraph “When Peter says...” What is the blessing we received when we suffer for righteousness sake?

How do we overcome selfishness? Can we overcome selfishness by acting selfish? Can we drive out sickness with disease?

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.”—Martin Luther King Jr., Strength to Love (1963)

Why should Christians not fear those who are attacking them?

What can prevent Christians from being afraid? Three elements I have thus far identified overcome fear:

- Love
 - Perfect love casts out all fear—what is the truth here and how does it help us overcome fear?
 - Neurobiologically when our love circuits fire our fear circuits calm.
 - In your life when you are acting in love toward others, what happens to your fear?
 - Do we see evidence of this in the death of Stephen and the martyrs?
 - Christian de Chergé, was a French Catholic monk and the Trappist prior of the Tibhirine monastery in Algeria, and in 1993, with the rise of radical Islam, Father Chergé knew that his life was in danger. But rather than leave Algeria, Father Chergé chose to stay and continue his witness to the love of Jesus Christ. On May 24, 1996, Father Chergé was beheaded by Muslim radicals. Anticipating his death, Father Chergé had left a testament with his family to be read upon the event of his murder. The testament reads in part:

If it should happen one day—and it could be today—that I become a victim of the terrorism which now seems ready to encompass all the foreigners living in Algeria, I would like my community, my Church, my family, to remember that my life was given to God and to this country. I ask them to accept that the One Master of all life was not a stranger to this brutal departure. I ask them to pray for me: for how could I be found worthy of such an offering? I ask them to be able to associate such a death with the many other deaths that were just as violent, but forgotten through indifference and anonymity.

I should like, when the time comes, to have a clear space which would allow me to beg forgiveness of God and of all my fellow human beings, and at the same time to forgive with all my heart the one who would strike me down. . . .



My death, clearly, will appear to justify those who hastily judged me as naïve or idealistic: “Let him tell us now what he thinks of it.” But these people must realize that my most avid curiosity will then be satisfied. This is what I shall be able to do, if God wills—immerse my gaze in that of the Father, to contemplate with him his children of Islam just as he sees them, all shining with the glory of Christ, the fruit of his Passion, filled with the Gift of the Spirit, whose secret joy will always be to establish communion and to refashion the likeness, delighting in the differences.

For this life given up, totally mine and totally theirs, I thank God and you also, the friend of my final moment, who would not be aware of what you were doing. Yes, for you also I wish this “thank you”—and this “adieu”—to commend you to the God whose face I see in yours. And may we find each other, happy “good thieves,” in Paradise, if it pleases God, the Father of us both. Amen¹

- One factor which enables us to overcome fear is love.
- Where do we find such love?
- How do we experience it?
- What prevents us from experiencing such love?
- Truth
 - First truth is the truth about God—do you know Him for who He is such that you genuinely trust Him—with your wealth, life, family, future? Do we believe God really has our best interest at heart? Or is our view of God one that many of my patients have when they ask:
 - Why did God take my child in a car accident?
 - Why did God give my child cancer?
 - Why didn’t God prevent my husband from cheating?
 - Why did God give me bipolar?
 - If we believe God does such things can we truly trust Him?
 - What kind of emotions do such beliefs cause? Fear and what does fear cause us to do? Watch out for self—which is the opposite of love!
 - What did Jesus mean when He said: “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” Mt 10:28
 - What is the truth here and how can this reduce fear?
 - By realizing that our individuality, our personhood, our software, cannot be corrupted by others, and if we trust God while our bodies can be destroyed our individualities are safe with Christ in heaven
- Purpose—the third element that protects against fear
 - If we understand our suffering serves a purpose, does it help us endure it?

¹ Christian de Chergé, “Last Testament,” Eternal Word Television Network,
<http://www.ewtn.com/library/MARY/LASTTEST.HTM>.



- Did you hear in the *Desire of Ages* quotation above what that author describes that the angel of heaven did who came to Christ in Gethsemane? The angel pointed Christ to the purpose of His suffering, what it would accomplish, which further invigorated His love for us!
- Does our suffering for righteousness serve a purpose?
- If you knew your suffering would be useful in protecting someone you love, would that help give your courage?
- In my book, *The God-Shaped Brain*, I write about a patient dying of esophageal cancer and his struggles to understand why he wasn't healed, despite prayer for healing. He came to understand God did not cause the cancer, but allowed it for a higher purpose. through his dying process as he continued to demonstrate trust in God, experience peace, showed love and kindness toward others, and wasn't afraid—he saw his two siblings give their heart to God. He died, but he died with the comfort that not only would he rise again, but his brother and sister would be in eternity with him.

The third paragraph states, “Clearly there is no merit in suffering for being a wrongdoer.”

What is meant by “merit”? Do they mean benefit, there is no benefit in suffering for wrongdoing? Or do they mean something else?

Is there a disciplinary benefit in suffering for wrongdoing? In other words, can the suffering of wrong doing work to lead someone to reevaluate their actions? Did the prodigal son find himself suffering as a result of wrong doing? Did his suffering lead him to go home?

When people suffering for wrongdoing, while they might learn something and change their ways, when such suffering is imposed by law enforcement, rather than the natural results of sin, such suffering actually perpetuates the lie that God's government works this way.

Do the lesson authors mean that merit is a benefit for the advancement of God's kingdom, for the healing from sin?

What is the benefit to God's kingdom when we suffering for right-doing?

The revelation of truth which advances the knowledge of God and helps promote the methods and principles of God to those who don't already know them.

Additionally, those who suffering for doing right experience further healing, solidification, transformation of their character as they choose the right and reject the wrong.



WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “In all these passages...” When you hear the concept of judgment what comes to mind? To you think through judicial or medical lenses? Do you think through imposed law or design law?

What is judgment through judicial lens? It is a legal process, focused on behavior, the dos and don'ts and ultimately resulting in the judge making a ruling which determines the fate of the one being judged.

Through design law—what do we realize?

First, who is the one who is the focus of the judgment? Who is the one who was lied about in the beginning? What was the cause of the spread of sin in the universe? What did Satan do to get 1/3 of the angels and later humanity to fall?

What did Paul mean when he wrote:

God must be true, even though every human being is a liar. As the scripture says, “You must be shown to be right when you speak; you must win your case when you are being tried.” Rom 3:4

What is the first message of the 3 angels of Revelation 14?

“Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

The hour of whose judgment has come? The hour in which God can be seen in His true light and people, who have had their minds shrouded in the grossest darkness about God can make a right judgment about Him and finally worship Him who made the heavens, earth, and sea. It is a call to worship the designer and reject the dictator views of God.

So, why does judgment start with the house of God? Because God's people are the first to recognize the truth about Him and reject the lies of Satan and then go out and tell others!

What about the idea of standing before God, i.e. the Great White Throne judgment?

What is judgment through the medical lens? The accurate diagnosis of the condition of the one being examined, and then the medical judgment of what is the appropriate treatment to resolve, heal and thus save the one who has been diagnosed.

When you think of God acting as judge which view do you choose and why? Which is most accurate with Scripture? Which is more consistent with design law and how reality works?



In the second paragraph it states, “Sin has brought evil into the world, and God’s people throughout the ages have long waited for God to make things right again.”

What does it mean for God to make things right? What is another work for making things right, or doing what is right? Justice!

Is making things right, justice, the same as inflicting pain and suffering upon those who persist in sin and refuse salvation?

What about Bible texts that speak of vengeance being God’s?

- Therefore the Lord, the Lord Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: “Ah, I will get relief from my foes and **avenge myself on my enemies.** ²⁵ I will turn my hand against you; **I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities.** Isaiah 1:24,25
- Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; ⁴ **say to those with fearful hearts, “Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.”** ⁵ Then will the eyes of the **blind be opened** and the **ears of the deaf unstopped.** ⁶ **Then will the lame leap like a deer,** and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Isa 35:3-6
- The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to **bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,** ² to proclaim the year of the **Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God,** to comfort all who mourn, ³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion— **to bestow on them a crown of beauty** instead of ashes, **the oil of gladness** instead of mourning, and **a garment of praise** instead of a spirit of despair. Isa 61:1-3

What is God’s vengeance? It is God taking vengeance on sin, NOT SINNERS, by destroying all deviations from His design and thereby healing all who let Him!

Is this right or just for God to do? Then what does it mean for God to set things right?

Read bottom pink section, “Think of all the evil in the world that has gone, and still goes, unpunished. Why, then, is the concept of justice and God’s righteous judgment so crucial for us as Christians? What hope do we get from the promise that justice will be done?”

What is revealed in these questions?

- That the authors do not understand God’s law, nor character nor the nature of sin, and therefore do not understand the plan of salvation



- Worse, it reveals that the infection of Satan's lies about God's government have deeply infected Christian thought and the infection is being promoted as the cure.
- These ideas present the problem with sin as one of inflicted punishment coming from God. This false view of justice makes God out to be the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death. Thus, people end up teaching theologies which are designed to hide us and protect us from God, rather than deliver and heal us from sin!

What do I mean?

- What is the difference between God's law and man's law? How are they functionally different?
- What happens if one breaks God's law? What will happen to the one who breaks God's law if God does not act?
- What action does God take and why?
- What happens to the one who breaks man's law? What will happen if human law enforcement does not act?
- What action do human governments take and why?
- What did Lucifer allege in heaven regarding God's law?
 - In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. {DA 761.4}
- What does the Bible and the founders of the SDA church teach regarding what happens for transgressing God's law?
 - **The wages of sin is death.** Romans 6:23
 - **Sin when full grown brings forth death.** James 1:15
 - The one who sows to please his sinful nature, **from that nature will reap destruction.** Gal 6:8
 - **Sickness, suffering, and death are work of an antagonistic power. Satan is the destroyer; God is the restorer.** {MH 113.1}
 - **God destroys no one.** The sinner destroys himself by his own impenitence. {FLB 58.7}
 - **Read the Scriptures carefully,** and you will find that **Christ spent the largest part of His ministry in restoring** the suffering and afflicted to health. Thus He threw back upon Satan the reproach of the evil which the enemy of all good had originated. **Satan is the destroyer; Christ is the Restorer.** {MM 240.1}
 - **Satan is the destroyer.** God cannot bless those who refuse to be faithful stewards. **All He can do is to permit Satan to accomplish his destroying work.** We see calamities of every kind and in every degree coming upon the earth, and why? **The Lord's restraining power is not exercised.** {6T 388.3}
 - Men have reached a point in insolence and disobedience which shows that their cup of iniquity is almost full. Many have well-nigh passed the boundary of mercy. Soon **God will show that He is indeed the living God. He will say to the angels, "No longer**



combat Satan in his efforts to destroy. Let him work out his malignity upon the children of disobedience; for the cup of their iniquity is full. They have advanced from one degree of wickedness to another, adding daily to their lawlessness. **I will no longer interfere to prevent the destroyer from doing his work.**" {RH, September 17, 1901 par. 8}

- **Christ never planted the seeds of death in the system. Satan planted these seeds** when he tempted Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge, which meant disobedience to God. {16MR 247.2}
- **We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin.** The sinner brings punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a **change of character**, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, **men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.** {FLB 84.7}

What is justice?

It is doing what is right or just, as defined by what? The law, what law? The law of love, which emanates from God's character. So, with the law of love as the standard, which is design law, what is justice?

Justice – Bible definition is to do right in helping others, show compassion and mercy – no concept of punitive infliction of punishment, that is a human definition, which definition does PSM use? Here is the Biblical evidence:

- "Defend the poor and fatherless; Do justice (*tsadaq*) to the afflicted and needy" (Psalm 82:3 NKJV).
- Wash yourselves clean. Stop all this evil that I see you doing. Yes, stop doing evil and learn to do right. See that justice (*mishpat*) is done--- help those who are oppressed, give orphans their rights, and defend widows. (Isaiah 1:16,17 GNB)
- This is what the LORD says to the dynasty of David: 'Give justice (*mishpat*) each morning to the people you judge! Help those who have been robbed; rescue them from their oppressors.' (Jeremiah 21:12 NLT)
- 'Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Enough, O princes of Israel! Remove violence and plundering, execute justice (*mishpat*) and righteousness (*tsadaq*), and stop dispossessing my people,' says the Lord GOD. 'You shall have honest scales....' (Ezekiel 45:9,10 NKJV)
- The LORD is waiting to be kind to you. He rises to have compassion on you. The LORD is a God of justice (*mishpat*). (Isaiah 30:18 GW)



- “This is what the LORD of Armies says: Administer real justice (*mishpat*), be compassionate and kind to each other.” (Zechariah 7:9 GW)
- “He executes justice (*mishpat*) for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing” (Deuteronomy 10:18 NASB)

THURSDAY

Read bottom pink question, “Why is knowing the character of God for yourself, knowing His goodness and His love for you personally, such a crucial component for a Christian, especially one who is suffering? How can we all learn to come to know the reality of His love better?”

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 2



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Korean and Polish Translations: A publisher in Korea has contracted to translate *Could It Be This Simple?* (CIBTS) into Korean, and a publisher in Poland has contracted to translate *The God-Shaped Brain* (GSB) into Polish. We will let you know when these are available.

Currently CIBTS is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and German and GSB is available in English and Korean.

April 27-29: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle Is Real at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcsummit.com/>

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

June 23,24, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar for the Samaritan Counseling Service in Sarasota FL. For more information www.samaritangulfcoast.com
(T) 941-926-2959 (F) 941-929-0849

July 14,15, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Lakeport SDA church, in Lakeport CA.

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

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

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



2017 Q2 Feed My Sheep 1st and 2nd Peter

Lesson 7 – Servant Leadership

Leadership is a hot topic – leaders in business, leaders in government, church leaders, team leaders. There are countless books written on the topic every year, tons of classes and seminars taught on how to be a good leader. In fact, I put just the word “leadership” in Amazon’s book search engine and it returned 184,106 titles.

So what makes a good leader?

Are there consistent traits or qualities that effective leaders have in common?

How can we tell who is – or who will be – an effective leader?

Think about maybe people you have worked for or others who have struck you as good leaders. What are some of the common characteristics of successful leaders?

- Vision
- Communication
- Inspiration
- Innovation

These days on social media, if you like someone’s Instagram and don’t want to miss any of their photos...what do you do? If you happen to participate in the social media sewer known as Twitter, and you don’t want to miss someone’s asinine tweets, what do you do?

You ***FOLLOW*** them!

Instagram queen, Selena Gomez, has 118 million “followers”...does this make her an effective leader? Katy Perry has 97,298,907 Twitter followers...is she a good leader?

I have also known people in my life who were able to communicate a vision and inspire folks in such a way that they would quit their jobs, pack up their families, and move across the country in order to keep working for these leaders.

Is having followers or people being willing to follow necessarily an indication of strong leadership skills?



We will talk more specifically about Servant Leadership in Tuesday's lesson, and whether a servant leader exhibits different qualities...but this week's lesson tends to focus exclusively on the importance of these leadership traits in "church" leadership – the church proper, the organized, institutional, bureaucratic, political church. Sometimes, nothing can reduce the selfless and servant posture from folks like a little organizational power and prestige can...right? Even if it doesn't start out that way.

SUNDAY

Elders in the Early Church

So, let's revisit the history and context of who Peter is addressing here in his letter, and what is happening at the time. These are brand new churches, the apostles are evangelizing like crazy, the Holy Spirit is moving, new members and new churches are being added all the time, and the needs became overwhelming pretty quickly.

- So this rapid growth is a great problem to have – lots of churches would love to be able to say, “man, we just have too much growth...we are just adding too many members.” But the early church rapidly outgrew the apostle's ability to manage it effectively, and there were logistical issues, growing pains, and a real need for more defined structure in the organization.
- They had multiple ethnicities, cultures, nationalities coming together...but each with significant differences in traditions, beliefs, and practices (sound familiar?)...in fact, this first controversy or issue that arose was based on one group's perception that they were being discriminated against by the other groups.
- So these first elders were selected and ordained to handle some of the administrative, logistical, and organizational needs of the new churches, so that those who were preaching and evangelizing, and spreading the gospel would not be sidetracked or hindered by those tasks that were not the best use of their time or skills.
- These elders were given many different roles in early Christianity – they helped establish more structure in their local congregations. And since many were already leaders of their local communities, they sometimes acted as teachers, as preachers, and they ensured that the needs and well-being of their communities were being met.

In the teachers section, there is actually a distinction made between the roles of deacons and elders. Although the apostles were the early church's first leaders, Acts 6:1-6 describes the earliest attempt to draft additional leaders to share the organizational and structural responsibilities more effectively. These men were later called deacons, which mean those who minister to the needs of others. Subsequently, the apostles also found a need to appoint spiritual leaders in each church congregation and these men were known as elders, literally, older men of age and experience. The apostles were itinerant (traveling/roving) leaders, while the elders were local church leaders, and the deacons helped provide organizational and administrative support.



MONDAY

The Elders

Peter gives some instruction to the new elders and church leaders in 1 Peter 5:1-4:

“To the pastors and teachers among you, I call on you as a fellow pastor and teacher who witnessed Christ’s sufferings, and one who will also share in the glorious re-creation to be revealed: Protect God’s flock selflessly, like loving shepherds, serving as guides and guardians—not out of obligation or requirement, but freely—as God designed for you to do. Watch over it willingly, not seeking reward or payment, but eager to serve others; not like dictators exercising power and authority over those entrusted to their care, but modeling servant-leadership to your flock. Then, when the Chief Shepherd returns, you will be crowned with the glory of Christ’s perfection that will never fade away.”

Peter calls himself a fellow elder, pastor, and teacher when he gives this advice...do you think maybe it comes from a place of his personal experience?

Are there ways for these principles to apply to each of us, regardless of our roles in or out of the church?

Many times in the New Testament Jesus is referred to in the role of shepherd, the Good Shepherd, in our previous text as the Chief Shepherd. So, it is interesting that Peter, in this text, likens the role of an elder to a shepherd tending God’s flock.

What does that lead us to conclude about the significance of the role of elders in the church?

Are they literally tasked with being Christ’s representatives or envois to his church here on earth?

With that in mind, what are some of the qualities listed in the lesson that make good elder material? You will see many parallels to the effective leadership traits we discussed earlier.

- Patience (as a shepherd with his sheep)
- Humble, willing and eager to serve – no compulsion, guilt (nominating committee time), manipulation
- Nurturers and overseers
- Ready to function as examples rather than dictators
- Spiritual maturity, fully understood God’s methods and principles of love so they could foster the spiritual development of each new congregation



TUESDAY

Servant Leadership

What is servant leadership? How is it different from regular leadership we have been discussing? Well, another Google search yielded many of the same qualities and characteristics...along with some that weren't previously mentioned – traits like “person of character”, “puts others first”, “compassionate collaborator”, “leads with moral authority”, “empathy/healing”, “stewardship”, “builds community”.

Is there a common theme running through all of these? Selflessness!

Is there any doubt why Jesus was the quintessential servant leader?

For me, nothing illustrates the servant leadership concept better than the picture of Jesus we get a glimpse of in John 13:3-4 (this is from The Remedy):

“Jesus knew that his Father had placed all things—whether in heaven or on earth—in his hands, and that he had come from God to reveal him and was returning to God when his mission was complete. So in order to give his disciples a further revelation of God, he got up from his meal, took off his outer garment, and wrapped a towel around his waist. Then poured water in a bowl and began to wash the dirty feet of his disciples, drying them with the towel that was tied around him.”

What a beautiful picture, right? Especially when we remember that two of those feet were about to betray him.

Mrs. White expands on this story in her book, *The Desire of Ages*, but again we need to make sure we have a good grasp of the context and setting, and the recent events that took place right before the last supper. If you remember, the disciples were bickering amongst themselves, jockeying for position in Christ's kingdom, and the mother of the sons of thunder had just asked Jesus to put her two sons at his right and left hand! Think that caused any conflict? Here is what *The Desire of Ages* says about that encounter:

“Jesus bears tenderly with them, not rebuking their selfishness in seeking preference above their brethren. He reads their hearts, He knows the depth of their attachment to Him. Their love is not a mere human affection; though defiled by the earthliness of its human channel, it is an outflowing from the fountain of His own redeeming love. He will not rebuke, but deepen and purify.” DA 548



So based on that bit of background here is what she says about Christ's act of servant leadership:

“Another cause of dissension had arisen (other than the bickering and the brothers). At a feast it was customary for a servant to wash the feet of the guests, and on this occasion preparation had been made for the service. The pitcher, the basin, and the towel were there, in readiness for the feet washing; but no servant was present, and it was the disciples' part to perform it. But each of the disciples, yielding to wounded pride, determined not to act the part of a servant. All manifested a stoical unconcern, seeming unconscious that there was anything for them to do. By their silence they refused to humble themselves. – {DA 644.2}

How was Christ to bring these poor souls where Satan would not gain over them a decided victory? How could He show that a mere profession of discipleship did not make them disciples, or insure them a place in His kingdom? How could He show that it is loving service, true humility, which constitutes real greatness? How was He to kindle love in their hearts, and enable them to comprehend what He longed to tell them? – {DA 644.3}

The disciples made no move toward serving one another. Jesus waited for a time to see what they would do. Then He, the divine Teacher, rose from the table. Laying aside the outer garment that would have impeded His movements, He took a towel, and girded Himself. With surprised interest the disciples looked on, and in silence waited to see what was to follow. “After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.” This action opened the eyes of the disciples. Bitter shame and humiliation filled their hearts. They understood the unspoken rebuke, and saw themselves in altogether a new light. – {DA 644.4}

So Christ expressed His love for His disciples. Their selfish spirit filled Him with sorrow, but He entered into no controversy with them regarding their difficulty. Instead He gave them an example they would never forget. His love for them was not easily disturbed or quenched. He knew that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God, and went to God. He had a full consciousness of His divinity; but He had laid aside His royal crown and kingly robes, and had taken the form of a servant. One of the last acts of His life on earth was to gird Himself as a servant, and perform a servant's part. – {DA 644.5}

Before the Passover Judas had met a second time with the priests and scribes, and had closed the contract to deliver Jesus into their hands. Yet he afterward mingled with the disciples as though innocent of any wrong, and interested in the work of preparing for the feast. The disciples knew nothing of the purpose of Judas. Jesus alone could read his secret. Yet He did not expose him. Jesus hungered for his soul. He felt for him such a burden as for Jerusalem



when He wept over the doomed city. His heart was crying, How can I give thee up? The constraining power of that love was felt by Judas. When the Saviour's hands were bathing those soiled feet, and wiping them with the towel, the heart of Judas thrilled through and through with the impulse then and there to confess his sin. But he would not humble himself. He hardened his heart against repentance; and the old impulses, for the moment put aside, again controlled him. Judas was now offended at Christ's act in washing the feet of His disciples. If Jesus could so humble Himself, he thought, He could not be Israel's king. All hope of worldly honor in a temporal kingdom was destroyed. Judas was satisfied that there was nothing to be gained by following Christ. After seeing Him degrade Himself, as he thought, he was confirmed in his purpose to disown Him, and confess himself deceived. He was possessed by a demon, and he resolved to complete the work he had agreed to do in betraying his Lord.”
– {DA 645.1}

I know this is a long quote, but I was so intrigued and touched by these insights that I wanted to share it...and hearing this description of Judas' reaction reminded me of a little bit of Come and Reason history.

Some of you may remember in the very early days of our ministry, before we were Come and Reason, there were a group of folks who would get together and speak on God's character of love called The Good News Tour...anyone remember?

Well, they came up is a startling illustration reenacting the scene just described, but Jesus was washing the feet of George W. Bush, Kofi Anan, Osama Bin Laden, and others. They used it on marketing materials to advertise their events, but it turned out to be quite a controversial lightening rod. Many folks characterized the image as offensive – Christian denominations, non-Christian denominators, veterans – all demanded that flyers be removed and posters be taken down.



Why do you think this image caused so much controversy...any ideas?

I definitely did a double-take when I first saw it...it made me a bit uncomfortable and caused a bit of cognitive dissonance. Maybe it's easier to read John's account of Jesus washing the feet of both his friends and his enemies, filtered through the lens of our comfortable biases and prejudices and our interpretation of whose feet he **should** wash...and whose he shouldn't...than it is to see it laid out in a shocking, realistic, too-close-to-home illustration?



Why would this image of the Servant God cause such a visceral, some might say Judas-like, reaction in people?

I think the reason and the discomfort comes from both sides of the equation...or the stage. One of the reasons veterans strongly objected to the poster was the portrayal of Osama Bin Laden on equal footing with the president and the former secretary of state. If you notice, all of the folks being served are on the same level in this picture.

Have you ever heard the saying that the ground is level at the foot of the cross? Aren't we all terminal and in need of Christ's healing, saving remedy? And isn't his desire and willingness to serve and heal and save equal for all who are willing to receive it? The other source of discomfort may come from the picture of *God* portrayed here...and I say that purposely. Some might actually be able to accept Jesus in this picture and in this servant role, but have trouble interposing God the father in his place...but if Jesus and the Father are one, and if we have seen Jesus we have seen the Father, then isn't that exactly what we are seeing in the picture?

Maybe if you are waiting with baited breath for God to come back in glory and triumph and punish His (and your) enemies, then you are uncomfortable with and do not want to see a picture of him serving those enemies in love and humility? This is at the heart of the imposed law construct that has infected the vast majority of Christianity, and it's preventing hearts and minds and lives from being transformed by God's spirit of truth and love.

Continuing on with the quote –

“Judas, in choosing his position at table, had tried to place himself first, and Christ as a servant served him first. John, toward whom Judas had felt so much bitterness, was left till the last. But John did not take this as a rebuke or slight. As the disciples watched Christ's action, they were greatly moved. When Peter's turn came, he exclaimed with astonishment, “Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?” Christ's condescension broke his heart. He was filled with shame to think that one of the disciples was not performing this service. “What I do,” Christ said, “thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.” Peter could not bear to see his Lord, whom he believed to be the Son of God, acting the part of a servant. His whole soul rose up against this humiliation. He did not realize that for this Christ came into the world. With great emphasis he exclaimed, “Thou shalt never wash my feet.” – {DA 645.2}

Solemnly Christ said to Peter, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.” The service which Peter refused was the type of a higher cleansing. Christ had come to wash the heart from the stain of sin. In refusing to allow Christ to wash his feet, Peter was refusing the higher



cleansing included in the lower. He was really rejecting his Lord. **It is not humiliating to the Master to allow Him to work for our purification. The truest humility is to receive with thankful heart any provision made in our behalf, and with earnestness do service for Christ.** – {DA 646.1}

At the words, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me,” Peter surrendered his pride and self-will. He could not endure the thought of separation from Christ; that would have been death to him. “Not my feet only,” he said, “but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.” – {DA 646.2}

These words mean more than bodily cleanliness. Christ is still speaking of the higher cleansing as illustrated by the lower. He who came from the bath was clean, but the sandaled feet soon became dusty, and again needed to be washed. So Peter and his brethren had been washed in the great fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Christ acknowledged them as His. But temptation had led them into evil, and they still needed His cleansing grace. When Jesus girded Himself with a towel to wash the dust from their feet, He desired by that very act to wash the alienation, jealousy, and pride from their hearts. This was of far more consequence than the washing of their dusty feet. With the spirit they then had, not one of them was prepared for communion with Christ. Until brought into a state of humility and love, they were not prepared to partake of the paschal supper, or to share in the memorial service which Christ was about to institute. Their hearts must be cleansed. Pride and self-seeking create dissension and hatred, but all this Jesus washed away in washing their feet. A change of feeling was brought about. Looking upon them, Jesus could say, “Ye are clean.” Now there was union of heart, love for one another. They had become humble and teachable. Except Judas, each was ready to concede to another the highest place. Now with subdued and grateful hearts they could receive Christ’s words. – {DA 646.3}

The 4th paragraph says Peter, “goes on to explain that a key difference between His kingdom and those of the Gentile nations is the type of leader that will emerge in His kingdom.”

When I read that I said yep, that is *a* key difference...but it is a product or an outgrowth of *the* key difference.

What is the key difference between God’s kingdom and earthly kingdoms?

Imposed law versus design law!



“Those who wish to lead in the kingdom where Jesus is King must become servants because the leaders in Jesus’ kingdom will be like Jesus”

very well said! Thus, Peter is calling church leaders to the same ideal: the surrender and self-denial seen in Jesus must be revealed in them, as well.

The box at the bottom of Tuesday’s lesson points out how closely Paul’s writing in Phil 2:4-8 coincides with Peter’s instructions to church leaders. From The Message:

“If you’ve gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care— then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don’t push your way to the front; don’t sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don’t be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand. Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn’t think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn’t claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion.”

WEDNESDAY

Clothed in Humility

Does being clothed in humility seem counterintuitive to being a leader?

Is being described as “humble” a compliment or an insult?

Wednesday’s lesson describes the “stratified” class system that existed in the ancient world in Peter’s day. There was a “ruling elite” class that had what might be called a commanding presence. The so-called middle class was likely non-existent, leaving various groups of the lower class all the way down to the lowest rank of all – the slave – and the Greek word for “humility” described the proper attitude for those of lower rank to have toward those of a higher one.

This same Greek word means lowly, insignificant, weak, poor, and describes people with no power or status in society. In the world outside of Judaism and Christianity, the word “humble” was associated with those of low status, and to act humbly would not necessarily have been commended as



appropriate conduct or a compliment. But isn't it interesting that "confidence combined with humility" is listed as a common factor in successful servant leadership?

So Peter's advice in chapter 5 versus 5-7 was a bit counterculture for the time, and still is. The Remedy says:

"Young people, respectfully listen to the counsel of those who are older, and follow their wise leadership. But all of you – old and young alike – treat each other with humble and loving service, because 'God is the opposite of self-exaltation, and his very nature opposes pridefulness; he pours his healing power into the humble.' Therefore, surrender yourselves under God's almighty healing hand that he might restore you, uplifting you to his ideal in due time. Pour out your worries, frustrations, and burdens upon him, because he cares for you."

Another quote from one of the founders of our church giving instruction to pastors and church leaders says,

"To succeed as Jesus succeeded, lead humbly as Jesus led—Jesus, the dear Saviour, has given marked lessons in humility to all, but especially to the gospel minister. In His humiliation, when His work upon earth was nearly finished and He was about to return to His Father's throne whence He had come, with all power in His hands and all glory upon His head, among His last lessons to His disciples was one upon the importance of humility. While His disciples were contending as to who should be greatest in the promised kingdom, He girded Himself as a servant and washed the feet of those who called Him Lord and Master." {PaM 284.2}

Wednesday's lesson concludes,

"Sure, anyone could be humble before God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Also, it's relatively easy to be humble before those who are above us, who have power over us, and who are 'higher' in status than we are. The true test comes when we reveal humility toward those who are 'under' us, who have no power over us. That's the kind of humility Peter is talking about here."

One more quote on Christ's humility from Sons and Daughters of God:

"In consenting to become man, Christ manifested a humility that is the marvel of the heavenly intelligences. The act of consenting to be a man would be no humiliation were it not for the fact of Christ's exalted pre-existence. We must open our understanding to realize that Christ laid aside his royal robe, His kingly crown, His high command, and clothed His divinity with humanity, that He might meet man where he was, and bring to the human family moral power to become the sons and daughters of God. The meekness and humility that characterized the



life of Christ will be made manifest in the life and character of those who ‘walk even as he walked’.” {81}

THURSDAY

Like a Roaring Lion

So we have already discussed the context of Peter’s writing – he wrote against the backdrop of persecution. The lesson says, “The great controversy theme wasn’t just abstract theology to his readers;” they were experiencing it for reals, up close and personal, in a way that most of us have not, at least for now. There was no doubt a war going on for the hearts and minds of those new Christian converts, just as there is a war going on today for our hearts and minds.

Revelation 12:7-9 talks about how that war started and the origin of evil:

⁷There was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought using truth and love against the lies and deceptions of the dragon, but the dragon and his angels fought back against the truth, spreading more lies about God and Jesus, his Son.⁸But his lies were not strong enough, and they lost their place of esteem and respect in heaven:⁹The great dragon—the ancient serpent called the devil or Satan that leads the entire world away from God and his methods of love—was cast out of the hearts, minds and affections of the loyal beings in heaven. He and his angels were cast to the earth—the only place in the universe where beings still believe his lies about God.”

The end of the second paragraph says,

“Yet, the good news is that the devil will ultimately be destroyed in the end.”

Is that really the good news?

What is implied in that statement?

We are living in enemy territory. Lions are stealthy, they stalk their prey by keeping hidden until the sudden last-minute attack. Watch a little NatGeo Wild if you are unsure. Lions might toy with their prey, but they have one goal in mind. Satan is subtle, and stealthy, and wise. He knows our weaknesses – maybe better than we do – and he knows the best ways to exploit them. We might not be aware of the danger unless we remain alert, clear minded, and self-controlled. We are also told to “resist him, standing firm in the faith” and he will flee.

What steps can we take to be alert, clear minded, and self-controlled?

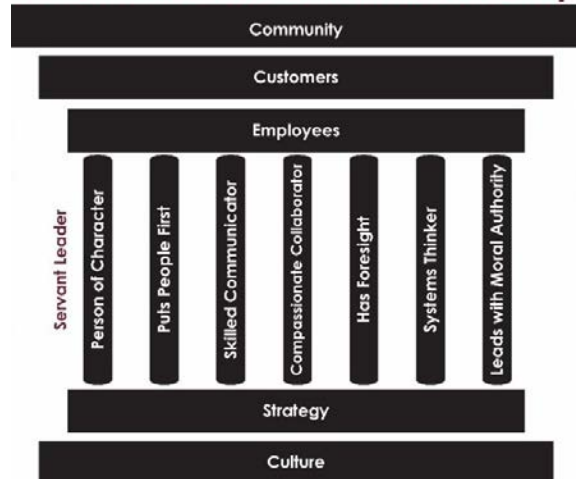


Sin damages, sin destroys, and the devil doesn't want to just cause you or your loved ones pain, heartache, or make you cry. He wants nothing less than to destroy you, and destroy as many of God's children as he can. Yes, the devil is real. The battle is real, our sufferings are real. But the "God of all grace" has overcome the world...has defeated him who holds the power of death – the devil. So whatever we are suffering, if we remain faithful – even unto death – victory is assured.

Discussion question: How would you answer the claim that Satan is not real but just a symbol of the evil found in human nature?



Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership



11 THEMES OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

CALLING

DO PEOPLE BELIEVE YOU ARE WILLING TO SACRIFICE SELF INTEREST FOR THE GOOD OF THE GROUP?

AWARENESS

DO OTHERS BELIEVE YOU HAVE A STRONG AWARENESS FOR WHAT IS GOING ON?

STEWARDSHIP

DO OTHERS BELIEVE YOU ARE PREPARING THE ORGANIZATION TO MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE?

LISTENING

DO PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT YOU WANT TO HEAR THEIR IDEAS AND WILL VALUE THEM?

PERSUASION

DO OTHERS FOLLOW YOUR REQUEST BECAUSE THEY WANT TO AS OPPOSED TO BECAUSE THEY HAVE TO?

GROWTH

DO PEOPLE BELIEVE YOU ARE COMMITTED TO HELPING THEM GROW AND DEVELOP?

EMPATHY

DO PEOPLE BELIEVE YOU WILL UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THEIR LIVES AND HOW IT AFFECTS THEM?

FORESIGHT

DO OTHERS HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOUR ABILITY TO ANTICIPATE THE FUTURE AND CONSEQUENCES?

COMMUNITY BUILDING

DO PEOPLE FEEL A STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN THE ORGANIZATION YOU LEAD?

HEALING

DO PEOPLE COME TO YOU WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN OR WHEN SOMETHING TRAUMATIC HAS HAPPENED IN THEIR LIVES?

CONCEPTUALIZATION

DO OTHERS COMMUNICATE THEIR IDEAS AND VISION FOR THE ORGANIZATION WHEN YOU ARE AROUND?



2017 Q2 Feed My Sheep – I & II Peter

Lesson 8: Jesus in the Writings of Peter

SABBATH

“Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed” (1 Peter 2:24, NKJV).

What does this text mean?

How did Jesus “[bear] our sins in His own body”?

How are we “healed” by His “stripes”?

The lesson refers to Peter’s focus on “Christ’s suffering” and suggests that we model that “suffering”.

How does this help? Which suffering?

The lesson also states that it *“was God Himself, who came in human flesh and who lived and died so that we can have the hope and promise of eternal life.”* It was, indeed, God Himself that lived and died, but not for the hope and promise of eternal life – it was for the revelation of **eternal life**, itself. [See John 17:3].

Which Law lens are you looking through?

SUNDAY

Jesus, Our Sacrifice

What do you hear when you hear “Jesus, our Sacrifice”?

Do you still think in concrete terms, and see lambs with their throats slit, bleeding on the ground, having their organs burnt on an altar and their meat eaten by priests?

Even if we don’t think in terms of priests of Baal cutting themselves, do we still have an appeasement mindset when we hear the word, “sacrifice”?

The lesson states: *“An overarching theme of the Bible, maybe even the overarching theme, is that of God’s work in saving fallen humanity. From the fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis to the fall of Babylon in Revelation, Scripture in one way or another reveals the work of God in seeking to save “that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).”* Is this all?



Doesn't Scripture delve in to the how and why God is working to "save that which was lost"?

Does it help to know the context of Man's fall and needing of a Savior, in cosmic terms, as well?

From the lesson:

*Peter thus likens Christ's death to that of a sacrificial animal in the Hebrew Bible. A sinner brought a sheep without blemish to the sanctuary. The sinner then laid his hands on the animal (Lev. 4:32, 33). The animal was slaughtered, and some of its blood was smeared on the altar; the rest was poured at the base (Lev. 4:34). **The death of the sacrificial animal provided "atonement" for the one who offered the sacrifice** (Lev. 4:35). Emphasis mine.*

Did the death of the animal provide any atonement?

Wasn't the Levitical sacrificial system a "teaching tool" to get humanity to look forward to the actual "atonement"?

"The multitude of your sacrifices—what are they to me?" says the LORD. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. Isa. 1:11.

For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings. Hosea 6:6.

But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Matt. 9: 13.

MONDAY

The Passion of Christ.

The lesson states that the Greek word that gets translated as "Passion" in English refers to a verb meaning "to suffer". Many Christians [1 + billion Catholics] reference his physical suffering especially in the last week or so before his death.

Was Christ "passionate" about the physical suffering?

What about the suffering to overcome the human "nature" to save Himself?

Which do you think he was more "passionate" about? T



the word “passion” can have many meanings in English, one of which is, “an intense desire or enthusiasm for something”. What was that something?

*Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the LORD been
revealed?*

*² He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to
him,*

*nothing in his appearance that we should
desire him.*

*³ He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low
esteem.*

*⁴ Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.*

*⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on
him,
and by his wounds we are healed.*

*⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.*

*⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.*

*⁸ By oppression^[a] and judgment he was taken
away.*

*Yet who of his generation protested?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was
punished.^[b]*

*⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.*

*¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and
cause him to suffer,
and though the LORD makes^[c] his life an
offering for sin,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the LORD will prosper in his
hand.*

*¹¹ After he has suffered,
he will see the light of life^[d] and be
satisfied^[e];
by his knowledge^[f] my righteous servant will
justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.*

*¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among
the great,^[g]
and he will divide the spoils with the
strong,^[h]
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.
Isa 53: 1-12. NIV. Emphasis mine.*

Quoted in the lesson:



*“Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father’s acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father’s wrath upon Him as man’s substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pg. 753.*

How do we hear a passage like the two above?

Which Law lens are you looking through?

TUESDAY

The Resurrection of Jesus.

What’s the typical Christian perspective on Christ’s resurrection? Most versions have some elements of God’s anger was assuaged by the shedding of Jesus’ blood, so as a reward for the “perfect sacrifice”, Jesus was granted life again. Even our lesson has the element of giving us “hope” of a heavenly “inheritance” from the resurrection.

Is this accurate, or is there more – much more?

The lesson also points out that His resurrection showed “... He has the power to conquer death itself.” Was it Jesus’ “power” that conquered death?

What is His “power” in the first place?

Life is the default status in God’s universe. Death, as we know it, exists only on Earth. **When Jesus had perfectly restored God’s original design back in to Man, Life was the only possible result.** After He had been made perfect, through suffering [Heb. 5: 8, 9], He could allow Himself to be “put to sleep”, but the grave could not hold Him. This is how He was able to say, “I lay down My life, that I may take it again.” [John 10:17]. He was the designer. He knew that Man restored to his original nobility would live.

But it was not merely to accomplish the redemption of man that Christ came to the earth to suffer and to die. He came to “magnify the law” and to “make it honorable.” Not alone that the inhabitants of this world might regard the law as it should be regarded; but it was to demonstrate to all the worlds of the universe that God's law is unchangeable. Could its claims have been set aside, then the Son of God need not have yielded up His life to atone for its transgression. The death of Christ proves it immutable. And the sacrifice to which infinite love impelled the Father and the Son, that sinners might be redeemed, demonstrates to all the



*universe—what nothing less than this plan of atonement could have sufficed to do—that justice and mercy are the foundation of the **law** and **government of God**. GC 503. Emphasis – mine.*

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. John 17:3.

Which Law lens are you looking through?

WEDNESDAY / THURSDAY

Jesus as the Messiah / Divine Messiah.

I'm a little unsure why the lesson made the distinction between "Jesus – The Messiah & Jesus the Divine Messiah" in Wednesday and Thursday's lessons. We have the benefit of hindsight to see the mistakes made by the Jews and Christ's disciples as to what "The Messiah" really represented [i.e. looking for a temporal ruler to cast off the yolk of Roman oppression].

My question is, are we, in the 21st Century, in danger of making the same mistakes from 2,000+ years ago?

Does modern Christianity, with all of the blessings of Scripture, Commentary on Scripture, historical perspective, Science, & experience have the same distorted concept of who "The Messiah" is and what should be expected in the coming future?

- Do we really believe that Jesus [Immanuel -- God With Us] is the complete representation of God Himself?
- Do we really believe that God Himself died on that cross?
- Do we really believe that God, The Father, loves us so much, that He would not use His power to save Himself, if we chose to kill Him?
- Do we really believe that God's "Anger" is actually Him "letting go"?
- Do we really believe God will not use his power to destroy the wicked in the end?
- Do we really believe God's Law functions very differently from human laws?
- Why is it important that Jesus was **fully divine?**
- Why is it important that Jesus was **fully human?**
- "When you think about the life and death of Jesus and then realize that He was God, what does this tell you about the kind of God we serve and why we should love and trust Him? Bring your answer to class on Sabbath." ** From the Lesson.**



First and Second Peter Lesson 9 2Q 2017

Be Who You Are

SABBATH

Read Memory Text: “For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.” 2Pet 1:5-7

What is being described? Is there a progression?

What does Peter mean by faith? Does he mean your religion? Does he mean trust, confidence? And what is the object of our faith? Is it enough to have faith, to believe in something like many people do, but not to know what?

How do we get this faith?

Were you ever taught that every person is given a measure of faith by God?

This is from the KJV Rom 12:3:

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Does this mean every person is given faith in God? If faith is trust and confidence, can that be given to a person?

Here is Rom 12:3 from the NIV:

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

Does you hear this differently? Rather than every person being given faith, it is speaking of those who have received faith from God.

Or the GNT:

And because of God’s gracious gift to me I say to every one of you: do not think of yourself more highly than you should. Instead, be modest in your thinking, and judge yourself according to the amount of faith that God has given you.



Again, the text is not saying that God gives every person faith by some supernatural outflow of power, but speaking to the fact that as our faith in God grows our understanding of reality changes and we become more humble realizing all our gifts are from God.

So, from where does faith come?

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. Rom 10:17

What does this mean? Faith or trust comes from the comprehension, understanding and acceptance of the truth of God and His character as revealed by Christ.

What about knowledge, what kind of knowledge is being referred to? Is he talking about going to seminary and getting a degree in theology? Is he talking about an experiential/experimental knowledge? What experiential knowledge?

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

Consider this historic quotation:

Experience is said to be the best teacher. **Genuine experience is indeed superior to mere theoretical knowledge**, but many have an erroneous idea as to what constitutes experience. **Real experience is gained by a variety of careful experiments, made with the mind free from prejudice, uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits.** The results are marked with careful solicitude, and an anxious desire to learn, to improve, and to reform on every point that is not in harmony with physical and moral laws. {CTBH 109.1}

That which many term experience is not experience at all; it has resulted from mere habit, or from a course of indulgence, thoughtlessly and often ignorantly followed. **There has not been a fair trial by actual experiment and thorough investigation, with a knowledge of the principles involved in the action.** *Experience which is opposed to natural law,—which is in conflict with the unchangeable principles of nature,—is not to be relied upon.* **Superstition arising from a diseased imagination is often arrayed in opposition to reason and to scientific principles.** To many a person, the idea that others may gainsay what he has learned by experience, seems folly, and even cruelty itself. **But there are more errors received and held through false ideas of experience than from any other cause.** There are many invalids today who will ever remain such because they cannot be convinced that their experience is not to be relied upon. {CTBH 109.2}

What about our knowledge of God, should it be based on genuine experience which requires careful investigation that harmonizes Biblical evidence with scientific principles and the laws of nature?



Why? Because when we refuse to do this we create superstitious beliefs, false views of God that damage the mind and obstruct God's healing.

Can you think of superstitious teachings in Christianity that deny design law?

- Transubstantiation – the idea that the communion wafer after it passes the palate and enters the esophagus changes from flour, sugar, oil, and salt to the physical flesh of Jesus' human body.
- If you have forgotten to confess some sin you will not be able to be in heaven because that sin will still have to be punished.
 - Why is this superstition? It would be like a person who has cancer from smoking who gets treatment and the cancer goes into remission, forgetting that they also chewed tobacco once and never mentioned it to the doctor—so because they forgot to mention chewing tobacco then they must be executed.
 - This is a false idea based on the false law construct
- If you confess your sins they get erased from record books in heaven
 - This is like saying when a disease gets eradicated from your body the medical record gets erased and your memories get wiped out.
- If you confess your sins Jesus covers you with a cloak of sin invisibility so that the Father cannot see your sins and thus cannot punish you for them. We call it the robe of His righteousness.
- Baptism by water cleanses you from sin
- Sacrifices of animals cleanses from sin
- Keeping feast days is necessary for salvation
- If a person dies and doesn't get last rights by a priest their soul will not go to heaven
- If a person is not buried on holy church ground they cannot go to heaven
- Others?

Look at our memory text: without correct knowledge and/or experience with God we cannot progress to the next element—self-control. How many people fail to develop self-control—which is the last fruit of the Spirit in Galatians? Could it have anything to do with a false experience, a false belief about God that incites fear and undermines trust?

These virtues culminate in mutual affection and then love—what is the difference between mutual affection and love?

Did anyone ever see the movie *The Miracle Worker*? The story of Helen Keller?

- Before Annie Sullivan Helen would do whatever she pleased, when meals served she would stick her hands in anyone's plate and take what she wanted.
- Helen's mother had great affection, compassion, sympathy for Helen, and couldn't bear to act in ways that might cause the poor child to suffer.
- So Helen's mother wouldn't set boundaries or expect anything more from the child



- Annie came and began teaching Helen, but initially Helen rebelled and there was quite a fight, a fight that the mother couldn't stand to watch, but in the end, Helen learned and eventually could use sign language...

Now, who had the greatest affection for Helen? Her mother—but who showed the greatest love for Helen? Annie—why? Because love is not simply about affection—the warm feelings and kind regard, and emotional connection; love is about doing what is actually best for another, even if it feels bad doing it. Love often requires personal sacrifice to do what is good for another.

How might this apply in our church community?

In my life it means that when people call my office from out of state, or come up to me at a seminar, with some crisis or problem and desperately want me to treat them—if I act in love what do I do?

I say no—why? Because I cannot get a proper history to actually get a proper diagnosis and then provide appropriate treatment which requires follow-up and reassessment with adjustment in treatment based on progress, with someone long distance or with a brief talk in the back of a seminar room.

However, when I say no, what do I risk? I risk being misunderstood as cold and not caring etc.

So what should I do? Do what I believe is the most reasonable, healthy and proper action, even if the other person doesn't understand.

SUNDAY

Read 2Peter 1:1-4:

Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:

² Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

³ His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. ⁴ Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

Read second paragraph, "Peter emphasizes that..." When you think of God's divine power what comes to mind?



For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, **they have divine power** to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2Cor 10:3-5

What are we demolishing in this war? Ideas, falsehoods, that are misrepresenting God, and what weapons do we use?

Weapons with divine power—what kind of weapons are those?

I am not ashamed of **the gospel**, because **it is the power of God** for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. Rom 1:16

What is the gospel? It is God's power to save—but what kind of power? Is it the kind of power the Jews were looking for to overthrow the Romans?

What kind of power is the divine power that demolishes everything that sets itself up against the knowledge of God?

What kinds of things set up against the truth about God and misrepresent Him?

- Lies AND
- Selfishness

Thus, what are the weapons that destroy lies and selfishness? Truth and love!

Consider this historic quote from one of the founders of the SDA church, do you agree? Is this describing the same power that Peter and Paul are describing?

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but **He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order.** His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and **truth and love are to be the prevailing power.** {DA 759.1}

When you read verses like we just read in 2Peter about the power of God, do you immediately think of truth and love, the power to free minds and heal hearts or do you think of physical power?

Now, just to be clear, did I say anything here today that says God does not have infinite physical powerful i.e. that God is not omnipotent? No! God is all-powerful, but the power of God that saves, that heals minds and transforms characters, is not physical might, it is the power of truth and love!



The third paragraph states, “We are called to love God, but how can we love a God we don’t know? We come to know God through Jesus, through the Written Word, through the created world, and through the experience of living a life of faith and obedience.”

Wow—did you see that? The lesson put in the Integrative Evidence-based Approach! The truth is spreading!

Do you have any friends in the SDA church that you need to show this to—because now that it is in the Study Guide they will feel comfortable believing it?

MONDAY

What do you think of the title of Monday’s lesson, “Love, the Goal of Christian Virtue”?

Do you agree? Yes, and if true then what does this mean?

What does it mean in regard to who is saved in the end? Are we saved by:

- denominational affiliation?
- method of baptism?
- attestation to a creed?
- legal adjustment in record books?

Or are we saved by being transformed in heart to love God and others more than self?

Any texts to support this idea?

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:
“Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God,
and the authority of his Christ.
For the accuser of our brothers,
who accuses them before our God day and night,
has been hurled down.

They overcame him
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony;
they did not love their lives so much
as to shrink from death. Rev 12:10,11

What does this text mean?



What is salvation? It is healing and what is the power that brings the healing? The power of truth and love, and where does the power of truth and love have its impact? In the hearts, minds and characters of intelligent beings, how? Truth destroys lies to win us to trust, and in trust we invite God in and the Spirit comes in and takes the perfection of Christ and reproduces it us.

Who is the accuser? Satan, and he has been hurled down, how? What hurled him down?

Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.³² But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all **men** to myself.” Jn 12:31,32 (the word men is supplied, not in the Greek)

What is driving Satan out? And from where is Satan being driven out?

John 12:31,32 from *The Remedy*:

Now is the time for the infection of selfishness and sin in this world to be fully diagnosed and revealed as destructive; now, Satan—the prince of this selfish world—will be driven out into the open, out of the shadows, out from behind his lies and distortions about God and God's methods, out where all can see him as the murderer he truly is, and thus out of the hearts of all who love me.³² When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all intelligences throughout the universe to me."

The saved overcame the accuser how?

By the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, which is what?

Blood is metaphor or symbolic for the life of Christ, which is the perfect character of Christ, that the righteous partake of, what Peter refers to in our text as being “partakers of the divine nature.” This is what Jesus meant in John 6 about drinking His blood and eating His flesh. Thus we overcome by believing the truth about God such that we trust God enough to open the heart to Him and then receive the Spirit and are changed in heart by receiving the perfection of Christ so that we die to survival drives and love others more than self!

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “Peter urges his readers...” What is the new reality? Is it a new legal reality, we get declared to be righteous even though we are not righteous, which is what is taught in the penal view?

Such a view is not a new reality, but a perpetuation of Satan’s lie; that false legal view has God presenting a mass fraud, which would be a new declared legal standing, but with no real newness of heart, mind, or character.



The true new reality is the new heart, right spirit, and recreation of the inner man where we have died to selfishness and live in a love relationship with God that inspires us to love others more and more every day!

The new reality is the real regeneration and recreation within the believer; this is design law, not imposed law!

Read next paragraph, “The problem is that not all...” What prevents so many Christians from living spiritually fruitful lives?

Could it be they are told by their church leaders that salvation is a legal accounting of their sins, and that there is no victory, no transformation that happens until the second coming. Could it be they are told everyone continues to go on sinning right up until Jesus comes but not to worry because the legal punishment for all those bad deeds Jesus has already paid, and if you have legally accepted it, God declares you are righteous, even though you continue to lie, cheat, commit adultery, steal, murder or whatever your sin is.

Could the very theology taught, the lie of imposed law with its expectation that there is no victory, just legal accounting of sins, be a core obstacle for Christians in experiencing true victory?

WEDNESDAY

Read memory text and first paragraph, “Yes, I think...” What are the problems with the doctrine of immortality of the soul? It is based on premises that are not supported by evidence—i.e. that God, in Eden when He first created Adam and Eve gave them immortality at that point. What is wrong with this teaching?

- Denies Biblical evidence of human mortality
 - After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to **guard the way to the tree of life**. Gen 3:24
 - God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ **who alone is immortal** and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen. 1Tim 6:15,16
 - **For the wages of sin is death**, but the **gift of God is eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 6:23
- What does the idea that God gave humankind immortality in Eden say about God?
 - If God has foreknowledge and knew they would sin and yet gave them immortality foreknowing millions would live just a few years, maybe a teen who sinned and never accepted Jesus, but then suffer in hell for all eternity, what kind of God would He be?
 - That God is a sadistic being, not a God of love
 - If God didn't know the future, didn't know they would sin and gave them immortality then what would that say about God?



- That God is not omniscient—He doesn't have foreknowledge
- Worse, He doesn't even have wisdom and can't even anticipate potential negative outcomes
- This doctrine of immortal soul ultimately makes God to be either sadistic, or incompetent and both views result in a god who is completely untrustworthy.

Read third paragraph, "A study of what the New Testament..." Did you notice the lesson authors have done, what SDA theologians almost always do, they skip part of this text? We cannot skip it; we must include it and understand it. So let's read the 1Thes 4, starting in verse 13 instead of 16:

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. ¹⁴ We believe that Jesus died and rose again and **so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.** ¹⁵ According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, **will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.** ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and **the dead in Christ will rise first.** ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage each other with these words.

What is going on here? First, did you notice that the concern the NT Christians had, to which Paul was addressing, is that those living on earth would go to heaven BEFORE those who have died? This is the complete opposite of what is commonly believed today.

And today SDAs often find themselves arguing with non SDA Christians over what happens at death—do our loved ones sleep in the grave awaiting resurrection, or do they go to heaven to be with Jesus?

Our modern understanding of computers help us: We are tripartite:

- Body – Soma – Hardware
- Soul – Psyche – Software/Mind/Individuality
- Spirit – Pneuma – Energy/Breath of life

When Our Computers Run Out of Power What State Do They Go Into?

- They "sleep"
- How does the Bible describe those who "die"?
- They "sleep" but, as Jesus said, those who believe in Him will never die!
- When your computer "sleeps" it is not destroyed
- If your computer backs up on a "cloud" what happens if someone destroys your machine?
- Do not be afraid of those who kill the body (hardware) but cannot kill the soul (Psyche/Software). Matthew 10:28



What happens when we die?

- The Body (soma) hardware, disintegrates to dust
- The Spirit (pneuma) energy, returns to God
- The Soul (psyche) software/individuality, is safe with Christ in Heaven, stored securely in the Lamb's book of life – the heavenly “servers”
- The person “sleeps” waiting to be “downloaded” into new hardware (bodies)

What makes most sense and harmonizes all Scripture with science and experience?

Paul's description of bringing the saved back from heaven and also raising them from the grave—their individualities (souls) software come back with Christ, while their hardware, bodies (soma) come up out of the grave, and God breathes in them the breath of life (spirit/pneuma) and they live again.

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “That Peter expects...” Do you agree or disagree? When your computer hardware gets destroyed, can your software, data survive separately from the hardware, say on another server or backup drive somewhere?

Do we believe our individualities do survive separate from the body?

If our individuality doesn't survive, then what is being resurrected?

Jesus said, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” Mt 10:28

Is Jesus suggesting that the body can be destroyed while the soul is not destroyed? Yes, just as we described above.

Now, is there a difference in keeping our individuality intact and having that individuality actively interacting and assimilating new experiences?

FRIDAY

read and discuss question 4: What does the concept of present truth connote? What is present truth for today?

Revelation 14, worship the Designer and reject the dictator views of God?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

June 23,24, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar for the Samaritan Counseling Service in Sarasota FL. For more information www.samaritangulfcoast.com
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First and Second Peter Lesson 10 2Q 2017

Prophecy and Scripture

SABBATH

What is the primary purpose of Bible prophecy? Is it:

- to give us the ability to know the future before it happens?
- to map out future events and plan what to do?
- to demonstrate God has foreknowledge and nothing catches Him by surprise and thus increase our confidence in God?

If the last is the reason for Bible prophecy, when in the flow of time do we get to experience that confidence from the prophecy—before or after the events happen? After!

What is the Bible principle regarding how we understand prophecy?

If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him. Dt 18:22

“You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. John 14:28,29

So, if you were to utilize these directions, when are you able to do so, when the prophecy is given, but before the events prophesied take place, or after the events prophecy take place?

The **primary** purpose of Bible prophecy is to be experienced AFTER events happen, then we can have increased confidence in God who foreknew and was not taken by surprise.

There is a secondary purpose for prophecy, which is what? To give us general warnings and safeguards but not a specific road map of exactly who, what, when and where.

Jesus’ prophecy about persecution of the saints, of the events prior to the second coming, about false Messiah’s going into the world, about not seeking to find Him in the secret meeting but as the sun shines from the east to west. Notice, these types of prophecies give measurable, testable, but non-specific points which keep us from going down wrong paths.

It is usually only after the events happen that we are able to fill in the specifics of who, what, when, and where.



Why is that? First because the prophecies themselves are not specific, but why are the prophecies not specific?

If God does know the future before it happens, why doesn't He provide detail prophecies, with persons, places, times, dates and exact events?

Have you ever considered how your life would be different if you knew with 100% certainty the following:

- The specific day, time and method of your death?
- The specific day and time of the Second Coming of Christ?

If you knew the specifics of either of these would it impact how you lived today? How?

If you knew the second coming wasn't for another 700 years, would that encourage or discourage you? Would you be tempted to become apathetic?

If you knew with 100% certainty that Christ would appear in the clouds with all His holy angels three days from now at 2:14 p.m. would you do anything different? Would you write the bills due at the end of the week, mow the lawn, go to work, etc?

If you knew you wouldn't die until 2034, would you be less or more cautious? Might you take some more risks? Might a person become less concerned about eternity thinking, "Oh, I've got time"?

Is there a reason God gives prophecy in general terms that give us guidance yet that we often don't understand specifically until after the events have transpired?

Even with the prophecies to Nebuchadnezzar, the specifics of when, who, and how were not told, only the large landscape of subsequent kingdoms.

How does this impact our lives today?

We should not get caught up into being overly concerned with every interpretation of Bible prophecy, particularly if they are about future events with overly detailed specifics. They are most likely going to have inaccuracies in them.

We should review Bible prophecies that have been fulfilled using them as evidences to build our confidence in God, and understand the general themes of prophecies yet to come.

Memory text: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." 2Pet 1:19



To what is Peter referring: primarily about prognostication or about the testimony of God's spokespersons?

Here is the same passage from the NIV:

And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

What have God's spokespersons been telling us? Primarily prophesying specific dates, times, places, events, or proclaiming a promise, proclaiming the truth about God, His character, methods, and the Remedy/Savior named Jesus who would come and fulfill all God's promises to heal and fix what sin has done to God's creation? And this is known as the mystery of God—the truth about God and His actions to heal and restore His creation!

Yes, it is true that the prophets spoke of unfolding truth about God in events yet to come, thus it was prognostic, but what the prophets spoke was so much more than merely predicting future events. The prophets proclaimed universal eternal truth; they proclaimed God's character, methods, and love all of which have their origin in God, were obscured by Satan's lies and would be revealed in Jesus.

Thus the sure word spoken by God's prophets has always been, and will always be, the truth about God, sometimes this also includes prognostication.

Could Satan trick people into miss the truth about God by getting them so focused on the prognostic details they don't even consider what the prophet is saying about God?

Could there be people, entire churches, who value Bible prophecy so much they make certain elements of Bible prophecy a test of fellowship and actually argue if you don't come to the same conclusion you will be lost—say something like finding in Bible prophecy a specific day of worship and arguing if you worship on a specific day you will get the mark of the beast?

What is wrong with such an approach? It misses the truth of God's character and actually misapplies the prophecy to misrepresent God.

And what is the result Peter points forward toward as a result of the sure word from the prophets? That the Day Star will arise in our hearts.

What is this? This is Jesus—this is being transformed in the inner person, this is partaking the divine nature, this is circumcision of the heart by the Spirit; this is the Spirit taking the perfect character of Jesus and reproducing it in us!

But the light, the truth about God, is shining into a dark place—where is that dark place?



The minds of human beings—and what has made that place dark? The lies about God Satan has told and we have believed.

John 1:1-13 from *The Remedy*:

¹In the beginning was Jesus—God's very thoughts made audible and visible—and Jesus was with God, and was God.

²He was with God before anything else existed.

³Through Jesus everything was created; without Jesus nothing was created that has been created.

⁴In Jesus was life—original, unborrowed, underived—and his life enlightens the mind about God: about his character, methods, and principles.

⁵The light of Jesus' life shines into the darkened minds of human beings—darkened by Satan's lies about God—but their darkened minds have not understood the light.

⁶There came a man called John who was empowered and directed by the Spirit of God.

⁷He came as a witness to testify that Jesus was the true light sent to dispel the darkness enshrouding the mind, so that everyone might believe the truth about God and be healed.

⁸John was not the light of truth; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹The true Light that enlightens everyone—God's very thoughts made visible and audible—was coming into the world.

¹⁰Jesus—the true Light—was in the world, and even though the world was created by him, the world was so blinded by Satan's lies that it didn't even recognize him.

¹¹Jesus came to his own people—whom he had especially chosen, instructed and blessed—but many refused to accept him because they preferred Satan's version of a savior.

¹²But all who recognized and accepted him—all who valued and accepted the character, methods and principles he revealed—he made them children of God, transforming them into like character, practicing God's methods and principles.

¹³They were made God's children not because of genetics or biological descent, or because of human procreation, but because of the transformation of mind, heart and character brought about by God.

Is this not what Peter is talking about when he describes the Day Star dawning in our hearts?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “All through his epistles...” First, do you notice the point the lesson makes, that Peter's certainty is in the what and the who, not the specifics about times and places and specific human actors in some future scenario. His certainty is in the truth about God, the problem of sin and God's solution for it—Jesus Christ!

But what do you think about the last sentence: “It was Peter's trust in the Written Word that helped him know the Word ‘made flesh’ (John 1:14).”?



I wonder if this is backward—wasn't it Peter's trust, along with His personal experience and knowledge of Jesus the living Word, which enlightened his mind with correct understanding and subsequent increased confidence in the Written Word?

In fact, the way the lesson authors have put it is a major error for many people today—how?

Many Christians, and theologians in particular, have this approach: They go to the Bible study the Old Testament with all its symbols, metaphors, dark speech examples, form their interpretations, beliefs, doctrines about what they think it means, and then go to the New Testament and force Jesus to fit into their understanding of what it all means.

I have taken the other approach—Jesus must be studied first! Only after coming to know Jesus, and correctly understanding Him (the true light) and what He taught can we then properly understand the written word. Thoughts?

What did Jesus say to the religious leaders in His day?

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me to have life. Jn 5:39,40

Here are a few quotes from one of the founders of the SDA church, consider which approach this person takes—studying the Old Testament Scripture and then coming to understand Jesus, or coming to know Jesus and what He taught and then studying to know the truth of the OT Scripture?

- The **system of Jewish economy was the gospel in figure**, a presentation of Christianity which was to be developed as fast as the minds of the people could comprehend spiritual light. **Satan ever seeks to make obscure the truths that are plain**, and **Christ ever seeks to open the mind** to comprehend every essential truth concerning the salvation of fallen man. **To this day there are still aspects of truth which are dimly seen**, connections that are not understood, and **far-reaching depths in the law of God that are uncomprehended**. Fundamentals of Christian Education 238
 - Could this be referring to the truth of design law being obscured by interpreting the symbols through imposed law lenses?
- **Christ was the foundation of the Jewish economy**. The whole system of types and symbols was a compacted **prophecy of the gospel**, a presentation in which were bound up the promises of redemption. Acts of the Apostles 14
 - What is the OT about? Jesus and the good news about God!
- **The significance of the Jewish economy is not yet fully comprehended**. Truths vast and profound are **shadowed** forth in its rites and symbols. **The gospel is the key that unlocks its mysteries**. Through a **knowledge of the plan of redemption**, its truths are opened to the understanding. **Far more than we do**, it is our privilege to understand these wonderful themes. We are to comprehend the deep things of God. Christ's Object Lessons 133



- What is the key? The gospel
- And who is the clearest revelation of the gospel? Jesus!

Many of the interpretations of the OT change when we seek to know Jesus before we study the OT. So, I would suggest it was Peter's personal knowledge of and trust in Jesus the living Word, that gave him right understand and subsequent confidence in the Written Word.

In fact, Paul the theology scholar who knew the OT Scriptures very well had a really hard time accepting Christ—why? Because he studied the OT Scriptures first, through their traditional views. After accepting Christ Paul had to spend 3 years in the desert being instructed by Christ in order to correct all his misunderstandings about the OT Scripture. Only then was he ready to be Jesus' ambassador and gospel messenger.

Read fourth paragraph, "Some of what the prophets..." What did the angels desire to know?

The lesson references 1Peter 1:12, let's read verses 11 and 12:

trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

What were they longing to understand? The coming of Christ, His sufferings, death, resurrection—why was it necessary, what would it accomplish, what would the angels learn?

Where did sin begin? In heaven, with whom? An angel, over what? Was it over money, land, sex, gambling? Over what? Whether God and Christ could be trusted. What weapon did Satan use—primarily lies. And what impact do lies have on minds? Confusion, undermining of trust, breaking of love, so what would the angels long to understand? The truth of the issues which Satan raised in their minds over God. Remember 2Cor 10:3-5?

Again from one of the founders of the SDA church, what do you think, does Scripture support this view?

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to **reveal God both to men and to angels**. He was the Word of God,—God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name,"—"merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"—"that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. **Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look,"** and it will be their study throughout endless ages. **Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings** will find in the cross of



Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the **glory of self-sacrificing love**. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that *the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven*; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. DA 19, 20

That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. [What do you think that is? What restrains sin? Is it threats of punishment? Might and power, flaming swords? What is sin? Transgression of the law, what law? The law of love which is the foundation of God's government, so what can effectually keep people from violating love? What is the power of God we discussed last week? The power of truth and love, which was manifested most effectively where? At the cross, so what would you predict can effectually restrain sin?] **The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels.** Fallen men could not have a home in the paradise of God without the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Shall we not then exalt the cross of Christ? The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, **for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven.** Human perfection failed in Eden, the paradise of bliss. **All who wish for security in earth or heaven must look to the Lamb of God.**

The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, provides **an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds**, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. {5BC 1132.8}

For centuries God looked with patience and forbearance upon the cruel treatment given to his ambassadors, at his holy law prostrate, despised, trampled underfoot. He swept away the inhabitants of the Noachian world with a flood. But when the earth was again peopled, men drew away from God, and renewed their hostility to him, manifesting bold defiance. Those whom God rescued from Egyptian bondage followed in the footsteps of those who had preceded them. **Cause was followed by effect; the earth was being corrupted.** *What law is being described? The law of liberty, the law of sowing and reaping.*

A crisis had arrived in the government of God. The earth was filled with transgression. The voices of those who had been sacrificed to human envy and hatred were crying beneath the altar for retribution. **All heaven was prepared at the word of God to move to the help of his elect.** One word from him, and the bolts of heaven would have fallen upon the earth, filling it with fire and flame. God had but to speak, and there would have been thunderings and lightnings and earthquakes and destruction.

The heavenly intelligences were prepared for a fearful manifestation of Almighty power. Every move was watched with intense anxiety. The exercise of justice was expected. *[What*



was Satan's core lie about God? That God is arbitrary, meaning God's law is not design law but imposed rules which require God to inflict punishment. What does justice look like when based on design law of love? Seeking to heal and restore while leaving free those who refuse. What does justice look like when based on imposed laws? Infliction of punishment. If Satan's lie about God's law being imposed was being considered by the loyal angels in heaven, then what would they be expecting when God exercises justice?] **The angels looked for God to punish the inhabitants of the earth.** [Why did they look for this? Because they were considering that Satan's view of law had some merit. Satan's lie had not been eradicated from the minds of loyal angels. What did God actually do?] **But "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."** "I will send my beloved Son," he said. "It may be they will reverence him." **Amazing grace! Christ came not to condemn the world, but to save the world.** "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

The heavenly universe was amazed at God's patience and love. To save fallen humanity the Son of God took humanity upon himself... {RH, July 17, 1900 par. 6} **What law is revealed in the coming of Jesus? Design law of love to fix what was broken and restore human beings back to love and trust. This is the Justice of God, which God revealed and which destroys Satan's lies about God for all who have ears to hear and eyes to see.**

Before Christ's first advent, the sin of refusing to conform to God's law had become widespread. Apparently Satan's power was growing; his warfare against heaven was becoming more and more determined. **A crisis had been reached. With intense interest God's movements were watched by the heavenly angels.** Would He come forth from His place to punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity? Would He send fire or flood to destroy them? **All heaven waited the bidding of their Commander to pour out the vials of wrath upon a rebellious world. One word from Him, one sign, and the world would have been destroyed. The worlds unfallen would have said, "Amen. Thou art righteous, O God, because Thou hast exterminated rebellion."** {ST, August 27, 1902 par. 4}

Why would the loyal angels have said amen? Because they didn't fully understand God's design law, why? Because Satan's lie was so effective. Thus, as the Bible teaches, angels longed to look into these things and understand more accurately the reality of God's character and the lies of Satan. And it was at the Cross that the prince of this world was cast out—out of the affections, minds, hearts of the sinless beings in the universe and out into the open for all who love truth to see—Satan is exposed as a liar and fraud!

MONDAY

Read third paragraph, "Peter highlights..." Any concerns about this?



First, I believe these events are historic, accurate, and really happened. And they happened because Jesus is the Son of God and this is evidence, which is consistent with His divinity and purity that we would expect to see in our Creator God. So all of this is consistent with Jesus as the Son of God and our Savior.

But, and there is a but, what is the but?

This type of physical manifestation can be counterfeited; therefore such manifestations alone, i.e. without the historic life of purity and self-sacrificial love lived out by Jesus, cannot be relied upon.

Any Bible evidence to support my concerns?

- How did Satan manifest to Jesus in the wilderness? As an angel from heaven. Did that mean because Satan presented with supernatural light and miraculous signs he could be trusted?
- “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ.¹⁴ And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.” 2Cor 11:13,14
- “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!” Gal 1:8

What is the point here?

That the true God will absolutely be powerful, and absolutely have miraculous revelations and demonstrations that accompany His true visible presence—no doubt. But miracles, signs, and wonders can all be counterfeited, thus we must rely upon something that cannot be counterfeited, and what is that?

The truth—the truth about God, His character and methods of love and the laws upon which He has constructed reality to operate upon.

Understanding these and how they operate, there are certain actions that God will never take—such as?

- God will never lie
- God will never say “love me or I will kill you” i.e. coerce, why? Because it violates the law of liberty and destroys love and incites rebellion
- God will not, and in fact, cannot, force people to love and trust Him
- So, when beings of immense power, manifesting what appears to be heavenly light, performing miracles attempt to impose a system of justice like our fallen world uses—coercion—“Worship me, I love you, I died for you. I only want your good. I don’t want to punish you. But if you refuse, justice requires I punish disobedience. I will first restrict your ability to buy and sell, and imprison, but if this doesn’t bring you to repentance, well holiness and justice requires that I execute you.” This is the beast—that many Christians are preparing to accept.



TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Here, as we can see...” Where is the darkness? In our hearts, but what causes the darkness?

See, darkness covers the earth
and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the Lord rises upon you
and his glory appears over you.
³ Nations will come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Is 60:2,3

To what is this referring? Primarily the lies about God, and the darkness in the minds of humans about God and Jesus who is the light of truth about God and His methods of love which will draw the peoples of the world, not just Jews, but Gentiles as well.

The lesson mentions supernatural power—what power did Jesus wield when He confronted Satan in the wilderness?

Did Jesus overcome by having heavenly angels come and drive Satan away?

What power did Jesus wield in Gethsemane and crucifixion weekend?

It was the power of truth and love—Jesus clung to the truth and loved others more than self. This is the power, the divine power we are given to demolish strongholds, and only this power is to be used.

WEDNESDAY

Read last two paragraphs and then the pink section: “Then what did Peter...” Is this an absolute rule? Should a believer surrender their understanding and thinking to the church board, or the church as a whole?

What does Paul mean in Romans 14 that every person should be fully persuaded in their own mind?

Are the lesson authors suggesting when it comes to Biblical truth that church members should surrender their interpretations to the church leadership?

Hmmm...In OT times why did God send prophets to the people? Did God send them to the nation to get the prophet to submit their ideas to the people and if the people? Remember Jeremiah, his prophecy was rejected and he was put in a pit. Should Jeremiah have changed his understanding because the body of believers saw it differently?



What about this quotation from one of the founders of the SDA church?

As the light and life of men was rejected by the ecclesiastical authorities in the days of Christ, so it has been rejected in every succeeding generation. Again and again the history of Christ's withdrawal from Judea has been repeated. When the Reformers preached the word of God, they had no thought of separating themselves from the established church; **but the religious leaders would not tolerate the light, and those that bore it were forced to seek another class, who were longing for the truth. In our day few of the professed followers of the Reformers are actuated by their spirit.** Few are listening for the voice of God, and ready to accept truth in whatever guise it may be presented. **Often those who follow in the steps of the Reformers are forced to turn away from the churches they love, in order to declare the plain teaching of the word of God. And many times those who are seeking for light are by the same teaching obliged to leave the church of their fathers, that they may render obedience.** {DA 232.2}

Is it safe to surrender our thinking to people because they occupy positions of church administration?

What is a healthier approach to pursuing truth than seeking a consensus of human opinion?

What about the integrative evidence-based approach that seeks to understand truth in harmony with testable evidence?

What about the evidence of healing and transformation of lives? In other words, does your application of the truth you currently understand result in ever increasing mental, physical, spiritual and relational health and growth in Christlikeness?

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, "After warning Timothy..."

What is the problem with the translation of 2Tim 3:16 quoted here? They have the "is" in the wrong place. It should be, "All scripture given by God is profitable..." not "All Scripture is given by God..." Are all the scriptures in the world given by God, or are some scriptures made up by men or inspired by demons?

Read fourth paragraph, "Doctrine: Doctrines are the teachings..."

The lesson makes a critically important point here, the primary purpose of doctrines are what? To reveal God and connect us to Him.

What happens if we set up stand-alone doctrines, disconnected from the truth about God and use proof texts to support them and make them tests of fellowship?



Read fifth paragraph, “Guidance: Paul tells...”

What is the point? True godliness, true spirituality, is coming back into harmony with how reality is constructed by God to operate!

What does it mean “wise unto salvation?” What is salvation? It is healing, and who provides the Remedy? How is healing achieved? What is our role in the healing process?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1, 2, 4.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

June 23,24, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar for the Samaritan Counseling Service in Sarasota FL. For more information www.samaritangulfcoast.com
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July 14,15, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Lakeport SDA church, in Lakeport CA.

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

Sep 5, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

Love is more than emotion, more than compassion, more than positive regard for another; love is power—the power to live, heal and be free. Love is functional, operational, with specific design parameters built into the fabric of reality. Love is intelligent and as we intelligently choose to harmonize with how love functions we not only experience greater health, fulfillment and wellbeing, we are transformed to become forces for good in the world. In *The God-Shaped Heart* Christian psychiatrist Dr. Tim Jennings explores the healing power of love, exposes a belief system infecting Christianity that obstructs love, and identifies eternal truths that open the heart to God's transforming power of love.

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First and Second Peter Lesson 11 2Q 2017

False Teachers

We received this email this week:

Hello and thank-you for writing The Remedy New Testament. I just recently came upon a copy at McKay's bookstore and don't know why I bought it because I already own dozens of Bibles with access to many more on e-Sword. But the Title caught my attention ... and something prompted me ... so profound that I had to get it, despite my usual dislike for paraphrases.

I started reading it last night with 1John then the Gospel of John and couldn't put it down until falling asleep sometime around 3-something this morning.

I travel a lot, which brings me in contact with a LOT of people and only rarely are the doors closed to some kind of Kingdom-discussion, with me usually leaving them with a copy of a book I'm reading or one I feel specifically prompted to give them. In fact, it's why I go to McKay's so often...it's to pick-up books for specific people I plan to meet ... and the Holy Spirit has never disappointed me yet ... or any of the recipients of the books. Nor do I think He ever will.

I was just recently asking what book will I next be "freely-given" so I can freely-give?

And that's when I came across The Remedy.

I would like to purchase in bulk for upcoming trips to New York, Missouri and South Dakota.

I also think your rendition to be the most profound rendering since the NEB ... which I've been distributing for years, thanks to McKay's.

But they only had ONE copy of The Remedy and therefore the email of inquiry to you direct for more.

I find your rendering so much more conducive to the people I tend to somehow be placed in their paths ... the homeless, the disenfranchised, addicts of all sorts, the sexually disoriented, prisoners, military who have seen some horrendous things and drown themselves in coping/escape mechanisms, inner-city at-risk kids and drop-outs, immigrants of all sorts, Native Americans on reservations, seniors who feel they nothing left to contribute and waiting to die ... you know ... people in need of the Great Physician and waiting for someone to share some GOOD NEWS for a change.



SABBATH

Read second paragraph, “Satan launches a two-pronged attack...” Does Christianity still face the problem of false teachings today?

What teachings do you find within Christianity today that are false?

I am not a denominationalist—meaning I do not believe a person is saved based on membership in a particular denomination.

If people believe salvation is by belonging to a particular denomination, would that be a true or false teaching?

But having said that, I am familiar with some distinct teachings among the various denominations, I thought I might review some of them and see if any of these are essential in determining a genuine Christian:

1. The Scriptures are inspired by God
2. There is one true God who exists in the triune perfection of love—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. Jesus is the divine member of the Godhead who is identified as God’s Son and who became human, lived a sinless life, died on the cross, rose again to life and ascended to heaven
4. God is the Creator and the world was created in seven literal days and God rested on the seventh day creating the Sabbath as a gift for human beings. Life did not evolve on its own.
5. Human beings were created in God’s image, with their own unique individuality and freedom to make their own choices
6. There is a conflict between God and Satan waging in the minds of intelligent beings over who to trust
7. Jesus became human, lived a sinless life and died on the cross for the purpose of defeating Satan, saving humankind, and securing the universe unfallen
8. God’s works via the Holy Spirit to heal and transform every human being who will let Him
9. Those who are transformed by the Holy Spirit having immersed their hearts in God’s love and truth, and, when able, give public witness by the ritual of water baptism
10. Those who trust God and are united in love are known as God’s church and they work together to reach other people with God’s healing grace
11. The Holy Spirit enables those who trust God to fulfill roles by providing abilities or gifts for the fulfillment of their calling
12. God is Sovereign and His law is unchangeable
13. Jesus is in heaven directing all the agencies at His disposal to defeat evil, Satan and to save and heal all who will let Him
14. The wages or result of unhealed sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in an earth made new.



15. Jesus is coming again soon in the clouds of heaven, visibly to resurrect the righteous dead and translate the righteous living to heaven, the wicked will die the first death and the earth will be barren for 1000 years, followed by the resurrection of the wicked, the final judgment and the eradication of all sin, pain, and death itself and then the universe will be cleansed and the earth made new.

Now, if a person believes all of these things, what would that make them?

Hmmm.... doesn't Satan and all his rebellious angels believe every one of these things?

Isn't it true that an intelligent being can believe every one of these beliefs to be true and be a devil, be Satan himself, God's worse enemy?

So, does believing such things make one a Christian?

Is there a lie operating here somewhere? It is a lie that we are Christians by attestation to a set of beliefs and by joining a particular denomination and by public baptism.

Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Jn 13:35

What is necessary to be a true Christian—to hold to a specific set of beliefs, or to have the heart transformed from selfishness to Christlike love?

And what is necessary to have the heart transformed to Christlike love? Knowing God—having the lies of God removed and knowing God personally, individually, intimately for who He is as revealed by Jesus Christ, which results in unity of heart, mind and character—we are at-one with God again. "This is life eternal that they might know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." John 17:3

And what prevents people from truly knowing God? Lies, false teachings, which create believers who believe in systems of theology, creeds, fundamental beliefs, but who still do not know God and who are not transformed to be like Jesus in character.

And what is the core lie within Christianity that obstructs people from knowing God?

The false law—the idea that God's law is imposed and requires inflicted punishment, which results in people creating doctrines that are designed to function how? The doctrines function by separating people from God, by hiding them from God, by protecting them from God rather than reconciling them to Him. This is the majority of Christianity, think of the barriers of false ideas about God that have been built up in the minds and practices of so many Christians. Can you name any?



- I need an intercessor between me and God to plead my case to God and persuade Him not to punish me for my sins
 - In Catholicism it is not only Jesus, but Mary and the saints who plead to God and the priests to whom sins are confessed because God couldn't tolerate us if there wasn't someone in between
 - In Protestantism it is Jesus who is our advocate pleading His blood or merits to the Father reminding the Father that He has paid the price for our sins so the Father doesn't punish us
- I need someone to hide my sins from God
 - In Catholicism it is Jesus, Mary and the Saints who hide our sins from God by covering them with the blood of Jesus; when we partake the Mass Jesus then applies His sacrifice to erase the sin from records and keeps God from seeing it and acting to punish
 - In Protestantism it is Jesus applying His blood to our record books to erase the record of sins, or covering us with His robe of righteousness, which is taught that His perfect sinless life gets recorded in our record book so when our records are open we have the life of Jesus recorded there so the Father only sees Jesus' sinless life and not our own.
- I need someone to pay my debt
 - In Catholicism it is Jesus, along with our works, penances, indulgences and other activities combined that pay our debt so the Father doesn't have to punish
 - In Protestantism it is Jesus who paid our complete debt to God so He doesn't have to punish

Do you see how these doctrines function? To hide or protect us from God? Why? Because believing the lie about God's law we believe the lie God must inflict punishment, thus we are never truly reconciled to God, we don't really know Him and we certainly don't trust Him. Thus we continue to live in fear, rather than being transformed back to beings who love God and others more than self.

It also leads to the concern that salvation is based on having the right doctrinal beliefs—thus if we can collect the right list of beliefs, and swear allegiance to that set of beliefs then we are saved. This leads to centuries long arguments among Christians over doctrines:

- What day to worship upon?
- Which method of baptism?
- Eternal or limited hell?
- Trinity or no trinity?
- Why did Jesus have to die?

Are we saved by knowing the right answers to any of these questions?

It is a lie that having the right doctrines results in salvation—what is the true purpose of doctrines? What they tell us about God, how they bring us into a closer intimacy with Him uniting our hearts with His, so that we are transformed to be like Jesus in heart!



The right way to approach any list of doctrines is to ask, if this is true what kind of being would God be? What does it say about God? Does this teaching increase trust or undermine trust in God? etc.

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read portions of 2Peter 2, lets read the entire chapter from the NIV and then from *The Remedy* and discuss it:

But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. [While this is true that some humans will deny Jesus is Lord, do the devils deny Jesus is Lord? Remember what the demoniacs said?] ² Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. [What are their shameful ways? Will it not be the ways that deny truth, which leads to superstitions and denying love, i.e. promoting selfishness?] ³ In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. [What does this mean? An infliction, or a consequence?]

⁴ For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; ⁵ if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; ⁶ if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; ⁷ and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men ⁸ (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)— ⁹ if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. ¹⁰ This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. [Are these words easy to understand? Do they incite fear or love? What law lens are you hearing these words through? What do they mean in reality? What is God actually doing?]

Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings; ¹¹ yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord. ¹² But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish.

¹³ They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you. ¹⁴ With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable;



they are experts in greed—an accursed brood! [accursed by who or what?] ¹⁵ They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness. ¹⁶ But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey—a beast without speech—who spoke with a man’s voice and restrained the prophet’s madness. [What is the straight way they have left?]

¹⁷ These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. [What does this mean? Reserved by whom, what is the cause of the darkness?] ¹⁸ For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. ¹⁹ They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. ²⁰ If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. [Why are they worse?] ²¹ It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. ²² Of them the proverbs are true: “A dog returns to its vomit,” and, “A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud.”

Do you see God and His law of love, the principle of liberty in these verses? Or do these verses bring up ideas of imposed laws and inflicted punishments?

When you read them to you feel more love, peace, joy, or more anxiety, fear and dread? Why? Does the preconceived ideas we have been taught impact how we hear these words?

From *The Remedy*:

In the past, among God’s people were those who claimed to speak for God and bring his Remedy, but they did not speak for God at all, and they brought a false remedy. Likewise, there will be people among you who claim to teach God’s truth and have God’s Remedy but will teach lies. They will subtly introduce false remedies—destructive doctrines purported to heal but actually incite fear, shut down thinking, and damage the mind. They will even deny the Sovereign Lord who procured the Remedy, thus bringing rapid deterioration and destruction upon themselves. [Do you see design law in this version? What happens to a person who refuses remedy? Why does it happen?] ² There will be large numbers of people who embrace their corrupt ways while calling themselves Christians, thus causing the Remedy to be considered worthless. [Why?] ³ In their eagerness for power, fame and wealth, these false teachers will mislead you with theories and doctrines they have made up on their own. Because of this, their terminal condition only worsens, and their ultimate destruction is unavoidable. [Again do you see why? Is God to be feared in this rendering or is unremedied sin to be feared?]



⁴For God did not suspend reality to let the angels avoid the consequences of their deviation from his design for life, but he expelled them from his presence, suspending them in utter darkness for the day they reap the full result of unremedied sin. [What is this saying? What does the Bible teach about God's presences? 1Tim 6:16 God lives in unapproachable light. Jesus is the source of light. So how would God suspend angels in utter darkness? By expelling them from His presence, which occurred by whose choice? And is this speaking primarily of physical light or the light of truth?] ⁵God did not allow the gangrenous ancient world to completely cut itself off from him but brought the flood to excise the necrosis and save Noah—a teacher of the Remedy—and seven others. ⁶He diagnosed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as beyond healing, and in mercy, he cauterized those festering lesions to ash, making it clear that the unhealed will not be made to suffer eternally, but the torment of sin will mercifully be ended; [Do these stories show a God who is love working to heal and save, like a doctor intervening with a very sick patient, or a deity who is angry and mad who seeks to torture and kill, which God do you see in these verses?] ⁷and God delivered Lot—a man who partook of the Remedy and was tormented by the disgusting lives of those living in violation of God's design—⁸for it was torture for that man with a healed mind and sensitive heart to live day after day among such vileness and see and hear such vulgarity.[what was the cause of the torment to Lot? Was it inflicted by God or was it due to sin in his world? Have any of you been tormented when those you love have chosen to indulge sin and debased, damaged and injured themselves?] ⁹If God can do all of this, he also knows how to rescue from affliction the godly—those who have partaken of the Remedy—while preserving until the day everyone is accurately diagnosed, the ungodly—those who by refusing the Remedy suffer in persistent sin,¹⁰and especially those whose minds are controlled by selfishness and who are so self-centered that they despise any authority, oversight, or redirection. They are presumptuous, pompous and arrogant; they are so self-absorbed that they have no respect for heavenly beings, but instead, they denigrate them.¹¹Yet even angels, who are mightier and stronger than these false teachers, do not slander such beings in the presence of God—the source of all truth.¹²These people speak foolishly about things they don't even comprehend; they are like unthinking animals, driven by fear, rage, and lust. They are caught up in their own destructive choices, and—like the unthinking beasts—they will also perish. [Why will they perish—a judicial infliction, or the natural result of unremedied sin and separation from the only source of life?]

¹³They will reap what they have sown, receiving as their wages the harmful results of living outside God's design. Their idea of health and happiness is to violate trust, stay faithful to no one, and openly indulge the basest passions. They are festering lesions of decay, reveling in their orgies.¹⁴They constantly backstab, betray and exploit; they never stop violating God's design for life—the law of love—and instead, constantly promote selfishness. They seduce the immature and unstable; they are experts in taking for themselves, regardless of how it hurts others. They are unhealed, dying under the curse of sin,¹⁵they have chosen to leave the design protocols for life and have embraced the methods of Balaam, son of Beor, who loved the rewards procured by exploiting others.¹⁶But a donkey had more sense than Balaam and told him he was wrong. With the voice of a man, the donkey spoke and stopped the prophet's insane action.



¹⁷These people have nothing to offer; they are like dried-up springs, having no more substance than a vapor trail in the sky. Eternal darkness is what awaits them. [Why? What is the result of eternal separation from the source of all light, truth and love?] ¹⁸They proclaim a false message, empty of any healing power but appealing to the selfish human desire to advance self. They entice people who are only just escaping the dog-eat-dog world. ¹⁹They promise freedom from fear and selfishness but are themselves slaves to their own insecurities, lusts and depraved natures—for a person is a slave to whatever controls them. ²⁰If they have broken free from the corruption of the world by experiencing a genuine intimacy with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ but choose to entangle themselves again in the web of selfishness, lust and deceit, they are worse than they were before they knew the freedom in Christ. ²¹They would suffer less if they had never experienced the joy and freedom of righteousness than to have known it and turned back into slavery and pain, ignoring God's design—the sacred protocols that were passed on to them. ²²Their characters prove true the proverbs: "A dog swallows its own vomit," and "You can clean a pig, but it will return to wallowing in the mud."

The lesson asks how we can protect ourselves against accepting false doctrines?

What method do you use?

What about the integrative evidenced-based approach, which requires us to know God's design laws, and harmonize our understanding of Scripture with testable parameters and real life experiences?

When we do this what kind of a God do we find? And isn't the ultimate question, the ultimate truth the truth about God Himself, His nature, character, method of operating?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "In the strongest possible language..." Can you think of any doctrines today that promise people freedom but actually enslave people instead?

- What about penal substitution theology?
 - What does it promise? Freedom from punishment for sin
 - What does it deliver? Fear of punishment for sins unrepented of, fear of a god who must inflict punishment for unrepented sin, fear in a universe where their god is the source of inflicted pain and suffering, enslavement in a system of religion in which one lives in fear of doing something wrong:
 - "Oh no, I had the TV on Friday afternoon, was talking on the phone and forgot to turn it off before sunset."
 - "Oh no, in a meeting at work I took a paperclip off a bundle of papers and put it in my pocket and then brought it home, did I steal from my employer? Have I done this before, will God punish me if I forgot to ask forgiveness for it?"



- “Is it okay to throw the Frisbee on Sabbath afternoon? What about a baseball, what about basketball, what about hitting a tennis ball?”
- “We must not stay after church in the lobby to visit lest someone speak about something not holy and we hear it.”
- “I haven’t taken communion in three years, am I still saved or am I in trouble with God?”
- “What if I get into an argument and impulsively curse a person, and then step out in front of a car and get killed before I confess this sin—am I still saved?”
- “I did a rolling right at a stop sign, didn’t stop completely, is that sin for disobeying the law? Should I confess it?”
- “I see people beside the road holding signs “homeless” “Will work for food” etc. Should I give them a donation? What if they use the money for drugs? If I don’t give does that mean I am selfish? Is it sin to give or not give? I don’t know what to do?”

Do you see the imposed law system creates entire lines of thinking, belief systems that darken the mind, incite fear, enslave with legalistic and ritualistic behaviors, steal joy and cause one to constantly look at themselves rather than to rejoice in their love and admiration for God and Jesus!

This then leads to the false legal solution—well even if it is sin, I don’t need to worry because all my sins, past present and future were placed on Jesus at the Cross and God punished Jesus for my sins, I have accepted that legal payment and my record in heaven is stamped legally pardoned, and God declares me to be righteous, even though I am not. So, I don’t worry about whether these things are sins or not, because Jesus legally paid my penalty.

TUESDAY

The lesson speaks about people who return to their former sinful lives.

Read fourth paragraph, “Perhaps the echo of the words...” What is Jesus referring to with his parable?

Matthew 12:44,45: from *The Remedy*:

"When the mind of a person is freed from an evil spirit, the spirit seeks another to harass. But if the spirit finds no other,⁴⁴ it says, 'I will return to the one I left.' If, when it arrives, it finds the mind not filled with God's Spirit but instead empty and uncommitted,⁴⁵ it gets seven other spirits more wicked than itself and infiltrates the mind with lies, temptations, and distorted thinking. And the condition of that person is worse than before, because truth no longer has any impact on them. That is how it will be with this wicked generation."

Why is their condition worse than before? Because their initial condition was one of believing lies without having the benefit of knowing the truth, but then the truth was presented and the truth



dispelled the lies and set them free. Then, after knowing the truth, they chose to reject the truth, to not apply the truth to their lives and instead choose the lies reverting to their old ways. Now, having considered, understood and rejected the truth, such truth has no impact because it has been rejected, thus they are worse off than before and the lies multiply and deepen their darkness.

What of the last sentence, “If involvement in church and the sharing of the new faith do not replace the earlier secular activities, it is too easy to revert to one’s old ways.”

Are they suggesting that it is church activities and sharing the faith that keeps people from having a darkened mind?

Can a person who has been freed from fear and selfishness by coming to the knowledge of Jesus Christ and His love for them, revert back to a life of fear and selfishness while they are active in, and perhaps because of, church activities?

In other words, do church activities keep us safe from backsliding or walking away from God? Were those who put Christ on the Cross, active in their church or not active?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Many people have observed...” What does this sentence mean, “God is in control of the destinies of the wicked”?

Does this mean God determines the outcomes of their lives? That it is God’s choice whether they are saved or not? Or that it is God’s choice that determines their punishment?

These ideas are wrong; they are lies. This statement is evidence that the authors are operating on the false view of God’s law—i.e. that God’s law operates like human law and God will inflict the punishment they deserve.

What determines the destiny of the wicked is not the choice of God, but the choices of the wicked. Their refusal to accept healing, their persistence in evil change them, warp them, harden them, and build up a life history of evil that they will one day face in the presence of all truth and love. This is what determines their destiny, and their own unhealed characters is the source of their suffering.

This is from the book, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* by Intervarsity Press, commenting on God’s wrath described in Romans 1:

In some sense, God’s wrath is built into the very structure of created reality. In rejecting God’s structure and establishing our own, in violating God’s intention for the creation and substituting our own intentions, we cause our own disintegration. P 542



The human condition, which Paul describes in Romans 1:18-32, is not something caused by God. The phrase “revealed from heaven” (where “heaven” is a typical Jewish substitute word for “God”) does not depict some kind of divine intervention, but rather the *inevitability of human debasement* which results when God’s will, built into the created order, is violated. Since the created order has its origin in God, Paul can say that the wrath of God is now (constantly) being revealed “from heaven.” It is revealed in the fact that the rejection of God’s truth (Rom 1:18-20), that is, the truth about God’s nature and will, leads to futile thinking (Rom 1:21-22), idolatry (Rom 1:23), perversion of God-intended sexuality (Rom 1:24-27) and relational-moral brokenness (Rom 1:28-32). P 543

The expression “God gave them over” (or “handed them over”), which appears three times in this passage (Rom 1:24,26,28), supports the idea that the sinful perversion of human existence, though resulting from human decisions, is to be understood ultimately as God’s punishment which we, in freedom, bring upon ourselves. P 543

In light of these reflections, the common notion that God punishes or blesses in direct proportion to our sinful or good deeds cannot be maintained... God loves us with an everlasting love. But the rejection of that love separates us from its life-giving power. The result is disintegration and death. P 543

Kaiser, W., et al., *Hard Saying of the Bible*, Intervarsity Press, 1996,

What does the last sentence, “Whether unrighteous humanity or the fallen angels, God has taken special note of their evil and has planned their punishment on the day of judgment,” say to you?

Again, what kind of law does such a statement reveal the authors believe in?

The infection of Satan’s lie is deeply rooted within the landscape of Christianity. The final message to the world to prepare people for the second coming of Christ is to worship Him who made the heavens, earth, sea etc. and stop worshiping the dictator. We are called to designer worship.

Read second paragraph, “Peter and Jude record three examples...” Was God’s action at the flood, at Sodom, vengeance? Or was it something else?

First, what law lens are you looking through? Does God’s law function like human law, or is God’s law design law, protocols reality is built upon?

So, if God operates on design law, what do we make of the flood and Sodom and Gomorrah?

Was God acting to punish sin, or was God acting in mercy to restrain sin and keep open the avenue for healing and restoration?



First question—what is the punishment for sin, first death—sleep in the grave and then resurrection, or eternal death? Did the people who died in the flood or Sodom die first or second death? First, it therefore is not punishment for sin.

Second question, speaking in a language of those stuck in the false law construct: Does the punishment for sin happen before or after judgment? Or which comes first, the judgment and then the execution of the sentence for the guilty? Had the judgment happened at the time of the flood and Sodom? So, again it cannot be punishment for sin.

So, understanding reality, we realize what happened then was not God punishing for sin, nor God acting vindictively or vengefully. What was happening?

After Adam sinned, what was the condition of the human species? Could the species human be saved without Jesus coming to earth and completing His mission?

Did Satan know this? Genesis three, God tells the serpent the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head. Did Satan know a Messiah was coming?

And what did Satan do? Did he try and prevent the Messiah from coming to earth? How?

Would God have Jesus born to a woman like Jezebel or force a woman against her will to be the mother of Jesus? So, what if Satan gets every person to permanently harden their heart to God? How many righteous people were on the earth at the time of the flood?

So was the flood God acting to punish or God acting in mercy and love to keep open the avenue for Messiah, in order to heal and save?

So the lesson authors see God as the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death—is there a problem with this view of God? What?

What is the truth? God is the source of all good, truth, love and life, sin is deviations from God's design and sin itself results in pain, suffering and death unless remedied by God.

Which God is the one you can trust?

So what are the false teachings? Those teachings about God that make God into the one we must fear, the punisher, the source of pain and death.

Is it surprising to discover that false teachings are found in every denominational organization?



THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “The first substantive reference to Sodom...” First question did Abraham negotiate with God? Hmm... Did God go to Abraham unaware of how Abraham would respond? Did God respond to Abraham’s requests to not destroy for 50, 40 and so on with a lack of knowledge of how many righteous people were in Sodom?

Did the conversation Abraham had with God change the outcome that God told Abraham was going to happen?

In other words, was God negotiating with Abraham or doing something else? What was God doing? God was educating by action the angels in heaven, who long to look into these things, and Abraham by experience on the kind of person God is.

What about the destruction of the cities, what is revealed about God, and about the end of the wicked at the end of time?

That God does not torture, that God will not allow people to suffer eternally but bring an end to the suffering.

FRIDAY

In the paragraph it states, “Christ came to release us from the condemnation of the law...” How?

What does this mean?

What law lens?

If the law is like human law, what would it mean to be released from the condemnation of the law? For instance, what does it mean to be released from a speeding ticket? To either have the fine waived or someone else to pay the fine. This is the false theology of penal substitution.

But, when we realize God’s law is design law, what does it mean to be released from the condemnation of the law? For instance, what does it mean to be released from the condemnation of a terminal diagnosis of lung cancer from years of smoking (violating the laws of health)? To be healed by having the cancer put into remission. Now, if the cancer is in remission and one is no longer living in violations of the laws of health, is there anything for the laws of health to condemn?

So, Christ frees us from the condemnation of the law by procuring a remedy and then applying that remedy in us to heal and restore us to live in harmony with His law/design for life.

Read and discuss questions 1-3



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

June 23,24, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar for the Samaritan Counseling Service in Sarasota FL. For more information www.samaritangulfcoast.com
(T) 941-926-2959 (F) 941-929-0849

July 14,15, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Lakeport SDA church, in Lakeport CA.

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

Sep 5, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

Love is more than emotion, more than compassion, more than positive regard for another; love is power—the power to live, heal and be free. Love is functional, operational, with specific design parameters built into the fabric of reality. Love is intelligent and as we intelligently choose to harmonize with how love functions we not only experience greater health, fulfillment and wellbeing, we are transformed to become forces for good in the world. In *The God-Shaped Heart* Christian psychiatrist Dr. Tim Jennings explores the healing power of love, exposes a belief system infecting Christianity that obstructs love, and identifies eternal truths that open the heart to God's transforming power of love.

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

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



First and Second Peter Lesson 12 2Q 2017

The Day of the Lord

SABBATH

What does the lesson title bring to mind? Do you think:

- Celebration—like the marriage feast described in the parable?
- Reunion—like the prodigal son returning?
- God's exoneration—like Romans 3:4 says?
- Do you think punishment, judgment, vengeance and wrath? And if so, what law lens do you view these ideas through?
- Do you think the Lord's Day—the day of rest and gladness?
- Is there any parallel between the weekly Sabbath and the Day of the Lord?
 - The weekly Sabbath came at the end of creation week, at the end of God finishing His work of creating planet earth, humans and giving the evidence to refute Satan's lies
 - The Day of the Lord comes at the end of God finishing His work of redeeming and saving human beings and eliminating the infection of sin
 - The weekly Sabbath, for those who reject the truth about God is day of greatest violating of God's design – either by partying or by legal enslavement to manmade rules that destroy freedom
 - The Day of the Lord will be the day that those who have lived in greatest violation of God's design will come face to face with the truth of their condition, their history, their rejection of healing and reap the full consequences of their choices.
 - Thus, is the Sabbath and the Day of the Lord alike in that it all depends on whether one is right with God in heart and mind or not—if so then both are days of rest, celebration, rejoicing, but if not both are days of dread, suffering, destruction?

FRIDAY

A quote from the book *The Desire of Ages* says,

“The expectation of Christ's coming is to make men fear the Lord, and **fear His judgments upon transgression**. It is to awaken them to the great sin of rejecting His offers of mercy. Those who are watching for the Lord are purifying their souls by obedience to the truth.”

What does this mean? What does it sound like to you? When you hear language like this what comes to mind?

Does such language cause you to think of God as heavenly physician seeking to heal the sick, but leaving those who refuse to reap what they have chosen, or to think of God as a judge and imposer of punishment?



The problem is not in the quote above, the problem is that most people think through human imposed law, and further don't even allow the author who wrote it to define what she means by the terms she used. She used the term judgments upon transgression.

What are the judgments of God?

Let's read some Bible texts:

- Wail, for the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty... See, the day of the Lord is coming—a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger—to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it.¹⁰ The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light.¹¹

I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless.¹² I will make man scarcer than pure gold, more rare than the gold of Ophir.¹³ Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the Lord Almighty, in the day of his burning anger. Is 13:6, 9-13

- Alas for that day! For the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty. Joel 1:15
- Woe to you who long for the day of the Lord! Why do you long for the day of the Lord? That day will be darkness, not light.¹⁹ It will be as though a man fled from a lion only to meet a bear, as though he entered his house and rested his hand on the wall only to have a snake bite him.²⁰ Will not the day of the Lord be darkness, not light—pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness?²¹ “I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies.”²² Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them.²³ Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps.²⁴ But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream! Amos 5:18-24
- “The day of the Lord is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head. Ob 15
- Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you,² for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.³ While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.⁴ But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.⁵ You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a



breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1Thes 5:1-9

- But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. 2Pet 3:10
- The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. ³² And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved; Joel 2:31,32
- Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. ¹⁵ The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine. ¹⁶ The Lord will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the sky will tremble. But the Lord will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel. Joel 3:14-16

How would you describe the day of the Lord?

So what is going on here? Is God going to use His power to inflict pain, suffering, punishment for sin? This is what is commonly taught, why?

Because people read these verses through imposed law and wrong believe these verses mean God inflicting punishment like earthly governments do.

However, under design law, these verses mean something entirely different—what?

- God's judgments are His accurate diagnosis AND His merciful/therapeutic interventions
- God's judgments always harmonize with His character and design laws, thus God never coerces

Consider these verses:

- Romans 1:18-34, God's wrath is letting go
- For a fire has been kindled by my wrath, one that burns to the realm of death below. It will devour the earth and its harvests and set afire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap calamities upon them and spend my arrows against them... But God says the wise will understand what his wrath really is: "If only they were wise and would understand this and discern what their end will be! How could one man chase a thousand, or two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, ***unless the Lord had given them up?***" (emphasis mine). (Deut 32:22-23, 29-30)
- "When that happens, I will become angry with them; ***I will abandon them***, and they will be destroyed. Many terrible disasters will come upon them, and then they will realize that these things are happening to them because ***I, their God, am no longer with them***. (emphasis mine). (Deut 31:17 GNT)



Do we find harmony here or conflict?

So what are the judgments of God? From the author of *The Desire of Ages* quote read earlier:

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

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

"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of." Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

Are these judgments the same as the judgment of God in *The Desire of Ages* quotation?

What is the cause of the pain, the suffering, the death of the wicked in the end?

What is happening and why?

What is to be feared, God or unremedied sin in the heart and mind?

What is the source of pain, suffering and death—God or sin?

Why then do Bible writers use such harsh language when talking about the day of the Lord?

- What level of moral development is the primary audience?
- What activities is the primary audience involved in?
- What was the belief system of the people of earth in Old Testament times? i.e. polytheistic, meaning they had good gods and bad gods, kind beneficent gods and mean punishing gods. They would pray to the kind gods for bountiful harvest, health, children, but to the mean gods to punish their enemies. What did the true God want them to learn first and foremost—There is one God—so God allowed both good and evil to be attributed to Him rather than opening an opportunity for misunderstanding that Satan was worthy of worship.
- It was not this way in the immediate aftermath of the fall—it was only this way once the minds of men became so polluted with polytheistic ideas.



Read first two paragraphs **SABBATH's** lesson, "In ages past people..." Were you grieved as I was when you read this paragraph? How sad, how pitiful, how deeply the infection of Satan's lies about God have penetrated Christian thought that this could be put out as sanctifying truth.

So, let's examine their assumption, their hypothesis, that a belief in a god who will have a future judgment and therefore punish the disobedient is a godly reason that people should avoid doing evil and instead do good.

Consider the following people from history—did they believe in a god who would hold people accountable and inflict punishment for sin?

- Nadab and Abihu—Lev 10
- King Saul
- Balaam
- Annas and Caiaphas
- Popes and prelates through the dark ages
- Puritans who burned so called witches at the stake
- KKK and other groups who burn **crosses** in yards of black people and white supremacists who participate in lynchings?
- Mafia bosses—why do they go to confession?
- Islamic terrorists—do they believe in God and a future judgment?

All of these evil people, and millions more through history, believed in a judgmental god and a future judgment, yet carry out terrible acts of evil—so does the belief in a judgmental god and a future judgment prevent people from doing evil, or is it in truth, just the opposite? The belief in a punishing god causes more hardness of heart, destroys love and makes evil grow?

Which do you think would result in a more altruistic society, to believe in no God, or to believe in a judgmental punishing god?

- A recent study of 1170 children from six countries—United States, Canada, China, Jordan, South Africa, and Turkey—found that children raised in religious homes were not as good at sharing and more likely to be punitive when compared to children raised in more secular homes.
- The author of the study said in an interview, "In our study, kids from atheist and nonreligious families were, in fact, more generous. . . . Together, these results reveal the similarity across countries in how religion negatively influences children's altruism. They challenge the view that religiosity facilitates pro-social behavior, and call into question whether religion is vital for moral development—suggesting the secularization of moral discourse does not reduce human kindness. In fact, it does just the opposite." (J. Decety et al., "The Negative Association between Religiousness and Children's Altruism across the World," *Current Biology* 25, no. 22 (November 16, 2015): 2951–55.)



God's laws are design laws—one of them being the law of worship, by beholding we are changed. Understanding this, the study outcome is no surprise; it is the predictable and unavoidable outcome when the predominant worldview of God is that of an authoritarian dictator who operates on imposed law.

We really are transformed into the image of the god we worship. It is just as the prophet Jeremiah said, "They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves" (Jer. 2:5). Or as Paul said, "Because those people refuse to keep in mind the true knowledge about God, he has given them over to corrupted minds" (Rom. 1:28).

The sad truth is these ideas put out in our quarterly are obstructing the final mission of the church, obstructing the truth about God that is to lighten the world, keeping people trapped in the darkness of lies about God, undermining trust in God, and preventing people from experiencing the freedom that Jesus has provided.

What is the final true message that is to lighten the world before the great and terrible day of the Lord?

"It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. **His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth...**The last rays of merciful light, **the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.**" Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Peter warned..." Can anyone summarize what we discussed last week about those who bring a false gospel/remedy promising freedom but that actually enslaves?

- What is sin—deeds or a condition of heart that leads to destructive deeds?
- So could one be a slave to sin because they are in a religion that teaches sin is a legal problem of bad deeds, that must be accounted for, so they confess bad deeds, seeking to get legal pardon, erasure from heavenly records etc, but never actually have a change of heart?
- In this situation they live in fear, fear of the judgment, fear of unconfessed sin, fear of people finding out what they have done etc.
- This is not the freedom Christ promised but the false gospel of the originator of lies.

It is this false picture of God which has defiled the Spirit Temple—or as Paul said to the Thessalonians the man of sin has set himself up in God's temple proclaiming himself to be god. This is why we have a message that the sanctuary is to be cleansed—but that message has also been corrupted by Satan's lies and instead of teaching the truth, which cleanses hearts and minds, the false law construct has



resulted in a false sanctuary message, with heavenly legalism, in which legal accounting is going on in books in heaven.

We must come back to the truth about God, which will result in the minds of people being cleansed from lies, hearts being transformed and the final message of mercy going to the world—the cleansing of the sanctuary!

Read the bottom pink section, “Why must the Word of God...” Any questions come to mind?

- How many Christians group are out there quoting the Bible as their source of authority yet arguing among themselves what it means?
- How can we understand the Bible if we don’t reason and think?
- Why did God give us reasoning powers if He doesn’t want us to use them?
- Why did God say, “Come let us reason together...” if we are not to think for ourselves?
- What does God want from us—blind unthinking behavioral obedience, or our love and trust?
- Can love and trust be obtained without a person being fully persuaded in their own mind of the trustworthiness of the other?
- Romans 14:5 every person must be fully persuaded in their own mind, why? What does this require?
- Did those who put Christ on the cross claim to believe the Scripture and also the Sabbath? Did that protect them from being God’s enemies?

What do you understand is the purpose of the Sabbath?

Jesus said the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath—what does this mean?

If I said, McKee Baking Company built their fitness center for their employees, the employees were not built for the fitness center, what would you think this statement means?

Does this give any insight to what Christ was saying about the Sabbath?

MONDAY

Scoffers—those who ridicule the idea of God and the second coming—how do you deal with such people?

Why do you think Christ has not returned?

- Is the time of the second coming something God fixed and He is just waiting on the cosmic stopwatch to run down and then He is coming back—ready or not?
- Or, is the time of the second coming determined by events on planet earth, and those events are a result of the choices of humans and thus we are delaying His return by not choosing to prepare for His return?



Is there something happening on earth that is delaying Christ's return? What?

When Jesus said the gospel of the kingdom will be preached... has the gospel of the kingdom of love gone to the world, or has a false gospel of the kingdom of an imperial dictator gone to the world?

Revelation 7 God tells the 4 angels to hold back the four winds of strife until an event happens—what? Who are God's servants? What is the sealing of God's servants?

Could God be waiting for the truth about Him to be presented effectively enough to seal His end time spokespersons and then the four winds loose and these spokespersons present the truth about God and from their witness and great multitude will be saved?

Then what would be the effect of presenting God like this week's lesson does? Would it be to bring people to a true knowledge of God, or to obstruct the end time truth from healing hearts and minds i.e. delay the coming of the Lord?

TUESDAY

What do you think of the title?

Many people struggle with the concept of time—the lesson states in the third paragraph, “In other words, our conception of time is not like God's: so, we need to be careful in the judgments we make about time.”

Do you believe God made time? If God made time is God subject to time, or is time subject to God?

Could one of the aspects of Jesus saying He is Lord of the Sabbath also mean He is the Lord of time?

Is God constrained to a linear existence, or does God transcend time?

One of the founders of the SDA church wrote:

I AM means an eternal presence; **the past, present, and future are alike with God.** He sees the most remote events of past history and the far distant future with as clear a vision as we do those things which are transpiring daily. We know not what is before us, and if we did, it would not contribute to our eternal welfare. God gives us an opportunity to exercise faith and trust in the great I AM. . . . {TMK 12.2}

Do you believe this to be true? What does this mean for us today?

Could God not only be outside time, which allows Him to experience all points in time simultaneously, but could time move at different rates in different places?



The **Hafele–Keating experiment** was a test of the theory of relativity. In October 1971, Joseph C. Hafele, a physicist, and Richard E. Keating, an astronomer, took four cesium-beam atomic clocks aboard commercial airliners. They flew twice around the world, first eastward, then westward, and compared the clocks against others that remained at the United States Naval Observatory. When reunited, the three sets of clocks were found to disagree with one another, and their differences were consistent with the predictions of special and general relativity. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hafele%E2%80%93Keating_experiment)

Clocks that flew east, with the rotation of the earth moved faster than the clocks on earth and thus when compared to the clocks on earth, less time had past, they were behind the clocks on the earth. The clocks flown west, against the earth's rotation, flew slower relative to those on earth, and thus more time elapsed on those than the ones stationary on earth. Additionally the stronger the gravity the slower the clocks move, so clocks on the space station move faster than ones on earth.

Is it possible while thousands of years have passed on earth that only a few days have passed in heaven since Lucifer's rebellion?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson asks the question “So what does this have to do with me now?”

This is a great question—is the gospel merely next-life, life insurance? Or does it have application today, here and now?

Those with the legal view often fail to make the connection and end up saying things like in paragraph two, “our whole Christian faith would become meaningless without the return of Christ and all that is promised.”

Is this true? In other words, there is no meaning, no purpose, no benefit in living God's way except for the future life; God's way doesn't benefit us today, except as it ensures our future eternal life. Is this thinking correct?

Consider, if there is no second coming of Christ does that suddenly mean that selfishness, lies, betrayal, coercion, intimidation, abuse, murder, adultery, hatred, etc. are healthier ways to live than love, truth, honesty, integrity, freedom, kindness, mercy, loyalty and forgiveness?

Even if no future life, which methods result in better living here and now?

So what difference does it make? The difference between sickness and health, pain and wellness, life and death—why? Because God's laws are design laws and harmony brings health, here and now!



THURSDAY

Peter warns that Paul's writings can be misconstrued—thoughts? Have Paul's writings been misconstrued? How?

Paul's writings are the primary writings used by those who teach the penal substitutionary lie, built upon the human imposed law construct. Paul never taught penal substitution, sadly his writings have been used to support this lie. I believe Peter was warning against this.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Korean and Polish Translations: A publisher in Korea has contracted to translate *Could It Be This Simple?* (CIBTS) into Korean, and a publisher in Poland has contracted to translate *The God-Shaped Brain* (GSB) into Polish. We will let you know when these are available.

Currently CIBTS is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and German and GSB is available in English and Korean.

June 8-10, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

June 23,24, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar for the Samaritan Counseling Service in Sarasota FL. For more information www.samaritangulfcoast.com
(T) 941-926-2959 (F) 941-929-0849

July 14,15, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Lakeport SDA church, in Lakeport CA.

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

Sep 5, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

Love is more than emotion, more than compassion, more than positive regard for another; love is power—the power to live, heal and be free. Love is functional, operational, with specific design parameters built into the fabric of reality. Love is intelligent and as we intelligently choose to harmonize with how love functions we not only experience greater health, fulfillment and wellbeing, we are transformed to become forces for good in the world. In *The God-Shaped Heart* Christian psychiatrist Dr. Tim Jennings explores the healing power of love, exposes a belief system infecting Christianity that obstructs love, and identifies eternal truths that open the heart to God's transforming power of love.

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

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



First and Second Peter Lesson 13 2Q 2017

Major Themes

SABBATH

Read memory text: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.” 1Pet 2:24 NRSV

Now I am going to read the same verse from *The Remedy* and I want you to compare the two and think, do you here the exact same meaning from the two renderings?

He took upon himself our sinfulness (our terminal condition) and in his own person carried it upon the cross so that we could be freed from sin and live the right way—loving God and others more than ourselves. You have been healed by the Remedy procured by his painful ordeal.

Does it make a difference to use “sins” versus “sinfulness”? What difference?

Does our understanding of this verse, whether he took our sins or sinfulness upon himself, impact our understanding of the judgment?

Read second paragraph, “What is significant is that Peter...” How do you understand the judgment? Is there one judgment, two judgments, three judgments?

For instance:

- Is there an investigative judgment, a judgment before the second coming? If so,
 - Who is being judged and who is doing the judging?
 - Is this a judicial process with records being reviewed and evidence being entered and defense attorneys pleading for the accused?
 - Who determines who is saved and who is lost?
 - Whose judgment is being exercised and whose executive decision-making is being utilized to determine the saved and lost in this judgment?
 - Is God judging the people of the earth, or is this the judgment of the people of the earth as to whether they can trust God?
- Is there a judgment during the 1000 years?
 - If so who is doing the judging and who is being judged?
 - Are the righteous judging the lives the wicked and the fallen angels?
 - Are the righteous judging whether God was right in who is there in heaven and who is not?
- Is there a judgment after the 1000 years?
 - If so, who is doing the judging and who is being judged?



- Is this a judicial process with records being reviewed and evidence being entered and defense attorneys pleading for the accused?
- Is this the revelation of all histories, realities, characters as they are—each person coming face to face with their own selves?

SDA Church has taught the idea of a judgment that occurs before the second coming of Christ. This doctrine has its roots in the Great Awakening of the 19th Century with the Baptist Preacher William Miller and his Daniel prophecy of Daniel 8:14, the cleansing of the sanctuary, which he taught was the earth to be cleansed at the second coming, which he predicted would occur Oct 22, 1844.

But there was a great disappointment when Christ did not return and people began to examine what was misunderstood and they realized the Bible does not teach that the earth is the sanctuary to be cleansed. They reevaluated, and over a course of years, realized some form of preparation was to be done before the return of Christ. Sadly, because of the infection of the false law construct, many people developed a heavenly legalism theory in which there is a courtroom in heaven and books are open and records of deeds are recorded there, and these records are investigated, with prosecution, defense, pleas etc. However, this is all misunderstood.

In Scripture there are several texts that refer to this important event in salvation history, which was taught by one of the founders of the SDA church, but which those who embraced the false law model failed to understand.

Here is the historic quote:

The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in **Daniel 8:14**; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of days, as presented in **Daniel 7:13**; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by **Malachi, are descriptions of the same event**; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25. {FLB 207.4}

Daniel 8:14 is merely predicting the time this event will begin, no other significant details are given in the 8:14 text.

In Daniel 7 we read:

“As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened....“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign



power; **all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him.** His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. Daniel 7:9,10,13,14

What is being described? What law lens are you reading through, imposed human law, or design law?

Those looking through human imposed law lenses teach that this text is describing a judicial proceeding in heaven in which God is the great Judge who sits down to pronounce judgment upon all mankind, but this passage of Scripture does not actually say that, instead we have to read into the Scripture to come to that conclusion.

If we take a more straightforward approach and ask what is being described in the context of the passage another idea emerges.

The word “court” can mean a legal body, but what else does the word “court” describe? A Royal court!

What is being described is not a judicial proceeding. Instead what is described is a Royal Court! It is the Royal Court of the universe which is holding the Coronation of Christ! Some are uncomfortable with this conclusion and rest their entire position on the Hebrew word "diyn," which is translated “court,” claiming this Hebrew word refers to a judicial proceeding. I refer them to The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament published in 1980 by Moody Press, which says:

This word, with its derived noun diyn is nearly identical in meaning with šhaphat {shaw-fat} (q.v.) and its derived noun mišpat {mish-pawt} (q.v.). It appears only twenty-three times, a fraction of the times šhaphat and mišpat appear. Of the twenty-three appearances, five are in parallel with šhaphat (Jer 5:28; 22:16; Prov 31:8; Ps 7:8 [H 9]; 9:8 [H 9]) and twice more it is associated in the text with mišpat (Ps 72:2; Jer 21:12). Thus nearly a third of its occurrences show how closely the idea of diyn was identified or associated with the root šhaphat. The verb also occurs in Ugaritic and in parallel with tp (the cognate of šhaphat) (Fisher, RSP, vol. I, p. 166). Likewise a similar—nearly identical as far as it goes—list of terms is associated with diyn, demonstrating the near identity of meaning: with mēyšhar {may-shawr} “uprightness,” “equity” (Ps 96:10; cf. Ps 75:2); and with gaša (Ps 54:1 [H 3]; cf. Ps 72:4). As with šhaphat it represents God’s government as both among his people (Israel) and among all peoples (Ps 135:14 “people”; Ps 7:8 [H 9] “peoples” cf Ps 72:2; Ps 9:8 [H 9]). As far as the small number of occurrences allows a test, the range of meanings is exactly the same: to govern, in the whole range of activities of government: legislative, executive, judicial, or otherwise. See the discussion of šhaphat and mišpat. The difference between the terms is simply that diyn is poetic, probably also an archaic and more elegant term. Of the twenty-three occurrences, only one is outside the Protestant grouping of poetical and poetical-prophetic literature. The exception is the single passive form—a Niphal participle (II Sam 19:9 [H 10]). **The chief theological significance of this word is that apparently like šhaphat it embodies the idea of government, in whatever realm, in all its aspects.**[1]



Further, notice the text says that all people from all over the earth worship Jesus—what does this mean? It means that the minds of people are being changed—it means that people are making decisions to worship Jesus, it means they are making judgments about the trustworthiness of God!

Once we recognize that the court seated is the Royal Court of the universe convening for the governmental action of coronating Christ, which involves intelligent beings recognizing Jesus as worthy of our worship, we can more clearly understand what occurs during the investigative judgment. Daniel 7:21,22 gives insight:

As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and **pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High**, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

The above rendering is from the NIV which many, who assume the legal model, prefer. But does the meaning of the passage change when we read from the King James Version?

Until the Ancient of days came, and **judgment was given to the saints of the most High**; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Daniel 7:22

Which translation is more accurate? The Hebrew word translated “pronounced” actually means “to give” or “to impart” and thus the KJV would be more accurate in this context.

Why do the saints of God need judgment (another word for discernment) imparted to them?

The Daniel text tells us the horn warred against the saints and was defeating them. What kind of warfare was going on?

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2 Cor 10:3-5

What kind of war? Where is it being fought? This is a war between truth and lies, centering on God’s character, and being fought in our minds! Amazingly, Paul makes the connection to the cleansing of the Temple even closer and shows how the Temple is connected to this war going on in our minds:

Concerning **the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ** and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt



himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he **sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.** 2Thes 2:1-4

Paul is describing the exact same events as Daniel 7 in which evil powers war against the saints and oppose God. In the aftermath of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, did this man of lawlessness ride into heaven overthrow God, set himself up in God's temple in heaven, and proclaim himself to be God? Now, where did this happen? In the Spirit Temple! In our minds!

Therefore, the cleansing of the temple, as described in the Bible, is the cleansing of our minds from the lies about God, which wins us back to trust and results in our cleansing from sin.

Daniel is told in vision that an evil power would arise that would lie, distort, misrepresent God, and defile the Spirit Temple by getting humans to accept, worship, and teach a false picture of God. According to our understanding of interpreting prophetic time, it would take 2,300 years before enough truth would be recovered for Christ to empower His people on earth with judgment (discernment) to break free from the lies and be cleansed in their minds and characters.

All of this is confirmed for us by the other text describing the same event as Daniel 8:14, Malachi 3:1-3:

Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. **He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.**

What is getting cleansed during the investigative judgment? The Levites. And who are the Levites? The Priesthood of believers (1Pet 2:5,9).

God is cleansing His people from what? 1) the lies about Him which keep us from trusting Him and 2) when we are won back to trust, He cleanses us from sin—fear and selfishness. God writes His law of love into our hearts. He restores His character of righteousness in us. This is what is happening during the investigative judgment.

How does this happen? By our investigating the truth about God as revealed in Christ, rejecting the lies, and clinging to the truth and trusting God!

Many have a very difficult time with this truth, because certain Bible passages are misunderstood, such as:

- As I judged your fathers in the desert of the land of Egypt, so I will judge you, declares the Sovereign Lord. Ezekiel 20:36



- You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. Romans 14:10
- For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. 2 Cor 5:10
- Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. 1 Peter 1:17
- And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. Revelation 20:12

Traditionally, these texts are interpreted to mean that God's judgment determines our destiny, either saved or lost. But this is not the case. God's judgment is merely the accurate diagnosis of our condition, either healed and restored to Christlikeness or incurable. An example of God's judgment is found in Hosea 4:17:

Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone!

What is God's judgment in this case? Ephraim cannot be separated from his idols, so leave him the way he is.

What determines our eternal destiny is not God's judgment upon us, but our judgment of God, which in turn makes us either fit or unfit for living in God's system of other-centered love. If we judge God trustworthy, then we open our heart and His Spirit heals us from sin. If, instead, we accept Satan's lies and judge God as untrustworthy, then we keep our heart closed and eventually move ourselves beyond His healing reach. One day all will stand in God's presence and their true condition will be revealed – this is God's judgment. Jesus describes this reality:

“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” Matthew 12:33-37

It is our very condition that determines our eternal destiny. We cannot make ourselves good. We can only be made good by the power of God working in us. And what determines whether God's power is experienced within our hearts and minds? Whether we trust God and open our heart to Him or not.

This reality is stated beautifully in the book *The Great Controversy*:

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day **declares the verdict that the wicked are incurable**. They have no disposition to submit to divine authority. Their will has been



exercised in revolt; and when life is ended, it is too late to turn the current of their thoughts in the opposite direction, too late to turn from transgression to obedience, from hatred to love. GC 543.1

Does God's verdict make the wicked incurable or does God's verdict merely pronounce the reality that already exists in the hearts and minds of the lost – that they are incurable?

We do not need to fear God who is trying to save and heal us; we need to fear sin, which if unremedied, destroys us!

What then is recorded in the record books of heaven?

The "record books" are a description of recorded data—I doubt seriously it is paper, or parchment, but some type of recording system we can't comprehend. But there are at least three distinct recording systems:

- The system in which the lives of people are recorded, i.e. their individualities, identities are stored, the book of life
- The book sealed with seven seals, which is a history of the entire great controversy which God wrote down before He created any intelligent life, demonstrating His foreknowledge of all that would happen
- The records kept by the recording angels which were directed by God to record events as they unfold, and when the book sealed with seven seals is revealed it will match perfectly with what the recording angels recorded, demonstrating that while God has foreknowledge, He never used that foreknowledge to take away our freedom of choice. And that God did everything He could to save every person and those lost are only lost because they insisted on refusing God's healing.

With this in mind, what is your response to the last paragraph in Sabbath's lesson which states, "that God will judge our actions at the last judgment"?

Is it our actions that are judged or our hearts?

- Man looks on the outward appearance God looks on the heart
- Make a tree good and its fruit will be good
- From the abundance of the heart man speaks...
- As a man thinks in his heart so is he

Is sin a problem of deeds, actions, or a problem of the heart that is manifested in the actions?

Can a person do an act, which appears good, but which is actually evil?

Can a person do an act, which appears evil, but is actually good?



Let's give a simply example:

- Could the act of standing up in the church sanctuary, turning over the communion table, taking out your belt and cracking it, and accusing the pastor and elders of defaming God's house be either an act of evil or an act of righteousness—depending on who is doing it, why, and the motive of the heart?
- Can we tell by the act alone?
- Can one person see the act and judge it righteous and another judge it evil?
- What about the husband, whose wife has a massive stroke is brain dead, so he pulls the plug and lets her die? Could it be that he fulfilled a promise he made to her to not let her exist in a vegetative state and thus it was an act of great love? Could it be he has had a girlfriend on the side for years and he can't marry his girlfriend until the wife is dead?
- Can we tell by the act along?

Are we really judged by acts, or are we judged by the actual condition of our hearts—have we been won to trust God, opened our hearts to Him and been reborn with new desires, motives, longings and thus “it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me”?

SUNDAY

The lesson talks about salvation—what do you understand the word salvation to mean?

If a non-Christian sits next to you on an airplane and you have a two hour flight, and they ask you, what does salvation mean—what do you say?

Acts 4:12 is a great verse for this because it has two words we can examine, salvation and saved:

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

What do both words mean?

σωτηρία [*soteria* /so·tay·ree·ah/] n f. Feminine of a derivative of 4990 as (properly, abstract) noun; TDNT 7:965; TDNTA 1132; GK 5401; 45 occurrences; AV translates as “salvation” 40 times, “the (one) be saved” once, “deliver + 1325” once, “health” once, “saving” once, and “that (one) be saved + 1519” once. **1** deliverance, preservation, safety, salvation. 1a deliverance from the molestation of enemies. 1b in an ethical sense, that which concludes to the souls safety or salvation. 1b1 of Messianic salvation. **2** salvation as the present possession of all true Christians. **3** future salvation, the sum of benefits and blessings which the Christians, redeemed from all earthly ills, will enjoy after the visible return of Christ from heaven in the



consummated and eternal kingdom of God. *Additional Information:* Fourfold salvation: saved from the penalty, power, presence and most importantly the pleasure of sin.¹

Deliverance from what is going to injure, harm, destroy, enslave—the question: from what do we need deliverance? Do we need deliverance from:

- God?
- God’s judgment?
- God’s punishment?
- Our sinful condition?
- Our false beliefs, fears, insecurities, bad habits, selfishness i.e. from ourselves?
- Our fallen state, terminal and dying state of being?

Hmmm, then what would Jesus need to do to provide this deliverance, pay a legal penalty to His Father? How would such an act fix our condition or free us from our fear, selfishness and distrust of God?

It wouldn’t, that is why Christianity has been so impotent in doing its work, because it has been infected with a false law construct and preaches a false remedy that doesn’t work.

This is the man of sin setting himself up in God’s temple proclaiming himself to be God—and from which we must cleanse our minds and hearts.
“

What does *saved* mean?

ἐκσώζω, σώζω [sozo /sode·zo/] v. From a primary sos (contraction for obsolete saoz, “safe”); TDNT 7:965; TDNTA 1132; GK 1751 and 5392; 110 occurrences; AV translates as “save” 93 times, “make whole” nine times, “heal” three times, “be whole” twice, and translated miscellaneous three times. **1** to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction. **1a** one (from injury or peril). **1a1** to save a suffering one (from perishing), i.e. one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health. **1b1** to preserve one who is in danger of destruction, to save or rescue. **1b** to save in the technical biblical sense. **1b1** negatively. **1b1a** to deliver from the penalties of the Messianic judgment. **1b1b** to save from the evils which obstruct the reception of the Messianic deliverance.²

It means to heal! To fix what is out of harmony with how God built life and health to function.

If a person goes to the emergency room bitten by a poisonous snake and says “Doctor Please save me” what are they asking for—forgiveness? No! Healing!

¹ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

² Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



Read second paragraph, “In many of the sacrifices described...” Was sin being transferred? Truly, in reality? Was sin even symbolically being transferred or was another symbolism being represented?

Consider, as you hear this, what law lens are you hearing it through—human imposed law, or design law? Is this describing a legal process or a healing process?

From the book *The Great Controversy*:

Important truths concerning the atonement are taught by the typical service. A substitute was accepted in the sinner's stead; but the sin was not canceled by the blood of the victim. A means was thus provided by which it was transferred to the sanctuary. By the offering of blood the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law, confessed his guilt in transgression, and expressed his desire for pardon through faith in a Redeemer to come; but he was not yet entirely released from the condemnation of the law. On the Day of Atonement the high priest, having taken an offering from the congregation, went into the most holy place with the blood of this offering, and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat, directly over the law, to make satisfaction for its claims. Then, in his character of mediator, he took the sins upon himself and bore them from the sanctuary. Placing his hands upon the head of the scapegoat, he confessed over him all these sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the goat. The goat then bore them away, and they were regarded as forever separated from the people. {GC 420.1}

Now, lets ask some questions:

Important truths concerning the atonement are taught by the typical service. **A substitute was accepted in the sinner's stead;**[accepted for what purpose, to punish or to cure?] but the **sin** was not canceled by the blood of the victim.[sin, does this mean act, or state of being out of harmony with God's design, is this referring only to the animal symbols, which Hebrews tells us was never able to cleanse the conscience of the worshipper, or to Jesus?] A means was thus provided by which it was transferred to the sanctuary.[what sanctuary, a tent made of gold, goats skins, and silver, or to the sanctuary Jesus mentioned that when they destroy it He would raise it up in three days? And was the act transferred, or is this symbolically teaching the terminal condition was taken up by another?] By the offering of blood the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law, confessed his guilt in transgression, and expressed his desire for pardon through faith in a Redeemer to come;[What does the blood symbolize? Life, whose, Jesus' which is sinless and cleanses, and thus the blood acknowledge what type of law, impose rules requiring inflicted punishment, or God's design law He built life to operate upon? Why language such as pardon and transgression and guilt? To what moral developmental level were the people who received the ceremonial law?] but he was not yet entirely released from the condemnation of the law. [what does the law of God condemn? Deviations from design, like the law of respiration condemning going into space without a spacesuit. Why was the sinner not released from such condemnation? Because they were only acting out a symbol, the Savior had not yet come, the Remedy had not yet been procured, they had not yet been



glorified and permanently freed from the infection of sin] On the Day of Atonement the high priest, having taken an offering from the congregation, went into the most holy place with the blood of this offering, and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat, directly over the law, to make satisfaction for its claims. [What does this mean? What does the law claim? What satisfies that claim? What law lens are you looking through? If our child was dying of leukemia what does the law of health claim? In other words, what does the law of health require in order for your child to live? The leukemia to go into remission—what would be the only thing that would satisfy that requirement and also satisfy you? A remedy that achieves that healing! In our case what is the remedy that achieves our healing? The truth which destroys lies and the perfect character of Jesus reproduced within and these are symbolized by what? The blood!] Then, in his character of mediator, he took the sins upon himself and bore them from the sanctuary.[What does this mean in His capacity as mediator? Who is the High Priest representing? Jesus, and what is Jesus working to do? Where is Jesus working? In a building or in the hearts and minds of His people? So Jesus took our sinfulness upon Himself and eradicated it, perfected humanity, and then works in us to eradicate our selfish, carnal nature and put His nature where our fallen nature was. Thus He removes our sinfulness, our fear, our insecurity, our selfishness along with the lies, the shame the guilt and carries it away from us and what does Jesus do with it?] Placing his hands upon the head of the scapegoat, he confessed over him all these sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the goat. The goat then bore them away, and they were regarded as forever separated from the people. {GC 420.1} [What does this mean? That having cleansed our minds from the lies about God, our carnal natures etc., all responsibility for all sin, rebellion, pain, suffering, death rests back on Satan who originated the rebellion without cause—this is atonement bringing the hearts and minds of all who will allow Him back into unity, at-one-ment!]

Read third paragraph, “The blood of the sacrifice...” What does this mean?

- Did the blood of animals have any actual role in salvation?
- Did a person have to participate in the Levitical system to be saved?
 - Naaman, Nebuchadnezzar, the widow who housed Elijah, Daniel and the loyal in Babylon while the temple was torn down, Esther and those who didn't return to Jerusalem, the Magi from the East, the Queen of Sheba
- The blood of animals is symbolic of what? The blood of Jesus and are we saved by the red corpuscles of Jesus, or is the blood of Jesus also symbolic—of what? The life of Jesus which is a sinless, perfect life.
- So what did Jesus mean when He said unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no part with me—cannibalism? No!
- His flesh is symbolic of truth, words, ideas, and as food is the molecules which become the building blocks of our physical bodies, the truth of God is to be the ideas, constructs, beliefs, data-sets, that are to become the building blocks of our minds, attitudes and beliefs which win us to trust and we open the heart and receive the life a new heart and right spirit, symbolized by the blood!



MONDAY

In the second paragraph the lesson states, “In the Hebrew Bible, things that are holy are set aside for use in the temple or for God’s purposes.”

According to the Hebrew Bible what was it that symbolically was used to make things holy? The blood of the sacrificial animal—in fact blood from any other animal always defiled, including human blood, but the blood of the sacrificial animal ALWAYS made things holy.

What is the lesson? What then does it mean that some teach the blood of the sacrificial animal contaminated the sanctuary?

What does it mean to be holy? Would holiness entail being in harmony with God, being like God in character, heart, motive etc.? And is God the standard of what is right, i.e. what is healthy? Can one have life outside of God? Then is holiness in its true sense complete godlike healthiness of heart, mind, character where selfishness and fear are replaced by love and trust?

TUESDAY

Read second, third and fourth paragraphs, “Peter highlights two things...” What does this mean?

Why does judgment start with the house of God? What do you understand the judgment to be? Are you thinking through human law lens and conceiving of a judicial process, or through design law in the Great Controversy and thinking of Romans 3:4 “God may you be proved right when you are judged”?

Who will be the first to make the right judgment about God, those who have never heard of God, or those in the house of God? This is very straightforward.

And it is what is taught in Revelation chapter 7 about the servants of God being sealed in their foreheads before the great multitude who are saved. The servants are those in the house of God who are first settled into the truth and who give the final message of mercy which leads others to make a right judgment about God and be saved.

What do you understand the fire to be and how do you explain it?

Does the Bible describe two fires? What is the sequence of these fires?

The wicked are destroyed by the brightness of Christ’s coming, what about the righteous, do they avoid that brightness or do they live in it? What of Daniel 7, the ancient of days takes his throne and rivers of fire come out, who is in the fire?



Yet there is a fire in which the elements melt in the heat? What is the difference?

The fire of God's presence, the fires of truth and love burn through lies and selfishness and the wicked, those solidified in rebellion, surrender their lives not wanting to live in a universe of love and truth. After the wicked are dead, then the fires of combustion burn on the earth and the earth is recreated in perfection.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson states, "For both Peter and Paul, government authorities have been put in place by God Himself to act as a check against those who would do evil."

Does this mean that human governments govern as God governs, using God's methods and represent God's kingdom?

Does this mean they have the divine right of kings?

Does this mean God endorses and supports what human governments do? Did God supported slavery in Rome or in America when the governments practiced slavery?

No! Don't confuse the reality that God's principles of order are manifested in orderly governments to minimize chaos and anarchy with the idea that human governments represent God and His methods; they do NOT.

Jesus said, "My kingdom is NOT of this world."

The last paragraph states, "Peter would no doubt share Paul's conviction that good church governance is important too. Paul insists, "Let all things be done decently and in order" in church worship services."

Are we to run the church like human governments run their states?

Is order in the church supposed to come from authoritarian measures, coercion, censure, threats dictator like tactics?

Or is order in the church supposed to come from loving one another like Christ loves the church seeking the best for each other?



THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, “His words should be a good reminder...” Some very good points in this paragraph, we absolutely should read Scripture with context and historical circumstance in mind, with spiritual insight, the knowledge of salvation etc.

One of the problems with all of this however is that most people read all of this through the false law lens and therefore come to wrong conclusions about what it all means.

Experience is said to be the best teacher. **Genuine experience is indeed superior to mere theoretical knowledge**, but many have an erroneous idea as to what constitutes experience. **Real experience is gained by a variety of careful experiments, made with the mind free from prejudice, uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits.** The results are marked with careful solicitude, and an anxious desire to learn, to improve, and to reform on every point that is not in harmony with physical and moral laws. {CTBH 109.1}

That which many term experience is not experience at all; it has resulted from mere habit, or from a course of indulgence, thoughtlessly and often ignorantly followed. **There has not been a fair trial by actual experiment and thorough investigation, with a knowledge of the principles involved in the action.** *Experience which is opposed to natural law,—which is in conflict with the unchangeable principles of nature,—is not to be relied upon.* **Superstition arising from a diseased imagination is often arrayed in opposition to reason and to scientific principles.** To many a person, the idea that others may gainsay what he has learned by experience, seems folly, and even cruelty itself. **But there are more errors received and held through false ideas of experience than from any other cause.** There are many invalids today who will ever remain such because they cannot be convinced that their experience is not to be relied upon. {CTBH 109.2}

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions:

1. Can we hasten the day of the Lord? How?
2. How do we harmonize Scripture and nature in a world infected by sin?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Korean and Polish Translations: A publisher in Korea has contracted to translate *Could It Be This Simple?* (CIBTS) into Korean, and a publisher in Poland has contracted to translate *The God-Shaped Brain* (GSB) into Polish. We will let you know when these are available.

Currently CIBTS is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and German and GSB is available in English and Korean.

June 23,24, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar for the Samaritan Counseling Service in Sarasota FL. For more information www.samaritangulfcoast.com
(T) 941-926-2959 (F) 941-929-0849

July 14,15, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Lakeport SDA church, in Lakeport CA.

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

Sep 5, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

Love is more than emotion, more than compassion, more than positive regard for another; love is power—the power to live, heal and be free. Love is functional, operational, with specific design parameters built into the fabric of reality. Love is intelligent and as we intelligently choose to harmonize with how love functions we not only experience greater health, fulfillment and wellbeing, we are transformed to become forces for good in the world. In *The God-Shaped Heart* Christian psychiatrist Dr. Tim Jennings explores the healing power of love, exposes a belief system infecting Christianity that obstructs love, and identifies eternal truths that open the heart to God's transforming power of love.

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

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 1 3Q 2017

Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “It’s not that hard...” What would you say were the major doctrinal beliefs held by Saul of Tarsus?

- God as Creator?
- Mankind was in sin?
- A Messiah was Promised?
- The Jews were chosen by God as a special people to prepare for the Advent of the Messiah?
- The Sabbath was a special and holy day?
- Diet laws were to be obeyed?
- They were not to marry non-Jews?
- The Sanctuary was important in God’s plan to save humanity?
- And what would Saul believe about law?
 - That God imposed law and broken law required punishment?
 - How would Saul then behave toward those who he saw breaking the law, if Saul wanted to act like the God he worshipped?

What group on earth today sounds like Saul—believes in and worships the Creator, that man is in sin, that a Messiah came, that God has a special end time people who are to prepare the world for the second advent, that the Sabbath is special, that diet is to be modified closer to God’s original design, that the sanctuary is important in God’s plan to save humanity? Would it not be the SDAs?

And what would you say most SDAs believe about God’s law? That it is imposed rules that require the rule giver to inflict punishment for breaking?

And what kind of theology is taught with that kind of law?

Was Saul able to do God’s work, fulfill God’s plan, as long as he operated on the imposed law concept?

What about the SDA church, or any Christian church, can we fulfill God’s plan for us at this time in human history if we are operating on the false law construct?

What method did Saul use in converting people? Coercion, force, intimidation—what method did Christians use in the Dark Ages?

What method do many evangelists use today? Your time is short, you could get hit by a bus and before long you will be tortured in hell if you haven’t accepted Jesus.



Remember I brought this evangelistic tool some use to class a few years back, it looks like a \$1,000,000 dollar note and on the back it reads:

Here Is The Million Dollar Question: Will you go to Heaven when you die? Here's a quick test: have you ever lied, stolen, or used God's name in vain? Jesus said, "Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." If you have done these things, **God sees you as a lying, thieving, blasphemous, adulterer at heart, and the Bible warns that one day God will punish you in a terrible place called Hell.** But God is not willing that any should perish. **Sinners broke God's Law and Jesus paid their fine. This means that God can legally dismiss their case.** "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Then Jesus rose from the dead, defeating death. Today, repent and trust Jesus, and God will give you eternal life as a free gift. Then read the Bible daily and obey it. God will never fail you.

What method is being employed? What law lens is being used? Can we as a church do God's work when we present Satan's view of God?

What method did Paul use after his conversion? Rom 14:5 "let every person be fully persuaded in their own mind." Present the truth in love and leave others free!

What about God, what does God want from His intelligent creatures? Does God want our genuine love and trust? Can God get our love and trust by using threats of punishment?

Then what happens in the hearts and minds of people when church leaders teach that in the end God will use His power to torture and kill the wicked. That we need to repent or God will be required to kill us?

This idea is based on the false human law construct and undermines love and trust and prevents Christians from completing the mission of preparing the world for Christ's return.

What we should be saying is, "We are dying of a terminal condition and if you don't trust God, He will be unable to heal you—why? Because the healing is the transforming of your character, and the only way for your character to be transformed and you to remain you, is by your voluntary and willful participation.

Yes, God has the POWER to rewrite your mind and impose a perfect character in anyone, but to do so without that person choosing it, would erase that person's identity and simply create a new individual.

You might ask, well why doesn't God do that?



Parents, do any of you have children who have been disobedient, maybe even rebellious—if you had the power to erase their identity and put another person’s identity—another mind, a mind of a different person that would be obedient and loyal—into their body, would you do it? Why not? Because it wouldn’t be your child! And if your goal is to heal and save your child, such an act would destroy them anyway, so there is not point in doing such a thing.

Thus, God presents the truth in love and leaves us all free. But the false law construct has blinded billions into a legal religion with no power to save, and in fact, obstructs people from truly trusting God.

SUNDAY

The first paragraph points out that Saul was involved in the stoning of Stephen—holding the coats of those who stoned Stephen.

How did Stephen act during his stoning? “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” Acts 7:60

What do you see manifested in Stephen’s response? Is this the character of a sinful human beings or the character of Jesus? Do you see in Stephen that the survival of the fittest principle has been removed and God’s design of love has been restored! Is this a demonstration of Bible perfection? Not perfect behavior, but perfect trust in God such that we love others more than self?

When perfection comes up, those in the legal model immediately get anxiety, focus on deeds, behavior, and teach theologies that no one is perfect and no one can be perfect that we live in sin, and keep on sinning, but under the umbrella of God’s grace, meaning Jesus paid for all our sins. But, in reality, Bible perfection is not primarily about behavior or deeds, it is about the heart, the heart attitude of trust in God and love for others. Thus even when the deeds are not great, the person is recognized as righteous, any examples?

- Rahab
- David
- Samson
- Jephthah

Do you think Stephen’s death had significance beyond Stephen’s own life? How and why?

Heb 2:14,15 says:

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵ and **free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.**

Do you think Saul had a fear of death? What did he see in Stephen?



If Stephen was consumed by guilt, out of harmony with God, etc. would he have been so kind, gracious and other-centered to his tormenters at his death?

The last paragraph states, “Saul saw that the great prophetic promises of God’s kingdom had not yet been fulfilled (*Daniel 2, Zech. 8:23, Isaiah 40-55*), and he probably believed it was his task to help God bring that day about—which could be done by cleansing Israel of religious corruption, including the idea that this Jesus was the Messiah.”

What method did Saul and the Jewish leaders use to try and eliminate religious corruption?

Why did they use this method?

Every religion that uses force, coercion, threat, inflicted punishment, sanctions, intimidation, etc. to enforce religious dogma exposes itself as a false religion. When acting in such a way it becomes beastly, and thus the beast of revelation coerces—“no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.” Rev 13:17

What is the mark of the beast? The imposed law method of coercion to force compliance!

How many Christians today would gladly take control of their government and pass laws to enforce what they believe are right moral behaviors? How many Christians will accept a god who comes performing miracles and speaking gentle words, begging sinners to repent and worship him, yet stating, “I only want your love. If you won’t worship me I will be forced by holiness and justice to punish and eventually kill you. So please worship me.” How many will say “This is our God we have waited for him”?

Jesus called His followers to love others—to convert NOT coerce people, why? Because love and trust cannot be obtained by legislation, or coercion.

What happens when people are forced to comply with religious laws that they don’t believe in?

What about:

- Prohibition? which came about by Christian groups recognizing the destructive effect of alcohol; what happened in society—a better society, or did it lead to more corruption, more crime, more violence?
- What about societies where Sharia laws are in force? What happens in places where such laws are passed? Do people become more loving, more kind, more generous, more enlightened, or do people become more fearful, less enlightened and more intolerant?
- What about when abortion was illegal—did it result in no abortions being performed, or did people just get them in back alleys, with unsafe conditions with coat hangers and more people were hurt etc.?



- Are some Christians today trying to pass laws to force others to comply with their belief system?
- Does God work in this way to implement His plan of salvation?

MONDAY

The lesson focuses on Saul's conversion when Jesus said to him "it is hard to kick against the goads."

What does this mean?

- To what is Jesus referring?
- Is Jesus commenting on an inflicted punishment upon Saul, or a natural result?
- What type of law is involved?
- Is there a principle here as to why pain happens when we sin?
- What happens if you touch a hot stove? Why?
- Is the pain bad or good? Why?
- What does the pain lead you to do?
- What if you feel no pain when you touch the stove?
- What disease causes one to lose pain sensation? Leprosy, and what happens in leprosy?
- Do you see why leprosy is a metaphor for sin? Sin deadens our consciences and we are less aware of the damage we are inflicted upon ourselves.

What happens inside the person who cheats, steals, commits adultery? Why?

Is this an inflicted punishment or a consequence of violating God's design law? And is the pain, turmoil, bad or a healthy response to influence a person to stop their destructive actions?

In the middle of the lesson it asks, "What role did the grace of God have in this experience? In other words, how much did Saul deserve the goodness that the Lord showed toward him?"

What do these questions imply the lesson believes grace is? Might they define grace, as many people have, as: "unmerited favor"?

If this is the true definition of grace, then, when the Bible says that "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor (grace—same Greek) with God and man" does that mean Jesus' favor with God and man was unmerited?

When you say grace before a meal, do you say, "God while you don't really merit our thanks, we give it anyway"?

Hmmm.... is the traditional definition of grace flawed? Yes—it is very flawed, because it is tainted with the false law construct. People go to the idea with the presumption we are guilty criminals who deserve only to be punished and therefore we don't merit anything good from God.



The focus of their definition is on *us*, but the true focus of grace is about God. God is gracious, regardless of whom God is dealing with—because God never changes, God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. So, God’s grace is not dependent upon us, whether we are good or bad. Was God less gracious in heaven before sin? No, but the full extent of how good and gracious God is was not evident until after sin.

For instance, was God less capable of and willing to healing blindness before sin? No, but His ability to heal blindness was not seen or understood until after sin and there was blindness for Him to heal. But God’s character, methods, grace was no different before and after sin. But our understanding of it has changed.

Further, grace also connotes the idea of God’s work, God’s actions, God’s interventions—and thus God’s grace is God acting, through all time, in all manner, for the good of His creation, providing what is always best for them. This is Grace!

Yes, it is true we do receive blessings, favors, grace from God that we have not earned, it is not wages, or something we created—so grace and blessings from God can be bestowed without our meriting it because of some good action we have taken. However, grace is not restricted to this definition. Grace is from God and is poured out from Him, upon the righteous and unrighteous. Jesus received God’s grace in His life on earth, as do the holy angels.

The lesson states in the third paragraph, “The only thing Saul deserved was punishment...” What level of moral decision-making is being revealed in this statement? Level 1-4, this is the immaturity that Hebrews chapter 5 says “is not acquainted with righteousness.” This means those who are teaching this legal view are not teaching the truth about righteousness, but are obstructing it.

This idea is that Saul’s problem was Saul’s bad behavior and bad behavior, rule breaking, requires the ruling authority to punish. But this is not the reality of our situation.

What is the true situation of every human being since Adam and Eve sinned?

Ps 51, we are born in sin conceived in iniquity—what does this mean? Are we born sinless, or are we born sinful?

Did any of us choose to be sinful, sinners? Did any of us have the choice to be perfect and sinless like Adam and Eve?

Is it our fault we were born this way? No! Do we have a condition we didn’t choose? Yes, and that condition is one of fear and selfishness—and what will that condition result in, without remedy? Acts of fear and selfishness, which the Bible calls what? Sins—so the sins are they the problem or the symptoms of the problem? Symptoms and do patients need to be punished for having symptoms?



What does Paul, who was born in sin, deserve from a God who is love?

Imagine you have a child who rebelled against all you taught them and went into wild living, and used dirty needles and got HIV infected, and then had a child with another person who was also HIV infected, so that your first grandchild was born HIV infected. Now, answer the following questions:

- What did your grandchild do wrong?
- Would you love or hate your grandchild?
- What if you were the doctor who had a cure for HIV, what would you do with that cure?
- What would your grandchild deserve from you? Would your grandchild deserve your love? Why? Because of something your grandchild has done, or for who your grandchild is?
- Who are we to God? Are we HIS children, and by the fact we are HIS children do we deserve His love—not because of something we have done, but because of who WE ARE?
- One of Satan's lies is this idea of unmerited favor, which focuses people on their behaviors and blinds them to realizing who they truly are—Children of God!
- Now, back to your grandchild who is HIV infected and you have a cure, what happens if as your grandchild grows up and you offer the free remedy, but they persistently refuse it?

Thus Oswald Chambers wrote in *My Utmost for His Highest*:

The Bible does not say that God punished the human race for one man's sin, but that the nature of sin, namely, my claim to my right to myself, entered into the human race through one man. But it also says that another **Man took upon Himself the sin of the human race and put it away** — an infinitely more profound revelation...

Sin is something I am born with and cannot touch— only God touches sin through redemption. It is through the Cross of Christ that God redeemed the entire human race from the possibility of damnation through the heredity of sin. **God nowhere holds a person responsible for having the heredity of sin, and does not condemn anyone because of it.** Condemnation comes when I realize that Jesus Christ came to deliver me from this heredity of sin, and yet **I refuse to let Him do so.** From that moment I begin to get the seal of damnation. **“This is the condemnation [and the critical moment], that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light . . .” (John 3:19)**

TUESDAY

read the second paragraph, The appearance of Jesus...” Could Saul of Tarsus have known the truth without this intervention? In other words, was there enough truth revealed in the OT and by the witness of Stephen and the other Apostles that was sufficient to convert Saul? Why then wasn't Saul converted by the Scriptures, the witness of Stephen and the other Apostles?

Because Saul had such biases he rejected the meaning, and it took a special event to get him to step back and reevaluate.



Notice what the Damascus road did and what it did NOT do.

- Did the Damascus road download into Saul's brain a new life history?
- Did it give him a sudden new set of memories?
- Did he have new Bible verses memorized in his mind?
- What did it do?
- It gave him reason to step back and say, "Wait a minute, my CONCLUSIONS about all I have studied are wrong. I need to rethink, reevaluate and come to new understanding of all I have previously thought."
- So, did he get a new Bible, or did he use the same OT Scriptures?
- But what was different?
- His mind was now motivated to understand the meaning without the false legal bias he was raised with, to see that God had a plan to heal through Jesus.

What about today—have you met people who simply refuse to rethink and reexamine evidence. They are so convinced they are right they won't even allow for another possibility?

What will cause them to rethink? A life crisis, some event that doesn't fit with their understanding, are such events punishments...or therapeutic interventions?

Now, did God force Saul to come to new conclusions? Did God over ride Saul's autonomy and self-determination.

Some think God by appearing in this way did overwhelm Saul's self-determination and forced Saul to conversion; that it was denying Saul free will. Any evidence to refute this claim?

- Pharaoh—how many miracles were shown to Pharaoh and did Pharaoh convert?
- What about those who came to arrest Jesus? Jesus' divinity flashed through and they fell down, just like Saul on the Damascus road, and then they got to see Jesus reach out and put an ear back on—and what did they do? They still arrested Jesus and killed Him.
- So did the use of blinding light to cause Saul to fall down and rethink over ride Saul's free choice? No!

WEDNESDAY

The Gospel Goes to the Gentiles...what is the significance of this? Answer these questions in regard to how God sees humanity:

- Are there different paths to salvation for different groups?
- Does God value one ethnic or racial or national group over another?
- Do some humans have a different sin condition than others?
- Do all human beings have the same sin condition and in need of the same solution?



- If all humans have the same sin condition and need the exact same remedy, and God favors no group over another, then what was the purpose of the Jewish nation? Was God favoring them with salvation and not wanting other non-Jews saved?
- In OT times is there evidence that God wanted all people to be saved?
 - Solomon's Prayer: "When foreigners who live in a distant land hear how great and powerful you are and how you are always ready to act, and then they come to pray at this Temple, ³³listen to their prayers. In heaven, where you live, hear them and do what they ask you to do, so that all the peoples of the world may know you and obey you, as your people Israel do." 2Chron 6:32,33
 - Isa 56:6,7: And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord to serve him, to love the name of the Lord, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant— ⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."
 - And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. Num 12:1
 - Rahab, Ruth, Naaman, Nebuchadnezzar, the widow who sheltered Elijah—all saved, all non-Jews.

Then what was the purpose of the Jewish nation?

- To be actors in a play, a drama, to learn the truth about the problem of sin and God's solution, and to take this truth to the world. They were God's first helpers to teach the entire world of God's plan to save all who let Him.
- But they rejected their mission, so God gave the privilege to the Gentiles to take the healing remedy to the world.

THURSDAY

The lesson focuses on the conflict in the church with those who came from Jewish background wanting the new Gentile believers to be circumcised and obey the feast days.

What were the Judaizers focusing upon? Rules, laws, which is what type of law? Imposed law, and what did Paul say about such an approach?

That those who want circumcision should go all the way and castrate themselves and maybe they would stop reproducing people who taught such non-sense—does that sound too strong?

But as for me, my brothers and sisters, if I continue to preach that circumcision is necessary, why am I still being persecuted? If that were true, then my preaching about the cross of Christ would cause no trouble. ¹²I wish that the people who are upsetting you **would go all the way; let them go on and castrate themselves!** Gal 5:11,12



What did the first church counsel decide the converts needed to do? Was this imposed rules or promotion of design law?

“Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood” (Acts 15:20). These instructions are not imposed rules but are the wisdom of design law. How?

Food polluted by idols:

- An idol cannot change the nutritional quality of the food. Therefore, eating foods offered to idols does not pollute the body. Paul makes this clear in Romans 14.
- The issue they were addressing is the design law of worship—by beholding we become changed. As we discussed in chapter 7, this is called modeling. What we believe has power over us: truth heals and sets free, lies damage and enslave. Don’t allow your minds to become contaminated by giving any credence to idols. Thus, don’t eat food polluted by the *idea* that it is a bounty given you by a false god.

Sexual immorality:

- God designed relationships to operate on love and trust. When sexual intimacy occurs between husband and wife, as God designed, healthy bonding occurs. The brain actually rewires, and reward circuits are heightened for one’s spouse. This is design law—how our biology is actually built to work. Deviating from this design is damaging to the mind, body, and relationships.
- It is a violation of design law, altering brain circuitry, inflaming selfish and fear circuits, thus obstructing healing of mind and character.

Meat from strangled animals or blood:

- It also violates design law—the laws of health.
- Humans were not designed to eat meat, and the blood carries waste products, stress hormones, and various inflammatory factors. Eating raw meat and drinking blood increases disease risk, and when the body is unhealthy the mind is compromised.

The New Testament church rejected the imposed-law rules and focused instead on living in harmony with God’s design law for life. When we have accepted the lie that God’s law is simply a list of rules, we believe they are subject to change with time and place. Good Christian people fall into the trap of arguing back and forth over trivial points, oblivious to the fact they are all worshiping the same dictator god. We then teach our children ideas of God that drive a wedge between them and God.

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Korean and Polish Translations: A publisher in Korea has contracted to translate *Could It Be This Simple?* (CIBTS) into Korean, and a publisher in Poland has contracted to translate *The God-Shaped Brain* (GSB) into Polish. We will let you know when these are available.

Currently CIBTS is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and German and GSB is available in English and Korean.

June 23,24, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar for the Samaritan Counseling Service in Sarasota FL. For more information www.samaritangulfcoast.com
(T) 941-926-2959 (F) 941-929-0849

July 14,15, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Lakeport SDA church, in Lakeport CA.

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

Sep 5, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

Love is more than emotion, more than compassion, more than positive regard for another; love is power—the power to live, heal and be free. Love is functional, operational, with specific design parameters built into the fabric of reality. Love is intelligent and as we intelligently choose to harmonize with how love functions we not only experience greater health, fulfillment and wellbeing, we are transformed to become forces for good in the world. In *The God-Shaped Heart* Christian psychiatrist Dr. Tim Jennings explores the healing power of love, exposes a belief system infecting Christianity that obstructs love, and identifies eternal truths that open the heart to God's transforming power of love.

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

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



3Q 2017 The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 2

Paul's Authority and Gospel

SABBATH

“For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ”
(Galatians 1:10, NKJV)

In the title of the lesson – is it Paul's Gospel? Or someone else's? Who originated it? When and where did the “Gospel” develop? Is the “Gospel” something that started after the crucifixion / resurrection or has it been around much longer? And what is “the Gospel”? Does it matter which Law lens we view the “Gospel” through?

Paul knew that he spent a long time working in opposition to the “Gospel” [see the memory text].

The lesson poses a hypothetical situation in the first paragraph of Sabbath's lesson.

I would like to pose another one. Suppose one of the prominent professors of theology at a respected Christian university, who had spent many years presenting a *legal* theology, including books, sermons, and sitting on committees tasked with rooting out heresy in the local church, gets up in front of his class and states that he's been presenting a false remedy for many years and begins to present a *healing* theology in an effort to undo his early life's work. How would he be treated by his students? By the other professors? By the church members? By his wife and family?

These are the barriers Paul faced in the presentation of *The Gospel of Christ*, to the Jews and, likely to a lesser extent, to the Gentiles.

SUNDAY

Paul, The Letter Writer

The lesson goes in to some style points and authentication support. My understanding is Paul's authorship of Galatians is generally unquestioned. I'm more interested in the content.

The lesson does provide a provocative question at the bottom of Sunday's lesson.

“If the Bible were to be written today, what kind of medium, format, and style do you think the Lord would use to reach us now?”



MONDAY

Paul's Calling

Who did Saul believe he was working for pre-conversion? Who did he believe he was working for post-conversion? From the lesson:

“The fact that Paul so strongly denies that his apostleship rests on any human being suggests that there was an attempt by some in Galatia to undermine his apostolic authority. Why? As we have seen, some in the church were not happy with Paul's message that salvation was based on faith in Christ alone and not on works of the law. They felt that Paul's gospel was undermining obedience. These troublemakers were subtle. They knew that the foundation of Paul's gospel message was tied directly to the source of his apostolic authority (John 3:34), and they determined to launch a powerful attack against that authority.” Emphasis mine.

¹¹ I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that **the gospel I preached is not of human origin.**

¹² I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, **I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.** Galatians 1: 11, 12. Emphasis mine.

I'm not sure why the lesson keeps referring to “Paul's Gospel”, when Paul, himself states very clearly the origin of the message.

Note the source of the opposition in the above paragraph. “Why?”

As we have seen, some in the church were not happy with Paul's message that salvation was based on faith in Christ alone and not on works of the law.”

It would seem that the imposed law mindset predates the conversion of Constantine, and for those needing an Ellen White quote, consider the following:

But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re-echoed, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. {MB 109.2}

And again:

To the very close of the controversy in heaven, the great usurper continued to justify himself. When it was announced that with all his sympathizers he must be expelled from the abodes of bliss, then the rebel leader boldly avowed his contempt for the Creator's law. He reiterated his claim that angels needed no control, but should be left to follow their own will, which would



ever guide them right. He denounced the divine statutes as a restriction of their liberty, and declared that it was his purpose to secure the abolition of law; that, freed from this restraint, the hosts of heaven might enter upon a more exalted, more glorious state of existence. The Truth About Angels pg. 43.

The Imposed vs Design Law struggle is as old as the controversy between Satan and Christ. It was one of the founding tenets of Lucifer's rebellion, and he's been very successful imparting his viewpoint to humanity, as well.

I'm in the middle of reading Sigve Tonstad's book "God of Sense and Traditions of Nonsense" [<https://www.amazon.com/Sense-Traditions-Non-Sense-Sigve-Tonstad/dp/1498233139>], which I highly recommend. In it, he tackles some of the concepts and stories from both the Old and New Testaments where "sense" seems to be missing or lacking.

He speaks eloquently on the issue of Freedom, and how this is understood, and misunderstood. In one passage he states,

"Proof gives a person no way of retreat. Faced with incontrovertible proof, the person who is in his or her right mind will have to surrender even if yielding happens against his or her will. Jesus offers evidence but not proof, in part because the indisputable proof can be a form of compulsion. In God's economy, it is possible to say no without seeming to be out of one's mind. Assent must be freely given, and it must be given in response to manifestations that are not coercive." Tonstad. God of Sense and Traditions of Nonsense pg. 333.

With this in mind how do we approach the lesson's compelling question at the bottom of Monday's lesson?

"In what ways, even subtly, is the authority of Scripture being challenged today within the confines of our church?"

TUESDAY

Paul's Gospel. Here we go again ...

From the lesson:

"What is the central truth upon which the gospel resides? According to Paul, it is not our conformity to the law—the point that Paul's opponents were trumpeting. On the contrary, the gospel rests fully on what Christ accomplished for us through His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. Christ's death and resurrection did something that we never could do for ourselves. They broke the power of sin and death, freeing His followers from the power of evil, which holds so many in fear and bondage."

Is this accurate? Is it complete? What's missing? What's correct? Conformity to which "Law"?



WEDNESDAY

No Other Gospel

“No other Gospel”, even one from an angel “of light” that calls fire down from heaven?

What is the real problem Paul is confronting in Galatians 1? If his audience was “turning away” from living in the Grace of Christ [v. 6], what were they turning to? What’s the logical conclusion? A works or legal “gospel”, perhaps?

At least we don’t have those concerns today, right?

From the bottom section in Wednesday’s lesson:

“There is, today, a tendency, even in some of our churches, to emphasize experience over doctrine. What matters most (we are told) is our experience, our relationship with God. However important experience is, what does Paul’s writing here teach us about the importance of correct doctrine?”

Does Paul’s letter really teach us about the importance of correct doctrine? Didn’t he have his doctrines in a row when he was persecuting the early Christian church? Didn’t the Pharisees have their doctrines straight when they nailed Immanuel [“God With Us”] on a cross?

How does our understanding of using multiple threads of evidence to understand Truth help us? Is there a counterfeit for the “Integrative, Evidence-based Approach” we have learned? Consider the following, again, from Tonstad’s book, quoting Dostoevsky’s book, *The Brothers Karamazov*:

“There are three powers, only three powers on earth, capable of conquering and holding captive forever the conscience of these feeble rebels, for their own happiness – these powers are miracle, mystery, and authority.” pg. 255. Emphasis mine.

Do we see these three powers being used as a metric for uncovering and understanding “Truth”?

THURSDAY

The Origin of Paul’s Gospel.

The lesson asks, “Why did Paul not require Gentile converts to be circumcised?”

Was it for increasing his number of converts? What was the original design of the male genitalia? What was the purpose of circumcision in the first place?

“If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of



circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses.” [Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 364.2](#) Emphasis mine.

Paul is quite clear where and when he received **The Gospel of Christ**. His reputation was probably well known among Jews and Gentiles alike, given his enthusiasm for persecution of the early Church. What would have been gained by his opponents by attempting to discredit him?

Do we see any of the same tactics employed today?



The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 3 3Q 2017

The Unity of the Gospel

SABBATH

Read memory text, “Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.” Philippians 2:2 ESV

What is the text telling us the one thing we are to be unified upon is? We must have the same mind, be in one accord about what? Love! We must come to the truth about what God’s character of love is; His methods of love, how love works. It is a unity of love that we must have!

Can anyone tell me how love works? Love gives, love is other-centered, love is outward moving, love is selfless, love is patient, kind, gentle, humble, interested in the welfare of others—which means love does what is in the eternal best interest in how we relate to others. So this means—we always give what the other wants? Does God give us everything we want? Why not?

Read paragraph one: “Protestant reformer John Calvin...” Avoid schism on what?

Read the next two paragraphs, “But should unity be preserved...” What does it mean to not compromise on truth?

Does it mean we are unified with the right facts, the right interpretations of Scripture, the right doctrines, the right definitions, the right fundamental beliefs, the right rituals, that this is what matters?

Can we obtain unity of the gospel by coming to unity of fundamental beliefs?

Before we get into historical evidence, let’s break it down to some very straightforward questions:

- When Jesus comes again—at the moment of His appearing in the clouds, amongst those who ARE saved, will there be any single person who understands every detail and fact of the Bible correctly; interpret every symbol accurately, knows the true meaning of all prophecy?
- Or will every saved person have many facts wrong?
- But will there be some element that will be common amongst all the saved? What?
- Will all the saved have been renewed in heart/character to love God and others more than self?
- Will all the saved have been changed in character to practice Godly methods, which are truth i.e. honesty, love, and liberty?
- Will any selfish and deceitful person be amongst the saved?
- And what is the avenue for the heart change to occur?

Remember the cascade of sin:



- Lies believed break the circle of love and trust
- Broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness
- Fear and selfishness result in acts of sin
- Act of sin damage mind, body, relationships—terminal condition

Healing cascade:

- Truth believed destroys lies and restores trust—about what?
- Restored trust we open the heart to God and love is poured in
- Love and trust cast out fear and we engage in acts of righteousness, giving, beneficence, love
- Acts of righteousness, giving, love, witness God's kingdom and we grow in godliness

But the healing always starts with the truth about God and His character and methods of love. When we substitute other TRUTHS for the truth about God we obstruct healing.

For instance, if we substitute the truth of God's character and methods of love, which win us to trust and open our hearts so we experience the indwelling Spirit and are transformed, with say...the truth about baptism by immersion and suggest if a person isn't baptized by immersion then they have not obeyed, and God has rules and doesn't tolerate deviations in the slightest from His rules—Adam and Eve only ate a piece of fruit but God wouldn't tolerate it. Uzzah only touched the ark but God wouldn't tolerate it. So, if you haven't been baptized by immersion God won't tolerate disobedience and you won't be saved.

Do you see what just happened? The truth about God has been replaced with the truth about baptism, but because the truth about God is not central then a lie about God is presented, and people rather than having trust in God restored have fear of God increased and instead find security in legalism, either rule keeping, or the false penal substitutionary fable of paying God a legal fee.

We are to be united in character, and this only happens when we come back to the truth about God.

Now to examine some history:

Was Martin Luther's protests primarily focused on doctrines, or were His 95 thesis examples of evidences to point out some other problem?

When a doctor identifies a constellation of symptoms, what is the purpose? To help recognize an underlying problem or disease state. It is the underlying disease state which causes the constellation of symptoms.

What was Martin Luther's list designed to expose? That salvation, or healing from sin, comes from trusting God, and the 95 thesis were examples of practices and teaches that undermined trust in God. Why? Martin Luther exposed that the methods of the institutional church are not the methods of God and that the methods the institutional church used of falsehood, coercion, bribes, manipulation, fear,



survival exploitation, were not God's methods, and therefore failed to win trust, heal hearts and minds, and transform characters to be like Jesus.

As evidence that Martin Luther was right, and that we are right, what have so-called Christians who value the imposed law, with all these human methods done throughout history?

- Crusades
- Inquisition
- Run mafia organizations—then attend mass and church
- Attack, murder, exploit, and deceive the American Indians, then go to church each Sunday and sing hymns while calling the native people savages.
- Murder one million Tutsis by rival Hutus in a few months, primarily killing zones were the churches, often right after kneeling at the altar and partaking mass

Is there a difference in examining doctrines and examining the impact those doctrines have upon our views of God and our character development and how we treat others?

Did the Pharisees in Christ's day have wrong doctrines about:

- Which day was the Sabbath?
- God as Creator?
- The Inspiration of Scripture?
- Which foods were on the permitted list?
- Paying of tithe?
- Who could serve as priest?

Did they have the right view of God? Did they have God's methods in their hearts? Were they united with heaven in fulfilling God's purposes?

So, is the most important thing to get doctrines right, or to get our understanding about God and His methods right and then form our doctrines?

Would it be a good test of our doctrines to ask, what do they say about God?

Can we have a healthy belief system if we have stand-alone doctrines that we support with proof texts—but which are not directly connected to how we understand God and His methods?

What did Jesus say would demonstrate we are His followers?

That we love one another—is there a difference between unity of love and unity of doctrine?

Why is there such an emphasis on right doctrines? It is because of people stuck at level four thinking who believe right doctrines are actually what matter, when they are only important in regard to how they enlighten us to God and His reality.



SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Having refuted...” Who was saying Paul’s gospel was not in harmony with Peter and the other Apostles?

Was it teachers who knew and practiced God’s love?

And what was it about Paul’s teaching that they used to suggest Paul was a renegade and disagreed with the other Apostles?

- He didn’t require circumcision
- He didn’t require Jewish feast days
- He didn’t require Jewish dress

What did Paul require? That people be reborn with new hearts that love God and others more than self, and that Jesus Christ is the Remedy to sin, and we receive a new heart, i.e. reborn by accepting Jesus into our lives.

Why did Paul require this and not Feast Days, or circumcision, or dress, or any other ritual? Because this is what is necessary to actually heal and fix what is wrong with us and unite us with God’s design for life!

Do such obstacles and difficulties occur today? Are there people today teaching the truth about God’s character and kingdom of love, the importance of being healed in the inner man, having a new heart and right spirit, but who are opposed by others, even church leaders, perhaps even being accused by such people for being renegades and disagreeing with the Apostles?

We have had many friends from around the world contact us and tell us that when they try and tell their church members about God’s character and methods of love they have met opposition, often from the pastor or other church leaders, even accusing them of being heretics and telling them not to come to church any more.

Hmmm...why?

Because the accusers are still stuck in the false law construct, which means they have the wrong diagnosis. They believe falsely that our problem is a legal problem and therefore promote a false legal solution. In such a world the focus is on legality, ensuring the ritual is carried out properly, ensuring the doctrines are properly defined etc.

Imagine scuba diving and you get your foot caught and your tank is running out of air, and another diver comes along with a spare tank and offers it to you, would it matter to you if the other diver was a man or a woman?



Imagine you were dying of an infection and a doctor came along with an antibiotic which would save your life, would it matter to you if the doctor were a man or a woman?

Imagine you are lost in a forest it had been days, you are dehydrated, hungry, weak, frightened, and a forest ranger comes along who can lead you to safety, would it matter if they were a man or a woman?

Why does it **not** matter in any of these situations if the person who helps you is a man or a woman?

Because the laws in question, which are threatening your life, are design laws.

What about when we take the gospel to the world, why is it the church says only men can be ordained? Because the church is still operating under the false law construct and they wrongly conclude that it really does matter, and sadly they end up making decisions that obstruct the healing gospel.

Jesus gave a parable to illustrate this problem to the church in His day.

The parable of the Good Samaritan: We could give the same parable today and replace the Samaritan with a woman, all the ordained pastors, conference presidents and General Conference committee leaders walk by, while a woman helps the injured man. Hmmm.... Again design law, laws of health as the injured person is helped.

Notice, in the parable of the Good Samaritan who of the actors in the parable kept the Sabbath, ate the right foods, paid tithe, dressed the right way, believed in the Sanctuary and Advent message? The Priest and Levite adhered to all the right doctrines and practiced all the right rituals, but were they commended for being right with God?

Who was commended for being right? What made the difference doctrine or love in the heart? It is a renewed heart that loves like God loves that brings unity and doctrines are only important as they lead us back to the truth about God.

When we place doctrines as test of fellowship, separated from what they tell us about God and God's methods of love, truth and freedom, then we actually create barriers to love!

Read bottom green section, "What are some issues that threaten church unity today? More important, after we define them, how do we deal with them? What issues are more important than unity itself?"

Evidently to many people there seems to be a lot of things more important than unity—such as power, authority, orthodoxy, protecting history, protecting the perceived prestige of the institution, correct definitions of doctrines—others?

But what is another term for unity? At-one-ment and what does the Bible say the outcome of God's work through Christ will be?



And he made known to us the **mystery of his will** [why was this a mystery? Was God keeping secrets? What made this difficult to comprehend or understand? It was Satan's lies about God which caused all kinds of wrong and confused thinking which kept hidden the truth of God's character and will —notice what is God's will] according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. Eph 1:9,10

This is atonement—unity—healing and restoring His universe back to the perfection of love.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Circumcision was a sign of the covenant relationship that God established with Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation."

Of what was circumcision a sign?

What was the importance of circumcision?

Could a person be saved by being circumcised?

Did a person in OT times have to be circumcised in order to be saved?

Naaman, Nebuchadnezzar, the Patriarchs, Melchizedek...no evidence is found that these persons were circumcised, yet good evidence is found that they were saved.

Was circumcision required for Jewish males to be saved, but not for others? Then are there two paths of salvation?

No! So it wasn't required for Jews to be saved either, for what was it required? To be a member of the acting troupe known as Israel, to act out the plan of salvation in type, in theater, in symbol—and perhaps a helpful tool for the Jewish men who were frequently tempted to worship at the fertility cults of the day. Perhaps it was a last line of defense as the Jewish man approached the cult prostitute, maybe the awareness he was Jewish would call into question why he was worshipping there instead of worshipping Yahweh.

The Bible tells us that circumcision of the body is not required for salvation. The circumcision that is required for salvation, for both Jew and Gentile, is not bodily circumcision, but circumcision of the heart.

What is circumcision of the heart?



How does physical circumcision typify this?

- Can you tell by looking at a person on the street if they have had circumcision of the body?
- Can you tell by looking at a person on the street if they have had circumcision of the heart?
- Can you tell if you reach a certain level of intimacy if a person has had circumcision of the body?
- Can you tell if you reach a certain level of intimacy if a person has had circumcision of the heart?
- Is circumcision of the body painful?
- Is circumcision of the heart painful?
- Is circumcision of the body less painful when we are younger?
- Is circumcision of the heart less painful when we are younger and have less sin habits developed?

What about Moses, why did Moses end up in a confrontation with God because his son had not been circumcised?

It was theater—and only those who follow the Script can be on stage. Exodus 4:24 is commonly translated as God was about to kill Moses—but the Hebrew doesn't say that, it says "him" and the context is about Moses uncircumcised son. Thus, what is most likely is that God was about to take Moses son off stage because he was not following the Script so Moses wife got him in costume very quickly and he was permitted to stay on stage and be an actor in the drama.

Also, Moses was about to become leader of Israel, and God was about to give instructions for salvation to a bunch of people who were very primitive and rebellious and what would have happened to the lessons God was going to give through Moses, if Moses and his family did not follow the ritual handed down through Abraham?

I think this demonstrates that Moses understood there was no direct value in circumcision; that it was the condition of the heart that mattered. But it also demonstrates that Moses didn't fully appreciate the utter primitive thinking of the Jews, their rebellious and stubborn hearts and therefore the importance of consistency in acting out the symbols. Therefore, God needed to remind Moses to be consistent lest false ideas creep into the symbolic system, which happened even with the scrupulousness to the Script.

Read bottom green section, "Maybe today circumcision isn't the issue. But what (if anything) do we as a church struggle with that parallels this problem?"

What about any doctrine that promotes sectarianism—i.e. that it really does matter what denomination one belongs to. That we are saved by denomination, and thus we begin to identify doctrines that set us apart from other denominations and make those doctrines tests of fellowship, marks of distinction and even tests of salvation?



TUESDAY

The lesson talks about the freedom we are to have in Christ, read first paragraph, “Freedom, as a description...” thoughts?

The lesson states, “Freedom from being enslaved to the desires of our sinful natures, freedom from the condemnation of the law, and freedom from the power of death.”

What law lens do you hear these promises through?

If through the false imposed law lens, what is often taught?

- That we are not condemned to be executed by God for our sins, because the law that condemns us has been paid by the perfect blood of Jesus so it has been satisfied and God can now pardon us.
- That we are freed from the imposed punishment of the eternal death sentence, which would be inflicted by God if Jesus didn’t pay the penalty for us
- That we will one day get a new heart and right spirit and in that future day be delivered from the domination of the sinful desires

What is the truth? It is all design law truth:

- That when we accept the truth about God we open the heart and God’s Spirit enters and takes the perfection that Jesus achieved and reproduces it in us. We get the victory over the sinful desires here and now as we experience new motives and new thoughts within
- That we are not condemned by the law because we are now renewed to be in harmony with the law because we love God and others more than self
- That we have victory over death because we have been healed from the terminal condition which causes death

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about Peter’s fear of what other Jews would think of him when he was associating with Gentiles, so Paul confronts Peter publicly.

What lesson do we learn from this event?

- Was Peter wrong on this issue?
- Was his error on this issue before or after he experienced the gift of the Holy Spirit, what some might call the gift of prophecy? It was after.
- Does this mean that because he was wrong about this issue, that he was not inspired? No!
- Does it mean that his writings are not inspired? No!
- What does it tell us about how inspiration of the Holy Spirit works?



- When a person is inspired by the Holy Spirit does that mean they are now perfect, sinless and never make any mistakes again and never get any Bible issue wrong?

What about EGW? Many people believe she was inspired, does that mean she was correct on everything she ever did and said? Did she claim to be correct on everything she ever did or said?

Do some people in the SDA church hold EGW up almost as an icon and use her writings as a litmus test of orthodoxy?

Does a person have to accept the writings of EGW to be saved? No! Can a person deny EGW was inspired by the Holy Spirit and still be saved? Yes!

Why then the hard line some take on the writings of EGW? Is it because they are more concerned about the SDA institution and what it might mean for the institution than for saving souls?

Now—have I, by asking these questions and pointing out that a person, like Peter, can be inspired and still be wrong on some issues, stated whether I believe EGW was or was not inspired?

Many people argue over this issue—it is a pointless argument that causes division and does not bring unity. Here is how we deal with that.

Does the Bible say that spiritual things are spiritually discerned? Yes (1Cor 2:14), what does this mean? That only by the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit are sinful human beings capable of understanding and communicating the truths of God's kingdom—do we agree?

Then, to whatever degree a person communicates the truth of God's kingdom, whether it is Peter, Paul, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, Ellen White or whomever, they are only able to communicate truth as the Holy Spirit enlightens their mind.

So, to argue over whether someone is a prophet or not, is mute and causes division not unity. It is exactly what the Bible warns against:

My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. ¹² What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."

¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?
1Cor 1:11-13

Were you baptized into the name of Martin Luther, or Calvin, or Wesley or White? No, you were baptized into Jesus! These arguments or quarrels are pointless and lead to division.



Why then to people do it? Because of spiritual immaturity—believing the false law construct that getting the answers right on a Bible test is what matters. People who have yet to think through from cause to effect, why things are the way they are, instead look to an authority to tell them the answer: Mom whose right, Dad, Teacher, Preacher, Umpire, Referee, Judge, Pope, prophet...someone tell me the answer.

THURSDAY

The lesson asks what reasons did Paul give for confronting Peter publicly, and references Galatians 2:11-14:

¹¹ When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong.

¹² Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. ¹³ The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

¹⁴ When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?”

What was the issue?

That division would be introduced, based on a false artificial, imposed law, ritualistic criteria, rather than based on the actual condition of heart and mind.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3, why is there no doctrine on the character of God as the central issue in the GC in our church?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Korean and Polish Translations: A publisher in Korea has contracted to translate *Could It Be This Simple?* (CIBTS) into Korean, and a publisher in Poland has contracted to translate *The God-Shaped Brain* (GSB) into Polish. We will let you know when these are available.

Currently CIBTS is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and German and GSB is available in English and Korean.

July 14,15, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Lakeport SDA church, in Lakeport CA.

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

Sep 5, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

Love is more than emotion, more than compassion, more than positive regard for another; love is power—the power to live, heal and be free. Love is functional, operational, with specific design parameters built into the fabric of reality. Love is intelligent and as we intelligently choose to harmonize with how love functions we not only experience greater health, fulfillment and wellbeing, we are transformed to become forces for good in the world. In *The God-Shaped Heart* Christian psychiatrist Dr. Tim Jennings explores the healing power of love, exposes a belief system infecting Christianity that obstructs love, and identifies eternal truths that open the heart to God's transforming power of love.

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

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 4 3Q 2017

Justification by Faith Alone

SABBATH

What does the title mean to you? What law lens to you hear these words through?

Before we even address questions like justification and atonement, we have to determine some basic facts:

- What is sin? –transgression of the law
- Is this transgression a behavior—a deed, a bad act, or is it a condition of heart and mind?
- “everything that does not come from faith is sin.” Rom 14:23
 - Is the focus on the specific act, or the motivation for the act?
 - Then, how does transgression of the law relate to a condition of heart and mind?
- What is God’s law?
- How does God’s law function?
- Does God’s law function no differently than man’s law—rules imposed requiring imposed punishments? –this is Satan’s allegation “Every sin must meet its punishment urged Satan.” DA 761
- Is God’s law design law, protocols upon which life and health are constructed to operate?
- If sin is breaking laws that function like human laws and therefore require the lawgiver to inflict just punishment, then what is justification? It is a legal solution—which is what many theologians argue.
- However, if God’s law is design law, protocols upon which reality and life is built, then what is justification—putting right what is not as God designed it to be.

This week I discovered a lecture given to a conference of pastors by a theology professor who spoke for over an hour on why what we teach in this class is wrong.

The theologian said that the word *justification* is legal language and therefore by definition of the word requires a legal explanation.

There are several problems with the theologian’s explanation: first the Bible was not written in English, or Latin, thus the word justification does not exist anywhere in Scripture. It is a word used by the translators who, already have a legal bias and thus, introduce legal ideas.

Secondly, even if we use the word *justify*, legal definitions are not the only legitimate definitions to that word. *Justify* also has meaning with no legal elements at all, to justify the margins on your document is not a legal act, but an actual moving or setting what is not in line to being in line.



Finally, *justify* can also mean to **show, demonstrate or prove** an action, position, person, claim to be right. The legal view has justification being declaration not demonstration. But the justification of setting right and demonstrating are the true Biblical definitions. The legal definition is not Biblical, it is the lie and I will give you the evidence for this so every person can be fully persuaded in their own mind.

The demonstration aspect of justify is what God was doing in the Great Controversy; God is the one being justified—God is showing, demonstrating, proving His righteousness and Paul speaks about this in Romans 3:25, 26:

From GNT:

God offered him, so that by his blood he should become the means by which people's sins are forgiven through their faith in him. God did this in order to demonstrate that he is righteous. In the past he was patient and overlooked people's sins; but in the present time he deals with their sins, in order to demonstrate his righteousness. In this way God shows that he himself is righteous and that he puts right everyone who believes in Jesus. GNT

Thus, justify can mean something legal, but it can also mean simply proving what is already true (God's character and methods of love) and also setting what is not in harmony or in line with God's design back to God's original design.

We cannot tell from the word itself, which meaning is the correct one. So the theologian who says it must be legal because it is a legal word demonstrates a huge bias and denies other possibilities.

From Wikipedia, which does a really good job of defining the penal substitutionary view of justification by faith, states:

Sola fide (Latin: by faith alone), also known as justification by faith alone, is a Christian theological doctrine that distinguishes most Protestant denominations from the Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, and some parts of the Restoration Movement.

The doctrine of sola fide asserts God's pardon for guilty sinners is granted to and received through faith alone, excluding all "works". All mankind, it is asserted, is fallen and sinful, under the curse of God, and incapable of saving itself from God's wrath and curse. But God, on the basis of the life, death, and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ alone (*solus Christus*), grants sinners **judicial pardon, or justification**, which is received solely through faith. Faith is seen as passive, merely receiving Christ and all his benefits, among which benefits are the active and passive righteousness of Jesus Christ. Christ's righteousness, according to the followers of "sola fide," **is imputed (or attributed) by God to the believing sinner (as opposed to infused or imparted)**, so that the divine verdict and pardon of the believing sinner is based not upon anything in the sinner, nor even faith itself, but upon Jesus Christ and his righteousness alone, which are received through faith alone.



Martin Luther opposed the Catholic teaching of righteousness by combination of Jesus' sacrifice and our works. Luther's position was that our works of penance, pilgrimage, offerings, abasement, flagellation or any other work could not justify us. **We agree completely!**

The question that separates our position with the legal penal view is not whether we can contribute to our own justification—we absolutely state we cannot. The question is: What is justification? Is it legal, or is it actual something that is achieved in human beings? Is it declared by not experienced, or is it only declared once it is experienced?

The reason this division exists is because there are two ways to understand God's law and depending on what view of God's law one holds that directly determines how one understands justification.

The legal penal theologians hold that God's law functions no differently than the laws sinners make—rules imposed requiring judicial oversight and imposed punishment. And therefore claim, as Wikipedia states above, that justification is when the righteousness of Jesus is imputed which means declared or accounted in a legal way in the courts of heaven, but not experienced in the believer. They make God out to declare something as true which is not actually true.

Further, they accuse us, because our model has an actual change occurring within the believer, of teaching Moral Influence Theory. (MIT)

Their accusation is actually diagnostic of their level of understanding. They claim we teach MIT because they are operating at level four moral development and people can only comprehend one level above their current level—and Moral Influence is level 5.

We do not promote Moral Influence Theory, and in fact we demonstrate its deficiencies, however the theologians who oppose us cannot comprehend what we are saying and thus claim we are Moral Influence. In the lecture the theologian admitted this multiple times "I really didn't understand what he meant by that." "He dressed it up with things not typically in MIT but if you eliminate those elements you get moral influence theory."

That would be like saying, "he put wings and an engine on it and called it an airplane, but if you remove the wings and engine you get a soap box."

They are being as honest as they are capable of being—they simply don't comprehend this perspective. This has happened many times in human history:

- Jesus presents design law truth and the legal theologians oppose Him and take offense that He doesn't support their legal views
- Apostles refuse to promote legal theology and are opposed by the Judaizers
- John Wesley and was opposed by leaders of the Church of England and they made fun calling him a Methodist (GC 257)



- Jones, Waggoner, and Ellen White when they presented the healing view were opposed by the legal believing leadership in the SDA church
- We are still facing the same long battle—who is God and how does His government work—like sinful humans, which is what penal substitution teaches, or do we worship the Creator and Designer who operates upon the laws of love, truth, and freedom?

Design law understands Justification differently:

- When Adam and Eve sinned did God get changed?
- Did God's law get changed?
- Did the condition of humankind get changed?
- So what needs to be "set right" in order to bring unity or at-one-ment?
- Does something need to be done to God, to God's law?
- Does something need to be done in sinners to fix what sin has done to them?

Jumping to FRIDAY and reading the first paragraph:

"The danger has been presented to me again and again of entertaining, as a people, **false ideas of justification by faith**. I have been shown for years that Satan would work in a special manner to confuse the mind on this point. The law of God has been largely dwelt upon and has been presented to congregations, almost as destitute of the knowledge of Jesus Christ and His relation to the law as was the offering of Cain. I have been shown that many have been kept from the faith because of the mixed, confused ideas of salvation, **because the ministers have worked in a wrong manner to reach hearts**. The point that has been urged upon my mind for years is the **imputed righteousness of Christ**..." Faith and Works p 18

What is the danger? What was she warning about? A false view of righteousness by faith which dwells on law and not on the character of Jesus—the exact problem we have in the church today which promotes justification as a legal issue and imputed righteousness as something declared rather than realized within the believer. Thus they obstruct the gospel and keep people from the faith.

Here is another quote from the same author:

What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ... {FLB 111.2}

The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, is a precious thought. The enemy of God and man is not willing that this truth should be clearly presented; for he knows that if the people receive it fully, his power will be broken. {FLB 111.6}



What is justification by faith? God's work in doing something legal, or in doing something actual?

What work could we not do? What law lens are you thinking through?

What is the actual problem human beings have because of Adam and Eve's sin—is the problem legal or a state of being?

What do we need to be right with God?

- A new record?
- A legal document?
- A legal declaration?
- Or a new heart and right spirit?
- Does God's law need to be sustained, supported, shown to be without defect? How?
- Penal view—by paying the legal death penalty inflicted by God
- Design law view—by doing what the law requires, perfectly restoring humankind into harmony with the law, i.e. justifying or setting right humankind and demonstrating that deviations result in death.

Again from the same author:

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; [why does the law require this? Why does the law of respiration require we breathe?] and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. [what is another way of saying a holy life and perfect character? The righteousness of Christ. And what is another way of saying offers a free gift to all who will receive them? Imputed! Imputed is not legal or declared it is a remedy of a new heart, life, attitude, desires, mindset within the believer received from Christ.] His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2} [Where is the righteousness of the law fulfilled? In record books? In courtrooms in heaven? IN THE BELIEVER!

What do you hear? What is justice? What is justifying here? What is actually happening, do we find something legal or something transformational, putting sinful beings back into harmony with God's design?

And what was necessary? A new sinless character. And could sinful humans do this for themselves? Could any work on our part achieve this? So, did Christ do something, **Objective**, that we could not do



and can never do? What? He developed a perfect sinless HUMAN character, by exercising His HUMAN brain and power of choice!

- Thus the species human was justified, or set right with God, in the person of Jesus Christ.
- God's law of love, being restored into Christ's humanity while Christ destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness, resulted in what? Christ's humanity rising from the dead. Thus, God's law was vindicated—it was demonstrated, the law was revealed to be the source of life. "The law of the Lord is perfect reviving the soul!" It is design law!
- God was justified, demonstrated to be right in how He governs, how His law works, and for suspending the ultimate consequences for unremedied sin until Jesus came to provide remedy and offering that remedy to us.
- Jesus now stands as the head of humanity, where Adam was created to stand. In heaven, Jesus now is the representative of human beings, the head of the species human. Thus His life stands for the life of humanity. And we as individuals can partake of what Christ achieved—remedy, which is a perfect character, and when we do we are set right!
- So our individual justification, or setting right is when we move from distrust to trust and open the heart to God, then we become partakers of the divine nature and it is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me. We are right with God and God declares this to be so, because it is so.

But, those of the legal mindset, stuck on human law, confuse and obstruct this healing because they move the justification away from what Christ accomplished in His own person, throw down the law of God and replace it with human law, and move justification away from our participation in Christ's accomplishments, and instead put it in record books and courts in heaven, with the adjustments being made to God's attitude and our legal accounts.

Further the penal view adherents are adamant that imputed righteousness is legal accounting, where God imputes to our records in heaven the righteousness of His Son declaring us legally justified or righteous, even though we are not. Whereas, they would teach, that imparted righteousness is what we experience within us to transform us to Christlikeness.

This distinction is of their own imagination, a fantasy, created by their own false understanding of law and failure to understand reality, and these ideas, these legal fantasies obstruct the final work of God on earth—what some call the 3 Angel's message.

Listen to these quotes by the one of the founders of the SDA church, what some of the founders of SDA church historically taught:

He would have us comprehend something of His love in giving His Son to die that He might counteract evil, **remove the defiling stains of sin from the workmanship of God, [to what is this referring? Is it not the human being?] and reinstate the lost, elevating and ennobling the soul to its original purity through Christ's imputed righteousness.** TMK 206 **Is this declared in some legal way, is it some application to records or courts in heaven, or is it an**



actual change happening within the believer being? And what is this healing change accomplished through? The *imputed* righteousness of Christ!

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us boldness to approach the throne of grace. **By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character.** [Where is the focus? Where is the change? Is this legal or actual in the believer?] **By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him.** [Again, where is the change, where is the impact of the *imputed* righteousness of Christ? This is not legal, the entire legal doctrine of penal substitution taught in Christianity is based on a lie, it is based on the false view of God's law and this doctrine obstructs God's final message to the world] The image of Christ is cherished, and it captivates the whole being. {AG 96.4}

Abundant grace has been provided that the believing soul may be kept free from sin; for all heaven, with its limitless resources, has been placed at our command. We are to draw from the well of salvation. . . . In ourselves we are sinners; but in Christ we are righteous. **Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just.** [What did this say? Did it say "having declared us righteous"? No! Having **MADE** us righteous through what? The imputed righteousness of Christ, then, having first made us righteous THEN God pronounces us righteous or just! This is a repudiation of the *penal substitution doctrine*.] He looks upon us as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds. {AG 181.4}

We aim too low. The mark is much higher. Our minds need expansion, that we may comprehend the significance of the provision of God. **We are to reflect** the highest attributes of the character of God. . . **The law of God is the exalted standard to which we are to attain through the imputed righteousness of Christ.** {OHC 364.2} [What is aiming too low? Is aiming to low aiming for legal adjustment, for record erasure, for a declaration of being righteous *even though we are not*? What law is the law of God? Is it not the law of love, which is design protocol, and to attain it means what? To be healed, restored, renewed, born again, through what? The imputed righteousness of Christ! This is truth! We must reject the legal penal view and expand our minds to a higher and loftier reality of God's design and plan to heal and restore us to His perfect ideal!]

Last week we suggested it might be a good test of our doctrines to examine what those doctrines say about God.

What does penal substitutionary ideas about justification say about God?

In the imposed law construct, which is the basis for penal substitutionary theology:



- God is the source of inflicted punishment i.e. death
- Thus death comes out from God
- Who do they teach killed Jesus on the Cross?
 - For a loving God to maintain His justice and righteousness, the atoning death of Jesus Christ became ‘a moral and legal necessity.’ God’s ‘justice requires that sin be carried to judgment. **God must therefore execute judgment** on sin and thus on the sinner. **In this execution the Son of God took our place, the sinner’s place, according to God’s will.** SDA Believe 27 p. 111
 - Why did **God the Father choose** a cross to be the instrument of death? Why did He not choose to have Christ instantly beheaded or quickly run through with a spear or sword? **Was God unjust in executing judgment on Christ with a cross** when He could have done it by beheading, a noose, a sword, a gas chamber, a bolt of lightening, or a lethal injection? (Whidden, W., *Ministry Magazine*, February 2007. <http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2007/February/sinners-in-the-hands-of-god.html>)
 - One of the fundamental problems of the Moral Influence Theory is that it rejects the substitutionary nature of Christ’s death. The idea that **God had to kill the innocent** instead of the guilty in order to save us is considered a violation of justice. (emphasis mine) Rodriguez, A., *Adventist World Review*, December 2007; p. 40.
 - In this false legal view sin is not harmful, it is criminal, and would not result in death but requires God to kill, thus God is the one we need protection from
- It promotes dualism, that both good and evil exist eternally, that life and death find their origin in the eternal being—God

But what does inspiration say?

- Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet **we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.** (Isaiah 53:4)
 - What did God prophecy would happen? Has it?
- Jesus speaking to those who would later crucify Him said, “You belong to your **father, the devil**, and you want to carry out your **father’s desire. He was a murderer** from the beginning...” (John 8:44)
 - Who is the source of death according to Jesus?
- Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸**The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction**; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Gal 6:7,8 (What kind of law is described here?)
 - What is the cause of death according to Scripture?
- **Satan** saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. **He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings.** White, E.G., *Desire of Ages*, p. 761.



- Who killed Jesus according to EGW?

With which view do you agree?

Which law is the true law of God?

So what is genuine Justification?

Justification - Healing Substitution Model: Is not a legal status. Instead it simply means being set right with God. Christ, as our substitute, took defective humanity upon Himself and in His person (human brain) destroyed the carnal nature, perfectly living out the law of love and developed a perfect human character. Therefore, the human race (species) was set right (justified) with God in the person of Jesus Christ. Through this achievement (a free gift), Christ's perfect character is now offered to all mankind. Each individual person is "justified" (set right) when they are won back to trust by the truth Jesus revealed. In this mindset of trust, they experience the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who "sanctifies" them by transfusing Christ's character into the believer.

So does the Bible give evidence that it is as we teach and not as the legal theologians teach?

Romans 4:1-3:

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? ² If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. ³ What does the Scripture say? **"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."** NIV

What shall we say, then, of Abraham, the father of our race? What was his experience? ² If he was put right with God by the things he did, he would have something to boast about—but not in God's sight. The scripture says, **"Abraham believed God, and because of his faith God accepted him as righteous."** GNT

What does it say here? That Abraham believed, or had faith, which means what? That he trusted God.

What is the natural state of the sinful human heart?

the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Rom 8:7
NIV

The natural state of the sinful heart is opposition and distrust of God. But, what is the condition of Abraham's heart as described above?

What came first, God's recognition and declaration that Abraham was righteous or Abraham's heart change from distrust to trust?



God's recognition, declaration, accounting of Abraham as righteous is because Abraham had his heart set right with God. Abraham was changed from distrust to trust.

Just as EGW described above: **Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just.** {AG 181.4}

Notice what Paul says later in Romans 4:

⁹ Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's **faith was credited to him as righteousness.** ¹⁰ Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? **It was not after, but before!**

What is Paul saying? That the works—circumcision—did not have any place in justifying, setting right, healing Abraham, but was a sign of what had already taken place in Abraham. But what had already taken place? His heart had been set right—a real and actual change, not some legal accounting in books.

What is happening within Christianity is worse than just a theological disagreement—the penal legal view is the infection of thought that God warned through His prophetic penmen would come into Christianity and war against the saints and obstruct God's plan and keep people trapped in sin. Today the promulgation of this false legal theology prevents the church from fulfilling its mission of taking the gospel to the world so Christ will return.

Jesus said that when the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached as a witness to all nations, then the end will come... what kingdom? The kingdom of love.

But what has actually happened, because of the acceptance into Christianity of the lie that God's law functions no differently than human law, is that Christianity, including the SDA church, has taken the false gospel of a legal dictator, who is the source of inflicted death and who even killed His Son, to the world.

God is waiting for a remnant people at the end of time to come back to the truth about Him and His design law of love and take this good news to the world!

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, "The verb to..." Let's read Galatians 2:15-17:

"We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' ¹⁶ know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus



that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

¹⁷ "If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! NIV

Can someone explain what that means? What law lens do you read it through?

What does justify mean—something legal, or something in reality being set right?

Does the text actually say anything about a courtroom, a legal accounting, or some declaration? No, all of this is read into the text by those who come to the text with their human imposed law construct projected onto the divine government.

Galatians 2:15-17 from *The Remedy*:

"We who were born Jewish—part of God's specially chosen educational team, blessed with the symbolic teaching tools—and not part of the ignorant Gentile world,¹⁶ clearly know that a person is set right with God not by rituals, symbols, or keeping to a certain educational script, but simply by trusting Jesus Christ. So we, too, have been won back to trust by the evidence Christ has revealed of God's true character and methods and thus our minds are set right with God by trust in Christ, and not by rituals or adhering to a certain set of rules, because it is not possible to heal the mind and set the heart right with God by behaviorally following a set of rules.

¹⁷ "If while we seek to be healed and set right with God, through the truth that Christ has revealed, it becomes obvious that the infection of selfishness has not been eradicated from our hearts, does that mean Christ promotes selfishness? Absolutely not!

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, "The phrase..." Do you see how deeply imbedded the lie has become?

It is absolutely true that our works cannot justify us—however, it would be easier for people to comprehend if we simply said, no amount of work on our part can produce a remedy that heals our hearts and cleanses our minds from fear, selfishness, guilt and shame.

TUESDAY

Read third paragraph, "It's important to remember..." Remember they are speaking of legal justification, and thus in their thinking, if faith was part of justification then the act of faith becomes a legal work, which would have merit or value and contribute to our legal change in status. In their



model this is not so, only by the legal application of the perfect life of Jesus can we be legally declared righteous.

They do not comprehend that part of what is wrong is our lack of trust, and our lack of trust is an obstacle to our justification—and what Paul in Romans 14:23 says is sin. Without our trust there is no justification for any individual sinner. So trust does not provide remedy, but trust is necessary for us to partake of the remedy. And trust is won by evidence of God's trustworthiness revealed in Christ.

Additionally, the species human was justified, set right, restored to perfection, put right with God in the person of Jesus Christ who took upon Himself humanity defective by sin and cured the condition, carried humanity to perfection. Thus, the act of setting the species right with God was accomplished completely singly and totally by Jesus alone and it was this same act that procured the remedy that heals us.

We become partakers of the divine nature, no longer our sinful selves, but Christ living in us.

WEDNESDAY

What does the title, "The Obedience of Faith" bring to your mind?

What is obedience?

Is obedience about what one does? Is merely following orders? Is the obedience God wants what we get from a well trained dog? Is it about performance?

Or is obedience not primarily about performance but the desire to *understand* and follow the instructions to the best of one's ability?

Is obedience then, about trust—I trust my dive instructor and thus when my dive instructor tells me to adjust my regulator in a certain way, I am eager to listen and follow what he says. But what if I misunderstand or what if I don't have the strength to turn a stuck valve but try with all my might?

When the Jesus came down from the mount of transfiguration he found his disciples flummoxed because they had been trying to heal a boy, cast out a demon that caused seizures, but had not succeeded. Were His disciples disobeying by trying to cast out the demon? Or were they obeying? But in that case they didn't have the wisdom, understanding, faith, strength to accomplish the task. But did they have hearts that wanted to?

This is Biblical obedience, an awareness of our helpless, sick, terminal condition, our inability to cure what is wrong with us, COUPLED with the knowledge of God's true character—His goodness, love, desire to heal and restore us. Then, we have an eager and humble attitude to listen to God, to discover



and understand His wisdom, His methods, His ways and to apply them to our lives to the best of our ability.

The problem with traditional Christianity and the penal legal approach is that it shifts the focus away from a humble eagerness to listen to God, to a fearfulness to identify the right rules and follow them lest we get punished. This results in a distorted system in which people are taught to place their faith in systems that put barriers between their hearts and God—like the blood, the robe, the mediator to plead, pay, erase, hide and protect us from God.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “One of the main...”

We received this email from Sweden this week:

Last Sabbath I was conducting the English Bible study at our church and, as I normally do, I used your notes and even made a handout with your statements about coercion and false religion, mark of the beast, and the circle of love and trust. Our church is little and they don't know about your teachings, but last Sabbath we had a guest who is a teacher, raised and educated in Scotland, and he even preached afterwards.

At the Bible study he argued that he knew about your teachings and that they had a principal at their school in Romania who followed and believed your teachings and that they had problems with him, because he never punished the pupils. He let them do whatever they wanted without any consequences, but talking to them. The pupils lost their respect for him and eventually the principal had to go.

The email went on to describe more of their discussion about what we actually teach and how love really functions with healthy boundaries, discipline, restraint etc.

But, this argument that the true gospel of Christ leads people to sin is one Paul faced and one we face. This argument is based on people being stuck at level four and below and in their mind, if there isn't some punishment for sin, then there is no restraint against it.

So, to those who make such arguments, the Bible has an answer:

Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. ²² Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God



and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength. 1Cor 1:20-25

Those who operate on the world's system of imposed law and imposed punishment find God's system of design law foolish and they cannot comprehend it.

The imposed law view has all kinds of loopholes, you may break the law, and such breaks require punishment, but you can get someone to pay the penalty for you so you don't have to pay it. And you can commit more and more sin and as long as you claim the legal payment and repent asking God's forgiveness then Jesus will pay your penalty.

The legal view creates loopholes around the law.

Design law—there are no loopholes, the law of God cannot be changed without life in the universe being destroyed—because it would be like changing gravity, or the nuclear force, or the laws of thermodynamics. Everything upon which God's creation rests would disintegrate.

So, sin, is deviation from design, and we are either restored, (healed) to be in harmony with the design, or not. Christ came, not to pay a legal penalty but to put humankind back in harmony with God's law.

What about pardon language, what is pardon?

Consider this quotation:

Satan deceives many with the plausible theory that since God's love for His people is so great, He will excuse sin in them; that while the threatenings of God's Word are to serve a certain purpose in His moral government, they are never to be literally fulfilled. But in His dealings with His creatures, God has maintained the principles of righteousness by revealing sin in its true character—**by demonstrating that its sure result is misery and death. The unconditional pardon of sin never has been and never will be. Such pardon would show the abandonment of the principles of righteousness that are the very foundation of the government of God. . . . {CTr 139.4}**

What is the cause of misery and death—sin, which is what, deviating from God's design law, and why can sin not be unconditionally pardoned? Because it would be like saying "I pardon you for not breathing" it cannot be done. One must comply with the laws upon which life is built, then one can be pardoned for prior deviations—why? Because one is now in harmony with the law.

Pardon and justification are one and the same thing. Through faith, **the believer passes from the position of a rebel**, a child of sin and Satan, **to the position of a loyal subject of Christ Jesus**, not because of an inherent goodness, but because Christ receives him as His child by adoption. The sinner receives the forgiveness of his sins, because these sins are borne by his Substitute and Surety. The Lord speaks to His heavenly Father, saying: "This is My



child, I relieve him from the condemnation of death, giving him My life insurance policy--eternal life--because I have taken his place and have suffered for his sins. He is even My beloved son." Thus man, pardoned, and clothed with the beautiful garments of Christ's righteousness, stands faultless before God. {FW 103.2}

What is actually happening, a legal process, or a change in state of being? What makes one a rebel? A legal status or an actual state of sinfulness, having a heart at war with God and His principles? Then what makes one a loyal subject of Christ—a legal claim by Jesus, or a change in the inner man accomplished by Jesus when we trust Him? Justification is setting right that which is wrong, and that means fixing what is out of line with God and His character of love, truth and freedom. Thus we are pardoned for our past only when we are healed from the cause of the past sins, so pardon and setting right are the same as actual healing of the inner person.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

July 14,15, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Lakeport SDA church, in Lakeport CA.

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

Sep 5, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

Love is more than emotion, more than compassion, more than positive regard for another; love is power—the power to live, heal and be free. Love is functional, operational, with specific design parameters built into the fabric of reality. Love is intelligent and as we intelligently choose to harmonize with how love functions we not only experience greater health, fulfillment and wellbeing, we are transformed to become forces for good in the world. In *The God-Shaped Heart* Christian psychiatrist Dr. Tim Jennings explores the healing power of love, exposes a belief system infecting Christianity that obstructs love, and identifies eternal truths that open the heart to God's transforming power of love.

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

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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



2017 Q3 The Gospel In Galatians Lesson 5

Old Testament Faith

SABBATH

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree’ ”(Galatians 3:13, ESV).

From the Lesson:

“A little boy had made a little boat, all painted and fixed up beautifully. One day someone stole his boat, and he was distressed.

In passing a pawnshop one day he saw his boat. Happily he ran in to the pawnbroker and said, ‘That is my little boat.’ ‘No,’ said the pawnbroker, ‘it is mine, for I bought it.’ ‘Yes,’ said the boy, ‘but it is mine, for I made it.’ ‘Well,’ said the pawnbroker, ‘if you will pay me two dollars, you can have it.’ That was a lot of money for a boy who did not have a penny. Anyway, he resolved to have it; so, he cut grass, did chores of all kinds, and soon had his money.

“He ran down to the shop and said, ‘I want my boat.’ He paid the money and received his boat. He took the boat up in his arms, and hugged and kissed it, and said, ‘You dear little boat, I love you. You are mine. You are twice mine. I made you, and now I have bought you.’

“So it is with us. We are, in a sense, twice the Lord’s. He created us, and we got into the devil’s pawnshop. Then Jesus came and bought us at awful cost—not silver and gold, but His precious blood. We are the Lord’s by creation and by redemption.”—William Moses Tidwell, *Pointed Illustrations* (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1951), p. 97”

What curse were we redeemed from referenced in the memory text? I’ve hung from a tree before – am I cursed? What does Paul mean?

What may we discern from the above passage? What’s the first question we must ask ourselves or others regarding this or passages like this? How is this illustration helpful? How is it harmful? Is it diagnostic of the author / editor / etc.? What’s the diagnosis?



SUNDAY

The Foolish Galatians

What does Paul characterize as “foolish” with regard to the Galatians [see Galatians 3:1-6]?

What is it about fallen human nature that makes us want to “work” our way in to God’s grace?

The lesson asks a poignant question as well:

“In what sense could we be in danger of falling into the same spiritual pitfall of starting out right and then falling into legalism?”

Another great question from the lesson:

“How often, if ever, do you find yourself thinking, I’m doing pretty well. I’m a pretty solid Christian, I don’t do this and/or I don’t do that . . .and then, even subtly, thinking you’re somehow good to be saved? What’s wrong with that picture?”

I think the lesson wants us to see the focus on works, but the problem is much bigger. Where’s the real focus? **ON SELF!**

MONDAY

Grounded on Scripture.

Considering our “Integrative Evidence Based Approach” to discerning Truth, should we be wary when we see statements like “grounded in Scripture” or “Scripture, and Scripture only”?

For review: What are the 3 primary avenues of discerning Truth?

1. Scripture
2. Nature / Science
3. Personal Experience / Relationship.

We have seen what happens when we marry ourselves to only one avenue of searching for Truth.

Scripture Only – 34,000 different sects of Christianity all using the same book to defend their mindset, and beat others over the head with.

Nature Only – Evolution, Atheism, Survival of the Fittest.

- Experience Only – Mysticism, Spiritualism, Elevating Feelings/Emotions to dethrone reason and judgment.



For certain, Paul's presentation of the gospel was grounded in Scripture, however, it was not the only anchor. He had a deep personal relationship with his Savior, and observed / obeyed the know laws of Nature.

Paul's only Scripture was the Old Testament. His support for Christ's position as Messiah / Savior, and the intent of Heaven for the gospel to go to the Gentiles are found throughout the OT. What about his view of God the Father? Is He the same in the OT as well as the New Testament?

TUESDAY

Reckoned as Righteous.

"Reckoned as Righteous" How many times have you heard that phrase? Which Law lens are you hearing it through?

Many authors use synonyms "accounted", "credited", "counted" and "imputed" instead of "reckoned". What do these terms mean? Some say it's a legal metaphor.

Some say it's a business / Accounting metaphor. Even from a business/Accounting perspective, it makes more sense than from a legal one. In my practice book keeping, I don't "credit" myself with money that I don't have. If I have the \$\$\$, it goes in the credit column. If I'm owed money, I can't call the bank and tell them "just put it in my account – it's coming eventually."

Could we come up with a healthcare version of this?

Could we say "Abraham believed God and was diagnosed as righteous"?

Too many "scholars" would have us believe that God's voicing of Abraham's righteousness made it so. I believe that's backwards. Abraham trusted God, opened his heart to the Spirit of Truth and Love, and his character was transformed, so God declared him righteous –

BECAUSE. HE. WAS.

God accurately diagnosed Abraham's character as healed. God didn't have to speak him in to righteousness, nor did he declare him righteous – even though he wasn't. God didn't lie about Abraham's character, and He doesn't lie about ours.

From the lesson:

"The Bible is clear: Abraham's obedience was not grounds for his justification; it was, instead, the result. He didn't do the things he did in order to be justified; he did them because he already was. Justification leads to obedience, not vice versa."

Thank You. Well said.



WEDNESDAY

The Gospel in the Old Testament.

Are there any differences between the “gospel” in the Old and the New Testaments? What constitutes the “gospel” in the Old Testament? What about the New Testament? How are they similar/different? What “gospel” did Paul have? Was some of Paul’s audience *claiming* that the OT gospel was different?

From the lesson: “The basis of God’s covenant with Abraham centered on God’s promises to him.”

I respectfully disagree. The basis of God’s covenant with Abraham centered on God’s **trustworthiness**. God’s promises are **manifestations** of His trustworthiness that we sometimes need to take on faith. God’s **fulfilled** promises are **evidence** of His trustworthiness.

Again, from the Lesson:

“Some mistakenly conclude that the Bible teaches two ways of salvation. They claim that in Old Testament times salvation was based on keeping the commandments; then, because that did not work very well, God abolished the law and made salvation possible by faith. This could not be farther from the truth. As Paul wrote in Galatians 1:7, there is only one gospel.”

Again, well said. How could God “abolish the law” when it’s the design template for life itself?

THURSDAY

Redeemed From a Curse

What was the “Curse”? Who was responsible for the “Curse”? How was mankind redeemed from the “Curse”?

Which Law lens are you looking through?

From the Lesson:

“The word redeem means “to buy back.” It was used to refer to the ransom price paid to release hostages or the price paid to free a slave. Because the wages of sin is death, the curse of failing to keep the law was often a death sentence. The ransom paid for our salvation was not insignificant; it cost God the life of His own Son (John 3:16). Jesus ransomed us from the curse by becoming our sin-bearer (1 Cor. 6:20, 7:23). He voluntarily took our curse upon Himself and suffered in our behalf the full penalty of sin (2 Cor. 5:21).”



FRIDAY

“Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid the iniquity of us all. He was counted a transgressor, that He might redeem us from the condemnation of the law. The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart. The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation. All His life Christ had been publishing to a fallen world the good news of the Father’s mercy and pardoning love. Salvation for the chief of sinners was His theme. But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father’s reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 753



The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 6 3Q 2017

The Priority of the Promise

SABBATH

What does the lesson title mean?

Simply that the promise takes precedence and the promise is the way salvation will be accomplished, not through the imposition of law.

Read Memory Text: “For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise: but God gave it to Abraham by a promise” (Gal 3:18 ESV).

What was promised? That the seed of the woman would crush the serpent’s head—which was given in Eden, and was renewed to Abraham, that through Abraham’s seed, not seeds, the promise would be realized.

- The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ. Gal 3:16
- (Gen 12:7, 13:15, 24:7)

What was the promise—to give the land to Abraham’s seed forever—what land? Was it referring to the small speck of acreage in the Middle East, or the entire world?

And who is the seed?

So the plan to restore the earth to human sovereignty was it a plan to be accomplished by the imposition of law or through the promise in a Messiah, a Savior, who would be first descended from Adam and Eve and later through the lineage of Abraham.

What would this Messiah need to do in order to fulfill the promise to restore the earth and save humankind?

Was the problem that after Adam and Eve sinned God was restrained by some law upon His own being that prevented Him from forgiving and saving, until some legal mechanism be instituted to free God to act?

Was the problem that God’s nature of love had become contaminated and God’s heart was filled with anger and wrath and some action needed to be taken in order to drain the anger and wrath from God so God would then act in mercy to save?



Was the problem that Satan had some legal ownership to the earth and Jesus had to come to purchase the earth and humans back from Satan?

Was the problem that the condition of humanity was changed and was out of harmony with God and God's design for life and without intervention the human species would cease to exist?

So what was needed from the Seed? What was the promise made in Eden and to Abraham?

That Jesus would come and crush the serpent's head and heal the species providing remedy to all who will accept.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Even if his opponents..." Did the giving of the law nullify the previous arrangement?

Did it modify or change the previous arrangement?

What was the previous arrangement God had with Abraham before the law given at Sinai?

Abraham had a problem he could not fix for himself:

- He couldn't produce a child with his wife Sarah—this was a real problem for Abraham and Sarah, but also a type or symbol of his inability to produce a cure for the sin problem through any means available to humans
- Through human effort alone, without the intervention of God, we produce only slaves to sin—which is what Abraham did produce with his slave Hagar—and another child of slavery Ishmael. Again real historical events, with real historical people, but who also represent in the theater larger realities.

What was needed in order for God to be able to intervene and fix Abraham's problem?

- Did God need more power?
- Did God need some inducement?
- Did God need His Son to plead with Him and work on Him to intervene for fix Abraham's problem?
- Did Abraham need to trust God and consent to God's intervention in His life—why?
- God is love and love only works in atmosphere of freedom—Coercion is found only under Satan's government, thus God could not act to resolve Abraham's problem without Abraham's consent i.e. trust – both to provide a child with his wife Sarah and to provide a remedy into Abraham's heart to sin

Thus, the faith—which is what?



Hebrews tells us that faith is the *substance* of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. The word *substance* comes from the Greek *hypostasis* which has two halves:

- hypo—which means under as in hypoglycemic, or hypotension
- stasis which means standing

This was translated into a Latin-based word *substance* that has two halves:

- sub—which means under as in subway, submarine, subterranean
- stance—which means standing

And we can translate that to modern English as “faith is our *understanding*”

And understanding as two meanings, and both apply:

- our cognitive comprehension of God, His methods, trustworthiness
- our agreement with God—we have an understanding with Him

I put these ideas of faith into my book *Could It Be This Simple?* back in 2007. I just came across this quotation in a book *Faith and Works* about two weeks ago:

What is faith? "The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). **It is an assent of the understanding** to God's words which binds the heart in willing consecration and service to God, **Who gave the understanding**, Who moved on the heart, Who first drew the mind to view Christ on the cross of Calvary. **Faith is rendering to God the intellectual powers**, abandonment of the mind and will to God, and making Christ the only door to enter into the kingdom of heaven. {Faith and Works 25.2}

So faith is the understanding the trust that Abraham places in God and God promises to provide the remedy, the solution—in type to give evidence of the reality, Sarah becomes pregnant—the reality Jesus Christ!

So, how was Abraham set right—justified? By faith—and what happened?

The natural state of the human heart is to distrust God, to be enmity to Him Rom 8:7. But Abraham experienced a heart change and his heart that did not trust was changed to a heart that trusted God and then he was recognized as righteous or set right, because in fact he was. Rom 4:4

Thus Abraham was set right through trust and the law given four hundred years later did not change this, nor God's plan to fulfill His promise.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Paul had argued...” The lesson is correct, working to keep the law cannot save—why?



Simply because the problem is not a legal one and thus cannot be resolved or remedied by a legal solution. Any teaching of legal solutions for the sin problem are false and work to obstruct God's plan of salvation. This is what Paul is teaching and why the Jews had so much problem with Paul and many Christians still do today.

We teach that sin is deviation from design and we are either restored (healed) to be in harmony with God's design or not. Christ came, not to pay a legal penalty but to put humankind back in harmony with God's law.

When we focus on legal solutions we move the minds of people away from their real condition and to a false remedy that has a form of godliness but with no power to heal and restore.

What do we do then with all the legal sounding language, when God pardons the sinner?

Consider this quotation:

Satan deceives many with the plausible theory that since God's love for His people is so great, He will excuse sin in them; that while the threatenings of God's Word are to serve a certain purpose in His moral government, they are never to be literally fulfilled. [what is the basis for this deception? Having first accepted the false law construct that God's law functions like human law a system of rules imposed that requires imposed punishment—thus once accepting this lie He can introduce another lie that because God is love He will excuse sin. Because in truth God will not use His power to inflict punishment for sin. But not inflicting punishment is not excusing sin. Why? Because of the truth of God's law being design law. When we realize that truth then we realize God doesn't excuse sin, but every person who refuses remedy will reap a terribly painful end, but not at the hands of God. It would be like saying all those with some terminal illness who refuses the cure God will excuse—no He won't but He won't inflict their pain, suffering and death either.] But in His dealings with His creatures, God has maintained the principles of righteousness by revealing sin in its true character—by demonstrating that its sure result is misery and death. [Do you see the language here, principles of righteousness i.e. design for life and that sin has a sure result—design law which is misery and death] The unconditional pardon of sin never has been and never will be. Such pardon would show the abandonment of the principles of righteousness that are the very foundation of the government of God. . . . {Christ Triumphant 139.4}

Those in the imposed law camp use quotes like this proof that there is a legal accounting, that God's law does function like ours and God will hold sinners accountable and punish the unrepentant.

But, what is the cause of misery and death, as stated in the very quote? —sin, which is what, deviating from God's design law, and why can sin not be unconditionally pardoned? Because it would be like saying "I pardon you for not breathing" it cannot be done. One must comply with the laws upon which



life is built, then one can be pardoned for prior deviations—why? Because one is now in harmony with the law.

Would you be comfortable saying that pardon and healing are the same? That pardon and setting a person right, putting them back into harmony with God's design are one and the same? What is another name for setting right or putting right? Justification, do you feel comfortable saying pardon and justification are one and the same? Listen to this historical quote:

Pardon and justification are one and the same thing. Through faith, **the believer passes from the position of a rebel**, a child of sin and Satan, **to the position of a loyal subject of Christ Jesus**, not because of an inherent goodness, but because Christ receives him as His child by adoption. The sinner receives the forgiveness of his sins, because these sins are borne by his Substitute and Surety. The Lord speaks to His heavenly Father, saying: "This is My child, I reprieve him from the condemnation of death, giving him My life insurance policy--eternal life--because I have taken his place and have suffered for his sins. He is even My beloved son." Thus man, pardoned, and clothed with the beautiful garments of Christ's righteousness, stands faultless before God. {Faith and Works 103.2}

What is actually happening, a legal process, or a change in state of being? What makes someone a rebel? A legal status or an actual state of sinfulness, having a heart at war with God and His principles? Then what makes one a loyal subject of Christ—a legal claim by Jesus, or a actual change in the inner man accomplished by Jesus when we trust Him? Justification is setting right that which is wrong, and that means fixing what is out of line with God and His character of love, truth and freedom. Thus we are pardoned for our past only when we are healed from the cause of the past sins, so pardon and setting right are the same—an actual healing of the inner person.

Read second paragraph, "Paul's argument in Romans 3..." Why is this even a concern? Why does Paul find himself having to educate them on this issue? Why do so many Christians go to such great lengths to argue so intensely that the law was not done away with? Because they are operating under the imposed human law. If they would simply come to the reality that God's law is design law then it becomes obvious the law isn't done away with.

When a doctor provides remedy to a patient with a disease, maybe a disease contracted by misconduct, say infections from IV drug use. Does treating the infection, healing the person, do away with the laws of health? We don't have to make such arguments when we come back to design law. But the intensity of these arguments are themselves evidence that the audience is stuck in imposed law and Paul is trying to help them see how reality works. Sadly, many Christians are stuck in the same problem today.

Read the third paragraph, which is not from an inspired source, but thoughtful Bible scholars making commentary, i.e. the thoughts of a theologian or a committee of theologians:



“The plan of justification by faith reveals God’s regard for His law in demanding and providing the atoning sacrifice. If justification by faith abolishes law, then there was no need for the atoning death of Christ to release the sinner from his sins, and thus restore him to peace with God.”¹

How can these ideas be understood in a helpful and accurate way?

What is justification—setting right or putting right

What is faith—our understanding trust

What is law—God’s design parameters for life

What is atoning—reuniting and restoring to unity that which is not in unity

So we might rewrite it as:

The plan of restoring people to God’s perfection by trust reveals God’s regard for His design for life as this could be accomplished only by providing the reuniting and healing sacrifice. If restoring people to God’s perfection by trust abolishes God’s design for life, then there was no need for the reuniting and healing death of Christ to heal the sinner from his terminal condition, and thus restore him to peace with God.

TUESDAY

The title for the day is: The Purpose of the Law

What law is being referred to in Galatians 3?

First paragraph states, “While both the ceremonial and moral law were ‘added’ at Sinai because of transgressions, we see by considering the following question that Paul appears to have the moral law primarily in mind.”

The question the lesson asks is, “To what was it added, and why?”

First—do you agree that the law that was added was both the ceremonial and the moral law—but Paul is especially talking about the moral law (10 Commandments) in Galatians 3?

The lesson has done a superb job of correctly identifying that Paul was primarily talking about the 10 Commandments here.

So, to what was it added and why?

¹ Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1980). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 6, p. 510). Review and Herald Publishing Association.



Two quotations from one of the founders of the SDA church:

- If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the **principles of the Ten Commandments**, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}
- I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments... "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). **In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law.** {ISM 233, 234}

Did you notice the language “had the practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments...”?

Do you hear practicing the principles of the Ten Commandments and obeying the Ten Commandments differently?

Can the “obeying” approach result in a rules, imposed law, type approach—lists of behaviors, do this, don’t do that, etc.? Can the obeying or keeping the Ten Commandments approach lend itself to a level four thinking about God?

Does the “practicing the principles of the Ten Commandments” lead us to something else?

What does it mean to practice the principles of the Ten Commandments? What are the principles of the 10 Commandments?

- Love
- Truth
- Freedom

And if we practice these principles is it about rules or about a change of heart?

So, what was the purpose of the written law? Why was it given?

Because the designs of God, His methods, His principles of love, truth, freedom were not written in the hearts and minds of humans and we humans needed a tool to help us realize this. As the lesson states in the second paragraph:



The law was not intended to be some kind of program for “earning” salvation. On the contrary, it was given, Paul says, “to increase the trespass” (Rom 5:20, ESV); that is, to show us more clearly the sin in our lives (Rom 7:13).

But what do you think of this in the last paragraph:

While the ceremonial laws pointed to the Messiah and emphasized holiness and the need of a Savior, it is the moral law, with its “Thou shall nots,” that reveals sin, that shows us that sin is not just a part of our natural condition but is, indeed, a violation of God’s law. This is why Paul says, “Where there is no law there is no transgression” (Rom 4:15 ESV).

What are they trying to say? Are they trying to separate the sinful condition from the behaviors? What do they mean by: “the moral law, with its “Thou shall nots,” that reveals sin, that shows us that sin is not just a part of our natural condition but is, indeed, a violation of God’s law”?

Are they saying it isn’t sin until we behaviorally break a rule?

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.” Rom 7:7

What is sin in the 10th commandment a behavior or an attitude of the heart even without behavior? Then what about the rest is it thou shalt not do an act, or rather than a list of rules we try and adhere to, this is both the diagnostic tool and promise of what we will look like when God heals us: “When I heal you, you won’t even have a desire for such things. You will not murder, you will not bear false witness...”

The focus on sin being behavior is based on the false human law construct. Those who teach such ideas have just substituted the **principles** of the Ten Commandments with the **rules** of the Ten Commandments, which creates a form of godliness but denies the power. This view leads people to misunderstand the purpose of the law, the problem of sin and God’s solution and thus leaves people claiming legal salvation but never experiencing victory and transformation.

Understanding design law we understand that sin is deviation from God’s design, and thus itself is damaging and ultimately terminal if not remedied. Further, we understand that this condition of being, results in symptoms, which we call sins, but the sins are not the primary problem (yes they are a problem but not the primary problem) the sins are the symptoms of the primary problem which is a heart and mind operating upon selfishness rather than love.

Any concerns about what I have said? Are you persuaded by the truth of God’s word, the evidence of science and nature and real life experience that you can stand confidently upon this reality against church authority that wants to focus on the legal distortion?



Well, in case you need some historic validation—here are a couple of EGW quotes:

- There is a great work to be done for many of us. Our minds and characters must become as the mind and character of Christ. **Selfishness is inwrought in our very being. It has come to us as an inheritance, and has been cherished by many as a precious treasure.** No special work for God can be accomplished until self and selfishness are overcome. To many everything connected with themselves is of great importance. Self is a center, around which everything seems to revolve. {Historical Sketches 138.7}
- **All sin is selfishness.** Satan's first sin was a manifestation of selfishness. He sought to grasp power, to exalt self. A species of insanity led him to seek to supersede God. And the temptation that led Adam to sin was Satan's declaration that it was possible for man to attain to something more than he already enjoyed, possible for him to be as God Himself. **The sowing of seeds of selfishness in the human heart was the first result of the entrance of sin into the world. God desires every one to understand the evil of selfishness, and to co operate with Him in guarding the human family against its terrible, deceptive powers.** The design of the gospel is to confront this evil by means of remedial missionary work, and to destroy its destructive power by establishing enterprises of benevolence. {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 3}

As a remedy for the terrible consequences into which selfishness led the human race, God gave His only begotten Son to die for mankind. How could He have given more? In this gift He gave Himself. "I and My Father are one," said Christ. By the gift of His Son, God has made it **possible for man to be redeemed and restored to oneness with Him.** "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." **Love is the great principle that actuates unfallen beings.** With amazement the angels behold the indifference that those who have light and knowledge manifest toward a world unsaved. The heavenly host are filled with an intense desire to work through human agencies **to restore in man the image of God.** They are ready and waiting to do this work. **The combined power of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost is pledged to uplift man from his fallen state.** Every attribute, every power of divinity has been placed at the command of those who unite with the Saviour in winning men to God. O, that all would appreciate the truth as it is in Jesus. O, that all would love God in return for the love wherewith He has loved them. {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 4}

Sin has extinguished the love that God placed in man's heart. The work of the church is to rekindle this love. The church is to co-operate with God by **uprooting selfishness** from the human heart, **placing in its stead the benevolence that was in man's heart in his original state of perfection.** {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 5}

What did you hear in these passages?

What is sin? Selfishness—how do we become selfish?



What is the purpose of the church? Is the plan of salvation legal or is it restorative, healing?

Then what was the purpose of the law? A diagnostic instrument to help everyone understand their terminal state and turn to Christ for the only remedy!

WEDNESDAY

Discuss the question at the top of the lesson, “Does Paul’s statement about the law being added at Mount Sinai mean that it did not exist previously? If not, what was the difference before and after Mount Sinai?”

Does Paul give a clue to Timothy in 1Tim 1:8-11:

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. ⁹ We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine ¹¹ that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

What does it mean? Was the law given for the righteous? No, then to whom was it given? It was given for sinners—then did it exist before there were sinners?

Did the 10 Commandments exist before human beings existed?

Did angels in heaven need a law to honor their father and mother, to not commit adultery, or that sins would pass down the generation of angels. In fact, did Adam and Even in Eden need a law that sins would pass down the generations when they had not sinned?

If you struggle with the idea that the 10 Commandments were not in existence in the universe before Sinai, consider Newton’s laws of motion:

First Law: An object at rest remains at rest and an object in motion continues at a constant velocity unless acted upon by an external force.

Second Law: The sum external force **F** on an object is equal to the mass *m* of that object multiplied by the acceleration vector **a** of the object: **F=ma**.

Third Law: When one body exerts a force on a second body, the second body simultaneously exerts a force equal in magnitude and opposite in direction on the first body.

Now answer the following questions about Newton’s laws:



- Are they real?
- Do they apply to our lives?
- Do they apply to everyone or only those who hear about them and choose to believe in them?
- Are they rules we must obey or descriptions of how reality is built to function?
- When did they go into effect?
- If Newton had not written them down, would that mean these laws would not exist and thus would not be in effect?
- If we decide in committee to change the wording of the first law to read: “An object at rest remains at rest unless it receives permission from the proper church committee to move,” does anything happen?
- In other words, can humans change these laws?
- Are these laws imposed laws or design laws?

The 10 Commandments are like Newton’s laws they were not in existence in this written form before human beings sinned, and we have no evidence they existed before Sinai. But the *principles* of the 10 Commandments were already in existence! And what are the principles of the 10 Commandments? Truth, Love and Freedom!

This goes to the heart of the problem in Christianity—do we understand God’s law as principles, design parameters, or as rules. Those who are level four and below are stuck on rules and get very upset if one suggests the 10 Commandments have not always been in existence. They focus on rules and in fact, make up more rules.

The Jews have done this through the generations and so have many Christians—making up lots of rules unique to their culture which they then attempt to enforce upon others. This is a legal religion, whether it is oneself keeping the law or a legal substitute law keeping.

Consider this quotation:

The effort to earn salvation by one's own works inevitably leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. **For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey. All this turns the mind away from God to self. His love dies out of the heart,** and with it perishes love for his fellow men. **A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard.** The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, and **causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies.** {MB 123.1}

The Pharisees were of this class. They came forth from their religious services, not humbled with a sense of their own weakness, not grateful for the great privileges that God had given them. They came forth filled with spiritual pride, and their theme was, "Myself, my feelings, my knowledge, my ways." Their own attainments became the standard by which they judged



others. Putting on the robes of self-dignity, they mounted the judgment seat to criticize and condemn. {MB 123.2}

The people partook largely of the same spirit, intruding upon the province of conscience and judging one another in matters that lay between the soul and God. [Do we do this today?] It was in reference to this spirit and practice that Jesus said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." That is, do not set yourself up as a standard. Do not make your opinions, your views of duty, your interpretations of Scripture, a criterion for others and in your heart condemn them if they do not come up to your ideal. Do not criticize others, conjecturing as to their motives and passing judgment upon them. {MB 123.3}

What is being described? What kind of law is God's law? What happens when we replace it with human law construct?

Do we understand the 10 Commandments as a diagnostic tool, based on the eternal principles (design law) of love, truth, freedom which originate in the heart and mind of God?

I want to point out what the lesson stated in the last paragraph, "Christ can do what the law could never do—provide a true remedy for sin, that is, justify the sinners and by His Spirit fulfill His law in them (Rom 8:3,4)."

Wow! Did you hear that? The lesson got it right—God sent Christ as the remedy to heal our sin condition, and justification is healing or setting the sinner right with God again! Incredible!

THURSDAY

Read the third paragraph, "As majestic as the giving..." What do you think of this idea that there was no need for a mediator? Why not?

Because we are sick and God is our Creator, Healing, Fixer—of what is wrong, i.e. the problem is in us, the problem is not in God!

In summation of the lesson let's read Galatians 3:19-29 from *The Remedy*:

If God promised to heal us, then what was the purpose of the law? It was added because of our sin-sick state—our darkened minds and the rapid rate at which we were destroying ourselves—in order to diagnose our condition and teach us a healthier way to live until the only true cure, Jesus (the promised One) had come. God communicated this law through angels, and then through Moses as an intermediary to the people.²⁰ But when there is only one party involved—and God and his Son Jesus are One—an intermediary is not needed.



²¹ Is the written law, then, somehow in opposition to the promises of God? Of course not! The written law was simply a tool to diagnose our sickness and lead us to God for healing. If the written law could somehow cure the infection of selfishness and promote life, then healing would certainly have followed the giving of the law.²² But Scripture is clear: All humanity is infected with selfishness and is imprisoned by this terminal condition. It is by trust that we experience the only cure, the One promised—Jesus Christ—who was given to humankind as the Remedy to this terminal condition.

²³ Before Christ came, we were quarantined by the written law—restrained from continual self-destruction—until Christ procured the only true cure.²⁴ The written law was provided as a safeguard to protect us and lead us to Christ—the Great Physician—so that we might be restored to unity with God by trust in, and partaking of, Christ.²⁵ Now that trust in God has been restored—and we are set right in heart, mind, and character, and again practice God's methods—we no longer need the law to diagnose our condition or lead us back to God.

²⁶ Through the Remedy established by Jesus Christ you are all loyal children of God,²⁷ for all of you who have immersed your minds and hearts into the truth of God as revealed by Christ have had your characters changed, and—like a new set of clothing—replaced with the character of Christ.²⁸ Your station on earth is irrelevant: it doesn't matter whether you are Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female—for you are all one in character, method, principle and motive through all that Christ has done.²⁹ If you are Christlike in heart and mind, then you are one of Abraham's descendants and an heir to all the promises of God.

FRIDAY

Discuss the questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

Sep 5, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

Love is more than emotion, more than compassion, more than positive regard for another; love is power—the power to live, heal and be free. Love is functional, operational, with specific design parameters built into the fabric of reality. Love is intelligent and as we intelligently choose to harmonize with how love functions we not only experience greater health, fulfillment and wellbeing, we are transformed to become forces for good in the world. In *The God-Shaped Heart* Christian psychiatrist Dr. Tim Jennings explores the healing power of love, exposes a belief system infecting Christianity that obstructs love, and identifies eternal truths that open the heart to God's transforming power of love.

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

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church
12702 9th Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987
Fax: (714) 534-3877
Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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

November 17,18, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr. SDA church in California.



The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 7 3Q 2017

The Road of Faith

SABBATH

This week's lesson is based on Galatians 3:21-25, let's read these texts first from the NIV:

Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. ²² But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

²³ Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. ²⁴ So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.

²⁵ Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

What do you understand this to mean?

In this passage to what law is Paul referring? As we discovered last week, both the ceremonial and moral law of the 10 Commandments, but especially the 10 Commandments.

And what is the purpose of the law in this passage? A remedy? No! Something else—what?

What does it mean prisoner of sin? How is the world a prisoner to sin?

What does it mean held prisoner by the law? Does it mean we are criminals and the law sentences us to death and we are criminals on death row awaiting the ruling authority to execute us, except for those who claim the legal death payment of Jesus in their place?

What then is the cause of death? Does death come from sin itself, or is death an imposed punishment inflicted by God?

Such ideas are what the false legal view leads to, the lie that God's law functions like sinful human governments, imposed rules requiring imposed punishments. But, when we return to worship God as Creator and realize His laws are design laws, then we realize that sin is breaking His design for life and is a terminal condition which results in death unless remedied by our Savior.

What does justified by faith mean? It depends of the view of God's law one holds BEFORE they read the passage. If one believes God's law works like sinful human law then they read this passage and think it is God declaring in the courts of heaven the legal accounting of a person to be righteous even though they are not when that person claims in faith the legal payment of Jesus.

All such ideas are not reality, at best they are metaphor, at worst they are lies.



In reality, justification is simply setting humanity right with God again, fixing what is wrong, putting back to God's original design what is not longer in harmony with His law and design.

Here is Galatians 3:21-25 from the Remedy:

²¹ Is the written law, then, somehow in opposition to the promises of God? Of course not! The written law was simply a tool to diagnose our sickness and lead us to God for healing. If the written law could somehow cure the infection of selfishness and promote life, then healing would certainly have followed the giving of the law.²² But Scripture is clear: All humanity is infected with selfishness and is imprisoned by this terminal condition. It is by trust that we experience the only cure, the One promised—Jesus Christ—who was given to humankind as the Remedy to this terminal condition.

²³ Before Christ came, we were quarantined by the written law—restrained from continual self-destruction—until Christ procured the only true cure.²⁴ The written law was provided as a safeguard to protect us and lead us to Christ—the Great Physician—so that we might be restored to unity with God by trust in, and partaking of, Christ.²⁵ Now that trust in God has been restored—and we are set right in heart, mind, and character, and again practice God's methods—we no longer need the law to diagnose our condition or lead us back to God. *The Remedy*

Now, I received a message after lesson four asking this question:

After reading the notes for lesson 4 it seems that you are thinking like Catholics. Protestants understand “the grace of justification” as purely a legal declaration; for Rome justification is a process of inner renewal, something that happens in us.

This is a very understandable concern and a reasonable issue to raise, especially since essentially all of Christianity has indoctrinated into the idea that these two views are the only two views and the choice is a binary either or choice. So, I want to thank the person who sent in this question.

It also gives each of us an opportunity to do some reasoning and perhaps break out of a trap in which both positions are less than accurate.

First, how do you handle questions such as this? What is your response?

Before we get to the actual facts of the concern, notice one of the methods of persuasion being employed—to contrast the understood Protestant position with that of the understood Catholic position—why do that? What is the purpose?

Is it to suggest that if the Catholics have a certain view it must be wrong, therefore we should hold the other view?



This is one of the arguments made by those who argue against the Trinity, that because the idea is held by Catholics it cannot be correct. But this is a weak argument.

The demon possessed often said about Jesus "We know who you are thou Son of the Most High God." Would we suggest that because the demons said this about Jesus that we should argue the opposite that Jesus is not the Son of the Most High God? No we would not, so determining whether a view is right or wrong based on who said it, is not the best method for decision making.

Who said it can cause us to be suspicious, to scrutinize, but how about some actual evidence of which view is most accurate?

Next, it is important to check the assumed positions of the questioner are correct. What is the difference between the Protestant and Catholic views of Justification?

The very simplistic difference between the historic Lutheran and Calvinistic view and the Catholic views is this:

- Protestant—justification is an act of faith accepting the legal accounting, declaring, crediting, imputing to the sinner's account the sinless righteousness of Jesus, without any works on the sinner's part while the sinner remains just as sinful as before. It is an event in time that cannot be undone except by the loss of faith.
- Catholic—justification is the change in the inner man accomplished by the grace of God **plus** the works of the believer. Thus it is a process happening over time. In this view, the sinner is born with original sin and the sinner can be moved from a state of condemnation to a child of God only by baptism (infant), and later by faith plus the sacraments. The sacraments of baptism, penance, mass, etc. are controlled by the Church and thus are gateways to justification.

Historically, the Roman Church had come to a point in history where they held people hostage to the authority of the church institution. Salvation was dependent not upon a trust relationship with Jesus Christ alone, but a combination of faith in Jesus and works controlled by the church to include penance, baptism, mass, and indulgences. Further, salvation could be obtained through purging of the wickedness after death in a place called purgatory. A living person could help a loved one out of purgatory by purchasing a pass from the church to accomplish this.

Martin Luther and the reformers saw the corruption of this system and protested against it. In so doing they moved people toward a better understanding. However, their understanding and teaching was still predicated on the imposed law construct, already deeply rooted in the Catholic system. Thus, while it was moving away from institutional authoritarianism, and arbitrary works, it did not actually come to teach what true justification actually is. Instead, it set up another theological construct based on the false law idea.



Truth is unfolding and those who cling to the penal substitutionary view of the early reformers cling to a view which freed the reformers from the domination of a institutional system, however, it did not free them from the domination of selfishness and fear nor the view of God as the inflictor of eternal torment as the punishment for sin. This penal legal view has a form of godliness with no power.

According the an online Catholic Encyclopedia:

What then is the part assigned to faith in justification? According to Luther (and Calvin also), the faith that justifies is... the infallible conviction (*fides fiducialis*, *fiducia*) that God for the sake of Christ will no longer impute to us our sins, but will consider and treat us, as if we were really just and holy, although in our inner selves we remain the same sinners as before.

In the Protestant system, however, remission of sin is no real forgiveness, no blotting out of guilt. Sin is merely cloaked and concealed by the imputed merits of Christ; God no longer imputes it, whilst in reality it continues under cover its miserable existence till the hour of death. Thus there exist in man side by side two hostile brothers as it were — the one just and the other unjust; the one a saint, the other a sinner; the one a child of God, the other a slave of Satan — and this without any prospect of a conciliation between the two.

Thus we find in one of Luther's letters, written to Melancthon in 1521, the following sentence: "Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe and rejoice in Christ more strongly, who triumphed over sin, death, and the world; as long as we live here, we must sin."...

We now come to the different states in the process of justification. The Council of Trent assigns the first and most important place to faith, which is styled "the beginning, foundation and root of all justification" ... The **process of justification** is then brought to a close by the baptism of water, inasmuch as **by the grace of this sacrament the catechumen is freed from sin (original and personal) and its punishments**, and is made a child of God. **The same process of justification is repeated in those who by mortal sin have lost their baptismal innocence; with this modification, however, that the Sacrament of Penance replaces baptism.** a <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08573a.htm>

Now, do we teach either of these views? What is the problem with both of these views?

This is a classic trap of Satan, get people believing two wrong views and then to argue those two views against each other. This happens when Protestants and Catholics argue over the Eucharist—the Catholic view is that during the mass Christ presents His sacrifice to the Father to pay for our sins, the Protestant view is He presents His merits to remind the Father that He has already paid for the sins on the Cross. Both miss the point that they are serving a dictator God, with an imposed law, who is the source of inflicted punishment for sin and who must be paid in order not to kill.

This same problem is happening with their argument over justification. They are both built on a legal system of imposed rules with inflicted punishment. The Protestant position grew out of a burdensome



religion in which works weighed down the sinner with penance and some action constantly needing to be done to influence God not to punish. The Protestants took away the sacraments, the works of humans, but did not take away the false law which causes people to think justice is God punishing, thus justification is addressing the punishment problem. Further, the Protestants actually set up a system in which people are told they are set right with God without any internal change in their heart at all, thus they will expect to continue to sin right up until the moment of translation. This is the form of godliness with no power.

The Catholic view realizes a change needs to happen in the person, but teaches that change comes about by **the works of the person and the power of the sacraments of the church in conjunction with faith**. Thus the Catholic view merges justification and sanctification and then adds sacraments and works.

The traditional Protestant view realizes change is part of salvation but separates it from justification and instead calls it sanctification. Whereas, justification is completely a legal process that has no internal change occurring in the believer.

Our view is that the species human was set right (justified) with God in the person of Jesus Christ—by what Jesus accomplished in His humanity. Because of Jesus there is a perfect, sinless human being—a descendant of Adam—who did not need to be delivered from His personal sin, but who by the exercise of His own human brain developed a perfect, sinless human character, thus restoring the species human to God's original intent.

The species was healed, put right, set right, justified first in the person of Jesus by His sinless life, selfless death which destroyed death and brought life and immortality to life, and thus resulted in His resurrection—in a humanity perfected and sinless.

In so doing, He procured the remedy to save all other humans who would give their consent to God so He can heal them.

In our experience we must first partake of Christ, ingest His body which was broken for us—this is symbolic of the truth. Jesus is the Word made flesh, thus by partaking of the words of truth—the truth about God Jesus revealed, the lies of Satan are destroyed and we are won from enmity and distrust to trust. This is justification, our hearts are set right in trust with God again. Romans 4:4 God, who is always truthful acknowledges the truth of this change and recognizes, accounts, declares that we who trust are set right with Him.

Then, in trust, their heart is opened and the Holy Spirit takes what Christ achieved and reproduces it within us. This is symbolically taught by drinking the wine—which is symbolic of the blood, which itself is symbolic of the life of Jesus, which is His perfect sinless character. We actually get a new heart and right spirit, it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me, we become partakers of the divine nature. And with our trust in God and desire to live in harmony with His designs of truth, love



and freedom, we make choices to apply to our lives the truths and principles He reveals to us. This is sanctification.

But all of this is a gift from God, we don't earn it, we don't create it, we don't procure it, we receive it by faith and participate by trust in God. There are not sacraments or works in creating the Remedy, there is human cooperation in accepting and applying it to our lives.

Many commit the error of trying to define minutely the fine points of distinction between justification and sanctification. Into the definitions of these two terms they often bring their own ideas and speculations. Why try to be more minute than is Inspiration on the vital question of righteousness by faith? Why try to work out every minute point, **as if the salvation of the soul depended upon all having exactly your understanding of this matter?** All cannot see in the same line of vision. You are in danger of making a world of an atom, and an atom of a world. {CTr 150.2}

So we believe Christ achieved the remedy to our sinful condition singly and alone without any help from any sinner, or any human institution. He is the head of the human family, species, and is the second Adam. Thus in the person of Jesus humanity is restored to its right place in God's universe. This is the justification or the setting right of the species human. But in doing this He also achieved the remedy that every sinful human being may freely partake and be transformed and eternally saved. But before internal healing happens the sinner must trust God and open the heart to Him. His heart must be set right, i.e. he must exercise trust or faith in God, which is justification.

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, **has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us.** "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isa. 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. ...**By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments.** When we submit ourselves to Christ, **the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

We want parents to awake from their lethargic sleep. Awake and see that at this time you must put on the beautiful robe of Christ's righteousness....**The righteousness of God never covers a soul all polluted with sin.** John says, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Will you let Him take it away? {1SAT 237}

So some review quotes from two weeks ago:



What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ... {FLB 111.2}

The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, is a precious thought. The enemy of God and man is not willing that this truth should be clearly presented; for he knows that if the people receive it fully, his power will be broken. {FLB 111.6}

The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."** Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2} [Where is the righteousness of the law fulfilled? In record books? In courtrooms in heaven? IN THE BELIEVER!]

He would have us comprehend something of His love in giving His Son to die that He might counteract evil, **remove the defiling stains of sin from the workmanship of God, [to what is this referring? Is it not the human being?] and reinstate the lost, elevating and ennobling the soul to its original purity through Christ's imputed righteousness.** TMK 206 **Is this declared in some legal way, is it some application to records or courts in heaven, or is it an actual change happening within the believer being? And what is this healing change accomplished through? The *imputed* righteousness of Christ!**

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us boldness to approach the throne of grace. **By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. [Where is the focus? Where is the change? Is this legal or actual in the believer?] By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him.** [Again, where is the change, where is the impact of the *imputed* righteousness of Christ? This is not legal, the entire legal doctrine of penal substitution taught in Christianity is based on a lie, it is based on the false view of God's law and this



SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, “These people believed...” What does this sentence mean, “The law cannot make anyone alive spiritually”?

Can the law make anyone alive physically?

Can the law make anyone alive in any way?

Then why emphasize “spiritually”?

What does it mean to be dead spiritually?

As a people, we are backsliding from God. The hearts of his professed children are being estranged from him. While they have a name to live, the true, **vital energies of the soul have become spiritually dead..** {RH, July 10, 1879 par. 6}

Those are spiritually dead who profess to worship God while the heart is not in the work. {ST, June 24, 1886 par. 3}

What does it mean to be spiritually dead? To be profess to worship but God, to be involved in church work, but the heart is not in it.

And what is the heart—is it the pump inside the chest?

In my new book, *The God-Shaped Heart* I go into detail describing the difference between the brain, mind and heart. Spiritually speaking, the heart is your true secret self, where you character, desires, motives, inmost personal identity is.

The Brain is the machine, the hardware, the neurons and glia, which are constantly changing based on the operations of the mind.

The mind is the entire software database, including your language, other facts and knowledge and memories, but your heart is a subset of your mind composing your core self.

To be spiritually dead is to have the right facts about God and the right doctrines, but not to be regenerated to have the law of love restored as the motive in the heart, to still be operating upon the principles of fear and selfishness. The spiritually dead are still focused on survival and that is their personal survival and the institutions to which their ego, self-esteem, name and reputation are tied. They may die for their institution, or a certain doctrine, if they have spent enough time associating their personal self with that institution. But their motive is still selfish and thus they are spiritually dead.

To arouse those spiritually dead, to create new tastes, new motives, requires as great an outlay of power as to raise one from physical death. It is indeed giving life to the dead to



convert the sinner from the error of his ways; but our Deliverer is able to do this; for He came to destroy the works of the enemy. And will He not accomplish that which He has pledged himself to perform? {RH, March 12, 1901 par. 16}

MONDAY

What does it mean to be kept under the written law? The lesson suggests a couple of meanings:

1. an alternate way of salvation by keeping the rules—but the Bible makes it clear this is impossible
2. being under its condemnation—read second paragraph, “Under the law...” thoughts?

Do you like the second view? Is there another view?

Yes the written law is a gift to function like a diagnostic instrument and protective hedge and a guidepost. It diagnosis what is wrong to bring us to realize we are dying and need external help, it protects us from further self-injury, and leads us back to Christ who can heal us.

We are not under condemnation because of the written law—we are under condemnation because of the terminal condition with which we were born.

The written law merely diagnosis what is already true in us. This is why Paul writes in Romans 5:12-14

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way **death came to all men**, because all sinned—¹³ **for before the law was given, sin was in the world**. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. ¹⁴ **Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command**, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

From *The Remedy*:

Therefore, the infection of distrust of God—which deformed humanity's heart and mind with selfishness and fear, and which results only in death—infected the human race when Adam accepted Satan's lies about God and broke trust with him. This infection of fear and selfishness is inherited by all human beings, so all are born infected.¹³ This is revealed by the fact that before the written law was given, the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness was already present in the world. But this infection of distrust, fear and selfishness is not diagnosable without the law.¹⁴ Nevertheless, even without being diagnosed as infected with this terminal condition, humans still died, all the way from the time of Adam to Moses—even those who did not break a specific command, like Adam did—revealing that the problem is the infected state of our minds and not a legal issue with God. Adam, the first man, being the conduit through



which the infection entered humanity, also represents the one man who is the conduit of the antidote that cures all those who accept it.

TUESDAY

Did you notice how awkward and difficult it is for those who hold the false human law concept to communicate the goodness of the law. They really work so hard to help people see that God's law is for us, because most react to it as if it is not.

It become so simple when we realize God's law is design law, and that the written law was added as a tool we needed, to diagnose, protect and lead to Christ.

From *The Remedy*:

Before Christ came, we were quarantined by the written law—restrained from continual self-destruction—until Christ procured the only true cure.²⁴ The written law was provided as a safeguard to protect us and lead us to Christ—the Great Physician—so that we might be restored to unity with God by trust in, and partaking of, Christ... Gal 3:23,24

WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph, "Paul's description of the law..." What does Romans 2:4 says brings us to repentance? It is the kindness of God.

Does the law have a negative aspect?

When did Adam run and hide from God before or after the law was given at Sinai?

Why did he run and hide? Where did the condemnation originate? Was it from the written law or did the condemnation originate in Adam's changed condition?

So why was the law added later? Because sin numbs, deadens, warps, hardens and people no longer felt conviction, no longer felt shame, guilt, condemnation, and thus the written law was needed to diagnose those so sin sick they didn't think they were sin sick—but the condemnation is in the condition and existed before the written law was given.

Is what the function of written law negative? If you have a tumor and go into the MRI and it reveals the tumor is that a negative aspect of the MRI? Or is it a redemptive and helpful aspect?

The condemnation comes from the condition itself, the law only diagnoses or exposes or reveals the condition. Thus Jesus said:



“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. ³⁶ But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” Mt 12:33-37

THURSDAY

Read fourth paragraph, “Instead, because the law is a transcript of God’s character...” What does it mean a transcript of God’s character? What are the lessons of this metaphor? What are the limitations of a transcript?

Consider DNA a transcript of a person. Does the DNA transcript reveal things about the person?

Does the DNA transcript let us know beauty of the smile? The reaction of forgiveness when wronged, the kindness in adversity, the depth of love in action?

The law of God is a living law and cannot be truly understood on stone—in fact it was not written on stone until it was no longer written in the hearts and minds of human beings. God’s plan is to restore His design law, His living law, back into you and me where it can be seen in its full active glory!

Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Rom 13:10

FRIDAY

Read third paragraph, “All who did service...” Discuss question 1.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

Sep 5, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

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

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church

12702 9th Street

Garden Grove, CA 92840

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

Phone: (714) 534-1987

Fax: (714) 534-3877

Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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

November 17,18, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr. SDA church in California.



Lesson 8 – From Slaves to Heirs

This lesson title is obviously based on the Memory Text from Galatians 4:7,

“So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.”

What does it mean that we are no longer slaves?

Slaves to what?

Slaves to our sinful behaviors/addictions/bad acts? Or slaves to our sinful nature, our condition of heart and mind?

And what are we heirs to? What do we inherit?

We will try to get some clarity and answer some of those questions as we go through this week’s lesson.

SATURDAY

Young Martin Luther’s experience of being a slave –

“by seeking to obtain pardon for sin and peace through his own works. He led a most rigorous life, endeavoring by fasting, vigils, and scourgings to subdue the evils of his nature, but even this monastic life brought no relief. He shrank from no sacrifice by which he might attain such a purity of heart that would enable him to stand approved before God. He called himself a “pious monk who strictly followed the rules of his order, and yet, found no peace within them...if ever a monk could obtain heaven by his monkish works, I should certainly have been entitled to it.”

But this strategy didn’t work for him...and it still doesn’t work...for anyone.

Does mindset ring true with anyone else here?

I remember growing up...even if we paid lip service to “salvation by faith”, there was always the underlying emphasis on obeying the rules and our behavioral performance; the works had to at least look good from the outside. That sounds a bit like slavery...and it felt a bit like slavery to me.

Apparently, the Galatians were experiencing similar struggles and Paul talks about it in Chapter 3 verses 1-5:



“Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified, and as the only Remedy for our sin-infected minds! 2 I would like to know just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit of love and truth, and experience his healing power, by practicing rituals and observing rules, or was it by understanding and believing the truth that you heard? 3 Are you really so foolish that you think that after experiencing the healing power of the Spirit, which came by trust alone, you can now complete the healing process by your own effort—without the Spirit? 4 Have you really gone so far in the treatment course for nothing? And it will be for nothing if you persist in trying to heal yourselves! 5 Is it because you observe a set of rules that God enlightens your minds with his Spirit and miraculously transforms your characters, or is it because you have been won to trust by the evidence Jesus revealed?”

The Galatians also thought that practicing rituals and observing a set of rules and relying on their own efforts could complete their healing or transform their characters. For Luther, only when he began to understand the truth about salvation in Christ, did he ever start to have any kind of spiritual freedom and hope for his own soul. And based on what I understand now, although his protestations advanced truth from where he started, there was still more truth to be discovered (and there still is! and there will always be more truth to uncover – throughout eternity!), because they still held to the view that God’s law is imposed. God’s true character of love, along with the knowledge that His laws are natural design laws, and the fact that he does not govern his universe in the same way humans - (thank God!) – these are some of THE most freeing and liberating concepts I have learned in this class. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Here is our Memory Text from the Remedy paraphrase,

“Rejoice! You are no longer childlike, needing the supervision of a slave, but are adult children, wise and mature; and as mature children—heirs with Christ of all that is promised!”

What is promised? What have we been told about our inheritance?

- Eternal life
- Kingdom of heaven – the kingdom prepared for us since the creation of the world
- The (new) earth

SUNDAY

Our Condition in Christ

The quarterly asks us – keeping Gal 3:25 in mind, how does Gal 3:26 help us understand what our relationship to the law is, now that we have been “redeemed” by Jesus? Would someone please read Gal 3:25-27 for us?



“Now that trust in God has been restored—and we are set right in heart, mind, and character, and again practice God's methods—we no longer need the law to diagnose our condition or lead us back to God. 26 Through the Remedy established by Jesus Christ you are all loyal children of God, 27 for all of you who have immersed your minds and hearts into the truth of God as revealed by Christ have had your characters changed, and—like a new set of clothing—replaced with the character of Christ.”

The quarterly compares a master's son being under a pedagogue while he was a minor - did anyone else have to look have to look up “pedagogue” or was that just me?

Google defines it as: a teacher, especially a strict or pedantic one...and “pedagogy” is a thing...who knew? Anyway, the quarterly is comparing a minor child under a pedagogue to an immature Christian or unbeliever... and then says that their relationship with the law is **changed** because they are now adult “sons” of God.

Does our relationship with the law change as we mature? Which law...and how?

If our parents have a “law” that we brush our teeth, does our relationship with that law change as we grow up and mature? Why is that?

What is the significance of Paul using the word *sons* instead of the more generic term *children* in this passage?

In that time and culture, the family inheritance was passed on to the male offspring. The phrase “sons of God” also had special meaning and was the specific designation of Israel in the Old Testament, and Paul wanted to highlight that, in Christ, the Gentiles (everyone - all nations, kindred, tongues, and peoples) now enjoy the same special relationship with God that had previously been somewhat exclusive to Israel.

What is it about baptism that makes it such a significant event?

- Is it that the right words were said?
- Is it the depth of the water? Size of the tank?
- Dunked or sprinkled?
- Which denomination?
- Whether the baptizee has accepted and agreed to the appropriate creed or doctrines or fundamental beliefs?

I have a couple of texts that speak to why baptism is a significant event.



Gal 3:27-29 “27 for all of you who **have immersed your minds and hearts into the truth of God as revealed by Christ have had your characters changed**, and—like a new set of clothing—replaced with the character of Christ. 28 Your station on earth is irrelevant: it doesn't matter whether you are Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female—for you are all one in character, method, principle and motive through all that Christ has done. 29 If you are Christlike in heart and mind, then you are one of Abraham's descendants and an heir to all the promises of God.”

Romans 6:3-5 “ 3 Or don't you realize that all of us who were immersed into union with Christ Jesus were immersed into selflessness and have died to self-centeredness? 4 We symbolically demonstrate that we have joined him in dying to self by being buried in water, in order that—just as Jesus rose from the dead, displaying the life-giving glory of the Father—we too may live a new life, displaying God's glorious character. 5 If we have joined him in dying to self, we will absolutely join him in his resurrection and in new life!”

1 Peter 3:21-22 “21 The flood is symbolic of baptism: Just as those who responded to the Spirit in Noah's day and went through the water—safely in the ark—to a new life, those who follow the Spirit go through baptism to a new life in Christ today. This doesn't wash away dirt from the body, but it symbolizes the Spirit's cleansing of the conscience from fear and selfishness. You are healed by the life of Jesus Christ who rose from the dead 22 and is in heaven at God's right hand, directing the Spirit to take his perfect character and reproduce it in you. All heavenly intelligences recognize him as worthy and sovereign, and he is directing all the agencies of heaven for your healing.”

So what is it that makes baptism such a significant event?

There is a Frank J. Matera quote in the 3rd paragraph that says:

“Paul views baptism as the moment when Christ, like a garment, envelops the believer. Although he does not employ the term, Paul is describing the righteousness which is conferred (bestowed/granted/given/imparted) upon believers.”

What do you think about that...what is Paul really describing here?

Is this simply a legal transaction, a declaration of something that's actually not true?

Or does this garment envelop the believer...is this righteousness conferred upon believers...because an actual change has taken place, because a heart that was at enmity toward God has been transformed to a heart that trusts God and has been...set right!

One of the founders of our church describes this covering garment or robe like this:



“Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God’s presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul...This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us...Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God “was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.” Sin is defined to be “the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. [which law? what are the requirements of the law?] By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God’s commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.”

Pink box: “Dwell on the thought that what is true of Christ is also true of us. How should this amazing truth affect every aspect of our existence?”

MONDAY

Enslaved to Elementary Principles

So in the first part of Galatians chapter 4, Paul elaborates on the metaphor of a young heir who is a master of his father’s estate by title, but as a minor he is required to be under the supervision of guardians and managers until he reaches maturity and “is little more than a slave in practice.” The quarterly asks how this story should help clarify what the role of the law should be in our lives now that we are in Christ?

We just talked about this a bit in terms of the tooth brushing law. We know that God’s laws do not change, but as we grow up and mature, does the role of God’s law in our lives change? How?

When we come to realize God’s law is not like man’s law, it is not a list of imposed rules, that God’s laws are the protocols upon which reality works and upon which life is constructed to operate, and that deviations are destructive to the deviant...then we come to an understanding of the underlying principles behind the laws, we are in agreement with them, and we become an active participant in God’s purposes. I think the role of the law - particularly the written/moral law - in our lives should continue to be a diagnostic instrument to highlight aspects of our character that still need healing. And when we fully understand the natural laws we have highlighted in this class, we can use them to predict the future. Has anyone here been able to do that? Gravity? Plastic bag/respiration? Exertion? Liberty?

OK, back to Paul’s child heir metaphor in Gal. 4:1-7 –



“I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, 2 but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. 3 In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the **[elementary principles]** of the world. 4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.”

What are these “elementary principles” of the world that enslave us as children?

Paul’s relates humanity’s status prior to the coming of Christ to the “minor” in the above text, who owns everything but is in effect no different than a slave. There is some theological dispute, but most agree that Paul is equating this phrase “elementary principles” to the rudimentary principles and practices of religious life...and how these symbolic ceremonies and rituals and practices have repeatedly become a stumbling block for God’s people - the Israelites, the Jews in Christ’s day, then with the Galatians, and how about with many religious folks today?

Reading these same verses in the Remedy shed some light for me:

1 What I am trying to explain to you is that as long as the heir remains immature, they are really no different from a slave, because they need someone to supervise their behavior, make their decisions, and guide their actions—even though they own the entire estate. 2 They don’t have self-governance, so they need the guardians and trustees to protect them from their immature self until such time as they can handle their own affairs. 3 Likewise, when we were childlike in character and immature in our thinking, we had no self-control and were slaves to selfish impulses. 4 But when the time was right, God intervened and sent his Son—born of a sin-infected human mother, as a real human baby, with a humanity weakened by the law of sin and death— 5 in order to purify, cleanse and purge humanity from the infection of selfishness and fear. He did this in order to heal and restore those diagnosed as “terminal” by the written law, so that we might receive all the blessings of sons and daughters of God. 6 Because we are children of God, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts to restore Christlikeness of character so that we genuinely call out to God, "Daddy, Father!" 7 Rejoice! You are no longer childlike, needing the supervision of a slave, but are adult children, wise and mature; and as mature children—heirs with Christ of all that is promised!



So these ceremonial laws and practices were only symbols - mere shadows of what was to come - they were always meant to point to Christ, and never intended to take his place. Paul is pointing out how immature it was for the Galatians to go back now and try to regulate their lives around these rules and rituals instead of around Christ - when they were able to experience the real thing! He wanted them to grow and progress from drinking milk to eating solid food like mature Christians who are acquainted with the ways of righteousness (Heb 5:11).

[Optional] Pink box question: Can it be argued that the more you grow and mature spiritually, the more childlike your faith will be?

TUESDAY

God Sent Forth His Son

Galatians 4:4 says:

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”

Have you ever thought about why that time was just the right time?
What was going on in the world that made it just the right time?

From a historical and cultural perspective, that time frame was known as the *Pax Romana*, or the Roman Peace - a 200-year period of relative stability and peace all across the Roman empire. Rome's conquest of the Mediterranean world brought peace, a common language, favorable means of travel, and a common culture that helped to facilitate the rapid spread of the gospel in the early Christian church.

Is there any doubt that the God of the universe, the God of infinite wisdom, would choose the exact right, perfect time to intervene in human history with the promised Messiah?

What does it mean when the text says Jesus was “born under law”?

The text says it points not only to his Jewish heritage, but also to the fact that he bore our condemnation...what does that mean? The law of sin and death, he was born with our condition - a selfish, carnal nature.

The 2nd paragraph in Monday's lesson equates God sending forth his son with God taking the initiative in our salvation...and it certainly was the most significant, tangible evidence of God taking



the initiative in our salvation, but it certainly was not His first time or the initial initiative taken on our behalf. When did he **first** take the initiative in our salvation? According to Isaiah, Matthew, Luke, Acts, Hebrews, and Revelation...He is the lamb slain from the foundations of the world. Adam and Eve get the promise of a redeemer immediately after eating the fruit in Eden...then basically the entire Old Testament is a series of examples of God taking the initiative in our salvation, and intervening over and over to keep open the avenue for the Messiah to come.

The last paragraph on Tuesday's lesson was interesting to me...I almost felt like the author was experiencing an internal struggle between some healing model/design law concepts and some penal substitution/imposed law concepts. "It was necessary for Christ to assume our humanity because we could not save ourselves"...100% true.

"By uniting His divine nature with our fallen human nature, Christ legally qualified to be our Substitute, Savior, and High Priest"

Did he really need **legal** qualifications?

"As the second Adam, He came to reclaim all that the first Adam had lost by his disobedience" (Rom. 5:12-21)"

I might would reword the last phrase to 'by his distrust, by the damage he did to his heart, mind and character'... rather than by his disobedience, because the implied focus is on behavior alone. "By His obedience He perfectly fulfilled the law's demands, thus redeeming Adam's tragic failure."

What are the law's demands and how did he perfectly fulfill it?

One of this class' favorite quotes from the Desire of Ages:

"The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character" [*Why?? Why does the law of respiration require that we breathe? Because that is how life was designed to operate!*] "and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and **developed** a perfect character." [*What is maybe the only thing God cannot create? Character! It must be wrought out, developed, refined, and perfected through the exercise of your free will....so although Christ was created sinless, he had to mature and develop his perfect character.*]

"These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this,



Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can 'be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.'

Back to the quarterly:

"And by His death on the cross, He met the justice of the law, which required the death of the sinner, thus gaining the right to redeem all who come to Him in true faith and surrender."

Does the "justice of the law" require the death of the sinner?

What does the "justice of the law" require?

The just thing, the right thing to do under the law of love...is to heal and restore the sinner back to his original design!

WEDNESDAY

The Privileges of Adoption

Wednesday's lesson starts out by digging into Paul's statement that Christ has "redeemed" or bought back or ransomed those who were "under the law". It correctly defines "ransom" as the price paid to secure the freedom of a hostage or a slave. It also correctly asks the question, "from what do we need to be freed?" and does quite a good job at answering that question, but still reveals some imposed law/penal views. So what do we need to be redeemed or ransomed from - what is holding us captive?

1. Satan's lies about God we have believed that keep us from knowing and trusting God, and
2. Our sinful, selfish nature.

What then is the price necessary to free us?

The truth that will destroy the lies and free our minds to trust, and a new perfect nature/character, and Jesus provides both and both could only be achieved by His sinless life, selfless death and resurrection!

This is what Christ came to do - to reveal the father and His character - to make him known - in order to win us back to trust...and to develop a perfect character in his humanity, which he offers as a free gift to all who are willing to receive it.

To whom was this price paid...the judge?



An angry God?

No...To us! *We* are the ones who needed the truth and we are the ones who needed a new nature!

The quarterly points out that Paul's use of the word adoption is unique - he is the only New Testament author to use it, and it talks about this word being more vivid and descriptive of Christ accomplished for us, than even the word salvation.

Has anyone here experienced adoption - either by being adopted or by adopting a child? Hopefully that's not too personal a question. I am genuinely in awe of folks who foster and adopt in this world, and I believe it is such a beautiful representation of how we are all grafted into the family of God. Apparently, adoption was a well-known legal procedure at that time in the Greco-Roman world, and several roman emperors during Paul's life used adoption as their means of choosing a successor when they had no legal heir. There are many real rights and privileges guaranteed through adoption – and from those I know who have participated in adoption, there is literally no difference in how an adopted versus a naturally born child is loved and accepted as part of the family. So, if we broken folks can manage to achieve that here on an earthly level...how much better to is the experience of divine adoption as children of God and co-heirs with Christ.

This is a great quote from Friday's lesson talking about our adoption:

“In the council of heaven, provision was made that men, though transgressors, should not perish in their disobedience, but, through faith in Christ as their substitute and surety, might become the elect of God predestined unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will. God wills that all men should be saved; for ample provision has been made, in giving His only-begotten Son to pay man's ransom. Those who perish will perish because they refuse to be adopted as children of God through Christ Jesus.”

The box at the bottom of Wednesday's lesson talks about Paul's use of the word Abba - the intimate term children call their daddys - and asks if you enjoy that kind of intimate closeness to God in your own life? If not, what's the problem? What typically keeps folks from experiencing this type of an intimate, close relationship with God?

Thursday

Why Turn Back to Slavery?



Gal 4:8-11 from the Remedy:

“In the past, before you knew God as revealed by Jesus, your minds were held in the bondage of fear and superstition by gods of your own darkened imaginations. 9 But now that you have come to know God as revealed by Jesus (or, more importantly, now that Christlike character has been developing within you, and you are known as God's children), how could you possibly return to the dark, powerless, destructive beliefs and practices of your former lives? Do you wish to have your minds destroyed and be enslaved by superstition and ignorance all over again? 10 You are actually observing ceremonial holidays as if somehow such observances could heal the mind, remove selfishness and guilt, or restore the character to Christlikeness. 11 I can hardly believe it! I am beginning to wonder whether all my time with you has been wasted.”

The 2nd paragraph of Thursday's lesson is interesting, and I picked up on some defensiveness about whether sabbath observance might be included in Paul's list of ceremonial practices and holidays.

"Many have interpreted Paul's reference to "days and months and seasons and years" as an objection not merely against ceremonial laws but against the Sabbath, as well. Such an interpretation, however, goes beyond the evidence. Does it?

For starters, if Paul really wanted to single out the Sabbath and other specific Jewish practices, it is clear that he easily could have identified them by name. Second, Paul makes it clear that whatever it is the Galatians are doing, it has led them from freedom in Christ to bondage.

“If observance of the seventh-day Sabbath subjects a man to bondage, it must be that the Creator Himself entered into bondage when He observed the world's first Sabbath!” — The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 967.

Also, why would Jesus not only have kept the Sabbath but taught others how to keep it, if its proper observance were in any way depriving people of the freedom that they have in Him?

Were there folks in Israel who were “keeping the Sabbath” but were still kept in bondage?

Isa 1 says:

“Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations— I cannot bear your worthless assemblies. Your New Moon feasts and your



appointed festivals I hate with all my being. They have become a burden to me. I am weary of bearing them.”

Were there folks in Christ’s day who were “keeping the Sabbath” and were still in bondage?

They wanted to stone Christ for the way he kept the sabbath, because he broke all their rules...and they did eventually kill the Lord of the Sabbath but wanted his body down off the cross so they could “keep the Sabbath.”

Are there folks today who are “keeping the Sabbath” in ways that are leading them from freedom in Christ toward bondage?



The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 9 3Q 2017

Paul's Pastoral Appeal

SABBATH

Read the first paragraph, “As we’ve seen...” Does correct doctrine matter? Yes! Why?

What is the importance of correct doctrine?

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against **the knowledge of God**, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2Cor 10:3-5

What is the central issue in the war between good and evil?

The truth about God—His character and methods of love, truth and freedom, thus doctrine is important AS it reveals truth about God that ultimately wins us back to trust in God!

What did the war start over in heaven?

How did Satan get Adam and Eve to rebel? What issue?

Let's ask some clarifying questions:

- What does it mean to be saved? Does it mean a legal declaration or a restoration to righteousness, an actual regeneration of heart, mind, character to be like Christ, which results in immortality?
- Can a person be saved who holds to fear, selfishness and deceit? Why not?
 - It would be like asking can a person be healed who insists on ingesting cyanide, or smoking, etc. why can't they be healed?
- Can a person claim to accept the legal payment of Jesus but still prefer the methods of coercion, fear, selfishness? Are such persons saved?
 - Why not?—it would be like what they did to George Washington—when he had pneumonia the doctors said they were going to heal him and what did they do? They bled about half his body blood to get rid of the evil humors—the doctors claimed to have the remedy, but they didn't in fact what they did was make his condition worse. This is what happens in the false legal model. The pastors and theology professors who hold it are like the doctors treating George Washington—those doctors really wanted to cure Washington, they were doing what they thought was right, but in reality it was



NOT right and thus they harmed while trying to do good. This is what the legal penal model of salvation does, harms while claiming to do good.

- Can a person have their characters renewed such that selfishness is replaced with other-centered love, but have never heard the message of Scripture? (Rom 2:12-14)
- Can a person be saved while rejecting the methods of God?
- Can a person be saved who doesn't worship on Sabbath?
 - Now remember we are talking about the importance of right doctrine, what is its importance—to bring us back to a trust relationship with God such that we are renewed in heart to be like Jesus—can that happen for people who don't worship on Sabbath?
- Can a person be saved who is never baptized by water?
- Can a person be saved who never joins a Christian church?
- Can a person be saved who believes in immortality of the soul?
- Can a person be saved who believes in eternal burning hell?
- Can a person be saved who doesn't believe in the Trinity?
- Can a person be saved who doesn't believe in six days of creation?
- Can a person be saved who doesn't partake communion or practice foot-washing ceremony?
- Can a person be saved who rejects love, truth, freedom, who values lies, coercion, selfishness—regardless of what religion they are, or what blood payments they claim?

What do we learn from this? What is the importance of doctrine?

Doctrines are important as they enlighten and inform us of reality—which originates and centers upon God, who is the source of reality—the Creator. If we have doctrines that are disconnected from God, that stand alone as tests of orthodoxy, then we actually obstruct the saving truth that Christ came to bring.

So, let's examine some doctrines and ask what do they tell us about God?

1. Holy Scriptures—the doctrine that the Old and New Testaments are inspired by God and contain the information necessary for salvation.
 - What does this doctrine tell us about God?
 - God communicates with us, provides us with evidence to refute the lies told about Him, as well as explanation of our circumstance, how reality works, His plan to heal and fix what is wrong with us and how we can cooperate with Him for salvation. Which says what about God?
 - Why would God take the time to explain things to us?
 - Does this mean God wants our understanding and agreement?
 - What does this say about God? What kind of God wants agreement?
 - Why didn't God just say get in line and obey or else?
 - Helpful—ideas, truths, wisdom, primarily about God, His character, design, and methods in contrast to Satan and his methods are communicated. The ideas and truths are what is important, the specific words are not special, magic, inspired and



thus the Greek and Hebrew can be replaced with English or other languages as long as the truths are retained.

- Harmful—words are inspired and must be taken literally; it is instruction manual of deeds to be done and sins to be shunned. We are not to ask questions or think, merely to believe and do what it says. Only King James is acceptable.

2. Trinity

- Helpful—God is love, love is other-centered, outward moving. The smallest number that exists to have genuine other centered love is three. Love cannot exist in a singularity, two can be narcissistically reinforcing, but three requires self-sacrifice for the other two. God is love and the Trinity is evidence of this reality. All three are equal in character, ability, eternity.
- Harmful—There is a hierarchical difference between the Godhead, or there is no Trinity. One being dominates and governs all other beings.

3. Creation

- Helpful—God is Creator and designed life to operate in harmony with His own character of love. We see love in nature in all the protocols of giving upon which life is constructed. Yet all nature groans under the weight of sin and thus we see disease and defect, not of God's design or origin, but due to violations of God's design and all such defects will one day be eliminated by God.
- Harmful—God didn't create directly in six literal days but used evolutionary forces over millions of years with the strong killing the weak to eventually evolve humans to the point we are today. What kind of being would God be if this were true?
 - Certain Christians hold to this view because they still cling to imposed law models of right and wrong. Thus they have no problem with a god who is the source of death.

4. Nature of Man

- What does it say about God that we have freedom to choose?
- What does our ability to love, to procreate say about God?
- What about or mortality—what does it say about God?
- Helpful—man was created mortal with conditional immortality pending development of a perfect sinless character of love
- Harmful—man was created immortal unconditionally—what would it say about God if God created human beings immortal in Eden—He either doesn't have foreknowledge (or even good anticipatory skills), or is sadistic and unloving

5. Great Controversy

- What kind of a God would allow questions to arise and give liberty to rebel?

6. Life, Death, Resurrection of Christ

- What is revealed about God in the life of Jesus?
- Helpful—Jesus partook of humanity in order to reveal the truth that destroys Satan's lies and wins us to trust, destroy the infection of fear and selfishness, develop a perfect human character by restoring God's design (law) of love into the species human and thereby carry humanity to perfection and becoming the source of salvation for all who trust and obey Him. All of this in accordance with God's



will. God was in the Son reconciling the world to himself.

- Harmful—God was angry His law was broken and was required by law to kill the breakers of His law, so Jesus came in order for God to kill Him so that the legal penalty could be paid and God wouldn't have to kill us. Jesus now stands between us and God working to keep God from killing us.

7. Baptism

- Helpful—water baptism is a symbol of the immersion of the heart, mind, character into God—where fear and selfishness, sin, guilt, shame are washed away and we are renewed to be like Christ by the cleansing waves of truth and love emanating from God, revealed and fulfilled in Christ and distributed by the Holy Spirit
- Harmful—water baptism is a legal requirement and the water baptism itself provides saving benefit

8. Communion

- Helpful—bread and wine are reminders to us of Christ and what He provides for our salvation, healing, nurturing and growth. Just as bread and wine provide nutrients to the body which become part of the cells of our bodies, so Jesus is the Word made flesh, the source of all truth. As we ingest into our minds the truth it dispels the lies and becomes the building blocks of ideas, concepts, perspectives, beliefs that form our mindsets and result in our hearts moving from distrust of God to trust. When we trust God we open the heart and God pours His love into our hearts, this is symbolized by the wine, which is the blood, which is the life, which is the perfect character of Christ, which we receive as a gift and we actually experience new motives, desires, in harmony with God.
 - The bread and wine symbol is to be more than a ceremony but to remind us just as our body needs daily nutrition by ingesting bread and wine so our minds/hearts need daily nutrition by ingesting the truth and love that comes from Jesus. So at every meal we are to be reminded of and partake of Jesus!
- Harmful—the bread and wine are either magical or legal, they magically transform to the literal flesh and blood of Jesus and by taking them they magically do something to make us acceptable to God; or they are a legal requirements that we must partake in order for Jesus to go to the Father in our behalf and pay the legal payment to God so God won't punish us.

9. Law of God

- Helpful—God's laws are design protocols upon which life is constructed, deviations are destructive to the deviant. God has been working through Christ to restore humanity back into harmony with God and His design (law). God like a loving parent, added laws (10 Commandments, Levitical laws) to educate, diagnose, protect, and lead, but never as a means of salvation i.e. healing because the law cannot fix what is wrong.
- Harmful—God's law functions no differently that human law, a system of imposed rules requiring legal adjudication and infliction of imposed punishments. Therefore God is the righteous judge who hold legal court and investigates records to determine guilt, innocence and length of punishment and then God uses His power



to inflict pain, suffering and death on the legally guilty.

10. Sabbath

- Helpful—Sabbath is a **sign**, an evidence, a proof of God's character of love, created in the context of an assault on His right to rule—rather than using power to force His way, God created a day for freedom to think. The Sabbath is evidence of design law, creation, how reality is built to operate. And all who model themselves after God and Christ present the truth in love and leave others free—which is what the Sabbath evidences.
- Harmful—the Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience, just observing this day as a weekly religious day of observance makes one right with God, and working on this day ensures one is condemned to hell.

11. Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary

- Helpful—The entire OT sanctuary system of rituals and rites were symbolic representations of God's plan, through Christ, to heal and restore human beings back into His original perfection. Thus Christ is in heaven directing all the agencies at His disposal to heal and cleanse the Spirit temple from sinfulness
- Harmful—There is a building in heaven in which Jesus presents blood, smoke and His sacrifice to the Father pleading the Father not to hurt us. In this process records of bad deeds are being removed from record books in heaven or amounts of time of inflicted pain and suffering in the fires of hell are being registered against those who have not accepted Jesus' legal payment for their sins

Do we understand all doctrine is only important as it informs us of reality—of who God is, how His designs (laws) work, what happens when we break His designs (laws) and how God through Christ works to fix (save/heal) His creation and how we can participate in His healing plan?

SUNDAY

The lesson points us to Galatians 4:12-20. Would someone read these verses?

I plead with you, brothers, become like me, for I became like you. You have done me no wrong. ¹³ As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. ¹⁴ Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. ¹⁵ What has happened to all your joy? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶ Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth? ¹⁷ Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may be zealous for them. ¹⁸ It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always and not just when I am with you. ¹⁹ My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, ²⁰ how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!



What is Paul's concern? What did Paul want to see happen as a result of his labor for them? "Christ is formed in you!"

The lesson rightly points out in the last paragraph, "To be a follower of Christ is more than just the profession of faith; it involves a radical transformation into the likeness of Christ."

Is this radical transformation a legal event, or a healing action?

This is genuine salvation, being reborn, regenerated, etc. all the descriptions of Scripture are the same.

But it is interesting—we received an email this week from a person who just read the document put out 7 years ago after we met with some of the local theology professors. Do you remember? They wanted to know if we had a response. My response is *The God-Shaped Heart*. But, to sum up their position they claimed that while our healing view is taught in Scripture, it is only one metaphor amongst many, such as legal, ransom, lost and found and others. And that their view is much richer and deeper because they include all the metaphors while we emphasize only one.

Do you see what they have just done? Metaphor is only metaphor as long as it is directly tied to some reality. If there is no reality to which it is tied it is no longer metaphor but fantasy.

The reality of Scripture is healing, renewal, regeneration into Christlikeness. The metaphors of Scripture all point to this reality. When they say the healing view is metaphor they have removed the reality and thus they are no longer teaching truth but fantasy.

This is the exact same problem Paul was dealing with in Galatia. Paul has real concerns that his work to bring them the healing remedy of Jesus, which when partaken results in this genuine transformation of the inner person, is being interfered with and perhaps will be obstructed. What is it that Paul fears will prevent the Galatians from experiencing this regeneration into Christlikeness?

Paul's very next words tells us what the false teachers were doing to obstruct the healing truth: "Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says?" (Gal 4:21).

A legal theology was being introduced and Paul was concerned that such a theology would prevent them from experiencing Christ within. And Paul was right, this is exactly what has happened to Christianity. The human law concept infected the church and salvation has been corrupted into a legal process rather than a healing one.

Sadly, we are still fighting this same battle today!



MONDAY

The lesson points out that to other churches (Corinth etc.) Paul at times challenged them to imitate his behavior, but with the Galatians he instead challenged them to become like him.

What is the point Paul is trying to make?

Is there a difference in behaving and becoming? What is the difference?

To what does Paul want them to become?

The lesson states, “Paul is referring to his experience as a Christian, a foundation that rests on Christ alone, a faith that trusts in what Christ has done for him and not in his works of the law.”

What is the lesson emphasizing? What is the critical difference between works of the law and what Paul is calling for them to achieve?

The lesson rightly points out that Paul is calling for them to trust—what is the natural state of the sinful heart toward God? Enmity—one of distrust of God.

Thus, Paul is calling for them to experience not a mere behavior change, but a heart change, to be transformed from distrust of God to trust in God—this is what he describes about Abraham and it is called? Justification—the change of heart from distrust to trust is the putting right of a soul with God again.

Paul is telling them that this cannot be accomplished by legal acts or legal declarations, but only by an actual change within their inner being.

Thus, Paul is warning the Galatians to be ware of theologians who come along and say that salvation is a legal process, one of law, and justification is a legal declaration. Such a doctrine will obstruct them from experiencing what he has worked to achieve, Christ within. To experience Christ within, the heart must be changed from distrust to trust, and the law cannot achieve this.

Thus, today Christianity is still struggling with what Paul warned the Galatians about, falling into a false legal construct of sin and salvation and promoting a legal declarative salvation, rather than the genuine renewal of heart.

And this is why addictions, pornography, teen pregnancy, spouse and child abuse rates are no different in Christian homes than non Christian homes, because they have a form of godliness but no power—because as the Bible says the law is powerless to save and heal and much of Christianity is focused on legal solutions. The healing truth is not legal, it is experiential—a real trust relationship with a God



who loves and who will indwell, heal, restore, cleanse, free from guilt, free from shame, instill new motives, desires and principles in all who trust Him!

TUESDAY

The lesson talks about how Paul not only challenged the Galatians to become like him in internal change from distrust to trust with the transformation of character that follows, but also points out that Paul became like the Galatians in that he stopped all the Jewish ceremonial law requirements and lived without those symbolic rules.

Read last paragraph, “Although contextualization is not always easy...” What is the core of the gospel that cannot be changed?

- God’s design laws of love, truth, freedom, worship, health, physics etc.
- Salvation is genuine trust in God which results in being renewed in heart to live like God designed life to operate, selfless love for God and others

What things can be contextualized?

- Religious ceremonies (circumcision, baptism, communion, weddings, funerals, Sabbath observance, church liturgy)
- Music
- Dress
- Diet
- Church organization
- Ordination
- Gender roles in the church
- Use of alcohol

But what about these can they be contextualized?

- Polygamy
- Slavery
- Use of drugs

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about Paul’s physical health and the care he received at Galatia.

Why didn’t the Galatians reject Paul when he had health problems? Weren’t health problems frequently seen as a curse from God?

Why did God not provide miraculous healing to Paul?



In Scripture are miracles usually provided for the benefit of the strong in faith, or are they provided for those who need their faith strengthened?

- Visions of Pharaoh interpreted by Joseph
- Gideon and the fleece
- Elijah calling for the drought
- Elijah calling fire down from heaven
- Elisha raising the axe head
- Elisha's servant seeing the angel army
- Fiery furnace deliverance
- Daniel and Lion's den
- Jesus healing people
- Lazarus being raised from the dead
- The Apostles healing people
- Peter walking out of prison

Were these miracles primarily for those through whom the miracles were performed, for those with strong faith, or for those who needed their faith strengthened?

So, why did Paul not get a miracle? Paul didn't need a miracle and because God's grace, God's power to heal hearts and minds, which is the primary purpose on earth now, was made more powerfully manifest in Paul in Paul's infirmity. And perhaps, given Paul's history of Phariseism, this was permitted as therapeutic for Paul, a constant reminder that his strength was always in God and not in Himself—a protection against the encroachment of any pride.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The expression..." Have you ever had the experience of speaking the truth to someone who doesn't want to hear it?

When do we speak the truth and when do we stay silent?

Jesus said to disciples he had much to tell them but they couldn't bear it at that time.

Is there only one truth or are there many truths?

Is truth dependent upon the developmental level of the person?

Is it true to a small child that they must brush their teeth or else they will get in trouble with their parent? But is that really true?

How many so-called truths do people hold about God that are like this, only true because of their level of understanding, but in eternal reality not true?



Was it true that the Law of Moses called for the stoning of a person who commits adultery? Was it true that stoning the woman caught in adultery and thrown down before Jesus would have been against God's will? How can both be true?

Context—why was it true in Moses' day, but not true in Christ's day?

Truth is unfolding, our capacity to understand truth and comprehend it increases as we utilize our ability to understand and assimilate truth, and as a species truth slowly is assimilated, but typically new truth is resisted and fought against by the establishment:

- Most medical advances met with opposition by those in authority
 - washing of hands before surgery
 - germ theory and sterilization of equipment
- Religious truth typically meets with opposition
 - Galileo and earth revolving around the sun
 - The truth about God's design law versus imposed law

Imagine you could travel back in time to the 14th century and bubonic plague was ravaging the land. You know that this is caused by a bacterial infection spread by fleas. Both the religious and medical leaders taught the people this was punishment from God, it was evil due to sin.

What do you think would happen if you began to try and teach people there were invisible living organisms that were infecting their bodies causing this illness that you could prevent by good hygiene and flea control?

Do you think the church leadership would have been relieved to hear that God was not punishing the people? Would this truth have been immediately embraced? Why not? What would cause people to hold to the lie?

Pride, power, authority and a preconceived system of beliefs.

Do we struggle with the same thing today?

Russell mentioned to me recently that there are four stages to acceptance of new truth:

- Truth is initially rejected or ignored
- Then it is ridiculed or mocked
- Then it is fought against, attacked, lectured against
- Then it is accepted

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

Sep 5, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

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

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church

12702 9th Street

Garden Grove, CA 92840

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

Phone: (714) 534-1987

Fax: (714) 534-3877

Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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

November 17,18, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr. SDA church in California.



2017 Q3 Lesson 10: The Two Covenants

Getting Windows Ready - Don't Turn Off Your Computer

Getting Christians Ready - Don't Turn Off Your Mind

“The life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God who loves me and gave himself for me.”
Galatians 2:20

“As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command, may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings.” COL 333

Memory Verse: “But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.” Galatians 4:26 NIV

Things I do not like to think about:

- The Movie “Titanic”
- Friend watching the movie “A Cry in the Dark”
Story of the Chamberlains experience after a dingo stole their baby out of the camping tent
“Don't leave your baby”
- Certain Bible passages I do not like to read:
Genesis 3
2 Samuel 11 - David and Bathsheba
Genesis 16 - Abram, Sara & Hagar

Read Galatians 4:21 - 31 (the passage for this week) What prompted Paul to write the letter to the Galatian churches?

- The abandonment of the “gospel” by the Galatian believers
- Letter organization
Angst over believers choosing a different gospel
Paul's History
Persecutor of Christ
Conversion
Sequestration in Arabia to be taught by the Holy Spirit
Trip to Jerusalem to confer with Peter & James
Council in Jerusalem confirming his mission to the Gentiles
Opposition of Peter's hypocrisy
Restoration of unity with God is by trusting God and not by trying to do some specific task or “works”
The life I now live is by trusting Christ
Galatians 2:20
How did the Galatians first come to God: by trust. ----- Now what has



happened

This is just how it was with Abraham

Galatians 3:6 “Consider the experience of Abraham; as the scripture says, "He believed God, and because of his faith God accepted him as righteous."”

Christ redeemed us from the natural consequences of lawlessness

The law was given to identify sin and death

Prior to our trusting God, the law was a guardian and tutor to bring us to God
Those who trust God are truly Abraham’s descendants

Sonship by adoption vs foreigners

(last week) the appeal of a pastor with a desire for his children

This week an allegory of two covenants

SABBATH

The Two Covenants

First paragraph begins with a discussion of how people have misunderstood the two covenants we are talking about today: Sinai and Abraham

Second paragraph: “The legalism that Paul was confronting in Galatia was a perversion, not just of Christianity but of the Old Testament itself.”

SUNDAY

Covenant Basics

Covenant - definition

“Various agreements into which God has, from time to time, entered with men - Noah, Abraham, and Israel for example.

“New Covenant” - Jeremiah 31:33, Hebrews 8:8-13

Human covenant

Between equals

Imposed by superior on an inferior

How many covenants did God make with humans?

More than 12, depending on how strict you want to define covenant

Covenants as **promises** made in the vernacular / language of human contracts / promises.

How you read the covenants is largely understood by which lense you see God and His dealings with His creation.



(How you see God also has a great influence by which you view God: as benevolent, stern, judgmental, gracious, loving being.)

How you see God determines whether you need a potion (“Grace”) applied to you (with a paint brush or roller to cover or hide you) or you need a gracious being as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe who is reconciling you to Himself by His strength.

“When that day comes, you will ask him in my name; and I do not say that I will ask him on your behalf, for the Father himself loves you. He loves you because you love me and have believed that I came from God.” John 16:26, 27

Biblical covenants

KJV - 272 hits (Study Guide states nearly 300 uses of the Hebrew word)

first listed is with Noah - Genesis 6:18

Second is listed in Genesis 9:9

Made with Noah, all humans, animals and every living creature.

Promise that there would never be an all encompassing flood again.

Gave a token of the covenant: the rainbow

Noah did not have to do anything to make the covenant happen.

How did Noah keep the first two covenants?

The deliverance from the flood

The promise of no new flood

Bottom paragraph: Is a description of imposed vs design law paradigm. Which way would you have written this?

MONDAY

The Abrahamic Covenant

The first covenant God made with Abram was a promise of blessings if Abraham would leave and go

The second covenant . . .for all the land of Palestine to be given to Abram’s descendants (Gen 15:18)
It was sealed in a manner typical of contracts at that time in that region. Yet, it was more a promise on God’s part than an agreement on Abram’s part.

It was ten years later that Abram and Sarah hatched the plan for Hagar to have a son for the family: again typical for the customs of the day in that region.

Abram and Sarah were doing what was the common practice for lineage and inheritance in their day and age.



TUESDAY

Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar

Read the last sentence of the 3rd paragraph.

“Had Abraham trusted in what God had promised him instead of letting the circumstances overcome that trust, none of this would have happened, and a lot of grief would have been avoided.”

How do we know when to choose a solution or not?

Proverbs 3:5 , 6 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the Lord in everything you do, and he will show you the right way.”

Why are certain people included in the Bible narrative? Why are certain people or people groups not included in the Bible narrative?

Do you ever feel like your life is meaningless in spite of faithful service to God?

Let’s talk briefly about people that could be spoken more about. People complain that certain peoples are not included in the Bible. China, Northern Europe, etc.

Many people are mentioned in the Bible and then we never hear about anything else they did. Sometimes even their names are not known.

1 Kings 19:18 “7000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

The “woman at the well”

Some we know their name and still don’t know much about them: **Keturah.**

In the last paragraph of Tuesday’s lesson it lists Hebrews 11:11, 12. Read this passage. . .

“It was faith that made Abraham able to become a father, even though he was too old and Sarah herself could not have children. He trusted God to keep his promise. Though Abraham was practically dead, from this one man came as many descendants as there are stars in the sky, as many as the numberless grains of sand on the seashore.”

What do you know about Abraham’s vitality? How many sons did Abraham have?

8: Ishmael, Isaac, plus the six sons of Keturah (Genesis 25:1)

One of the sons was Midian. Who were the Midianites? Do you know any stories of the Midianites?



Who was Joseph sold to when he was sent to Egypt as a slave? Where did Moses flee to when he was escaping from the consequences of Pharaoh?

Who was Moses' father-in-law?

Jethro

The priest of Midian (Exodus 3:1)

Where did Midian live?

Who solicited Balaam to curse Israel? (Numbers 22:7)

Who were the ones who led the Children of Israel into immoral behavior on the very threshold of Canaan? (Numbers 25)

Who did Gideon defeat?

Why were they warring against Israel?

What is the life-cycle and trajectory of Midian?

- one of the sons of Abraham
- this family and subsequently his family grew up in a God-fearing and worshiping family was circumcised with all of the other members of the family and staff
- Had a priest who was a worshiper of the true God
- became further and further away from the true God to the point they were worshiping immorally and induced the Children of Israel to do the same (the whole story of Peor)
- Eventually became blood enemies of their cousins and warred with them and subdued them, stealing their food / crops to the point of starvation (where / why was Gideon when the angel of the Lord appeared to him)

There has been a great deal of criticism of the path that God guided the Children of Israel in the Old Testament

- The purging of the land from idolatry
- The separation from intermarriage with Gentile neighbors
- The strange ceremonial laws
- circumcision of the males
- To what purpose were all these "laws" made?
 - Natural law
 - there were some health benefits to some of the restrictions
 - Preservation of the progenitors of the Anointed One to come.
 - Encourage faithfulness to righteousness

What was the purpose for the Children of Israel to be a separate people? Why is their story told and not someone else? Are they more important in God's eyes than other national groups?

- They were the keepers of His law and commands
- They were the progenitors of the Promised Anointed One



- They were to tell others of God
- They are only important when they are fulfilling the purpose for which they were designed.
 - When they obstruct God's message either by lifestyle or other choices, they cease to be important in the narrative.

Why have we not read more about Abraham's other children? Because they have little to say about the central message of God's character, love and redemption portrayed in the remainder of scripture.

- The Bible has a "Grand central theme"
- God has used people from all walks of life to help tell His story
 - Amos: Fig grower / fig picker / shepherd (farm laborer, in current terms he was a migrant worker)
 - Jeremiah: Royal family member
 - Disciples
 - We know a lot about some
 - Peter
 - James
 - John
 - Judas
 - A little about three
 - Andrew
 - Thomas
 - Matthew
 - ...
 - Names only
 - Thaddeus
 - Simon the Zealot
 - Song: "Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world, Red and yellow, black and white, all are precious in his sight. . ."
- "Gross darkness"
 - Isaiah 60:2 - 3
 - Acts 28:26 - 27
 - What were they in the dark about?
 - What was the purpose of Christ?
 - Read John 17:1 - 8

After Jesus finished saying this, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your Son, so that the Son may give glory to you. For you gave him authority over all people, so that he might give eternal life to all those you gave him. And eternal life means to know you, the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ, whom you sent. I have shown your glory on earth; **I have finished the work you gave me to do.** Father! Give me glory in your presence now, the same glory I had with you before the



world was made.

"I have made you known to those you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me. They have obeyed your word, and now they know that everything you gave me comes from you. I gave them the message that you gave me, and they received it; they know that it is true that I came from you, and they believe that you sent me.

WEDNESDAY

Hagar and Mount Sinai

Exodus 6:2 - 8, 19:3 - 6; Deut 32:10 - 12

God appeared to Abraham, Isaac & Jacob as God Almighty (El Shadday)

God appeared to Moses & the Children of Israel as God of existence and creation. (Yahveh, Jehovah)

Exodus 19:5 - 6 "Now then, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, then you shall be my own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

Exodus 19:8 "All the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do!"

God is giving promises and assurances of who He is and how He will take care of them. They are assuring Him that they will do whatever He says, and they mean well.

Compare with Peter's denial of Christ.

- Matthew 26:31 - 35
- Mark 14:27 - 31
- Luke 22:61
- John 13:36 - 38

This covenant is not a contract you must fulfill, but a promise that is yours to "keep." Compare this with the memories of the miracles and surroundings of Christ's birth that Mary "treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart." Luke 2:19

Psalms 1:2 "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night."

Psalms 119

"No one who believes in Jesus Christ is under bondage to the law of God; for His law is a law



of life, not of death, to those who obey its precepts. All who comprehend the spirituality of the law, all who realize its power as a detector of sin, are in just as helpless a condition as is Satan himself, unless they accept the atonement provided for them in the remedial sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who is our atonement - at-one-ment with God.” 6BC 1077.5

“Through faith in Christ obedience to every principle of the law is made possible.” 6BC 1077.6

KJV translation and the word “peculiar”

- Deuteronomy 14:2; Exodus 19:5; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9
- See *The King James Word Book* pp 254, 255

THURSDAY

Ishmael and Isaac Today

Read the first two paragraphs. What do you think?

The highlighted question at the end of the page: “... ask yourself this hard question: might you be guilty of persecuting others for *their* faith?”

FRIDAY

Further Thought

God Made Manifest in Christ. ST, January 20, 1890 par. 9

What is an allegory?

How is the works based religion of the “Judaizers” any different from the SDA theology of Sabbath keeping?



The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 11 3Q 2017

Freedom in Christ

SABBATH

What does the title of the lesson mean to you? Freedom from what? Freedom from God's punishment for sin?

19th Century Evangelist George MacDonald wrote:

"The Lord never came to deliver men from the consequences of their sins while those sins yet remained ... Yet, feeling nothing of the dread hatefulness of their sin, men have constantly taken this word that the Lord came to deliver us from our sins **to mean that he came to save them from the punishment of their sins.**

"This idea has terribly corrupted the preaching of the Gospel. The message of the Good News has not been truly communicated. Unable to believe in the forgiveness of the Father in heaven, imagining him not at liberty to forgive, or incapable of forgiving forthright; not really believing him God who is fully our Savior, but a God bound—either in his own nature or by a law above him and compulsory upon him—to exact some recompense or satisfaction for sin, a multitude of religious teachers have taught their fellow men that Jesus came to bear our punishment and save us from hell. But in that they have misrepresented his true mission."¹

Freedom from sin, which if unremedied, brings its own punishment? What is sin's punishment? From where does sin's punishment originate?

What about freedom from guilt and shame?

How do we experience freedom from guilt and shame? What causes the guilt and shame to go away?

Is it not healing and restoration to righteousness? Is it not the truth displacing lies, restoring trust in God and recreating the heart to be in harmony with God? Is it not experiencing the truth that God is not mad at us, He loves us and only wants to heal us.

What does it mean to be "in Christ"?

Does it not mean to be in unity, one-ness, in heart, mind, attitude, values, methods, practices, trust, confidence via our accepting the truth, opening the heart and experiencing His indwelling Spirit?

¹ George MacDonald, *Discovering the Character of God* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989), p. 39.



We had an online listener, Russell Bantin, email a quotation from one of the SDA founders, Ellen White this week, that I had never read before. I thought I would share a few paragraphs:

But the moral law, which is to be written in the heart, is the law of love. It is the expression of the very nature of the God of love as interpreted to us in the life and teachings of Christ, who said, “I have kept My Father’s commandments.” John 15:10 . To keep this law is to love as God loves. To the natural heart this is impossible, and so God has promised to give us a new heart: “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” Ezekiel 36:26 . In harmony with this provision is the prayer of David: “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a steadfast [margin] spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10 . **We may call this conversion, or regeneration, or the new birth, or the new creation; but in any case it is the impartation of a new life from God, that life which is love, and is revealed in loving.** Those who have this experience are “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4), and that nature is expressed in obedience to the divine **law of love.**

“When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new covenant promise is fulfilled, ‘I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.’ And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? ... Here is the true test. If we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwells in us, our feelings, our thoughts, our purposes, our actions, will be in harmony with the will of God as expressed in the precepts of His holy law.”

And this experience is guaranteed to us by the promise of God, and is provided for us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love: for we know that “the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us.” Romans 5:5. “Salvation is of Jehovah.” Jonah 2:9. Taken from the pamphlet, *The Savior of the world* - SOTW p. 81 <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/1409.319#333>

And this week on our Facebook page, Francesca posted a beautiful picture with 1John 4:21 from *The Remedy*:

God’s prescription is this: Internalize God’s love—which transforms the entire being—so that you love both God and people; for whoever loves God will also love others.

What does it mean to be In Christ? To have our hearts united in a love with Christ such that we live like Christ united with the principles of heaven!

Read second paragraph, “Paul addresses...” What is legalism? What is the motivation suggested in the lesson? Earning God’s favor, in this case by observing the law or rule keeping. This is classic legalism, what I refer to as legalism type I.

Do you recognize two types of legalism?



- Type 1—we keep the law and by rule keeping we earn or merit our reward
- Type 2—we try to earn favor with the Father through the legal application of someone else's actions, deeds, or achievement. The idea that a legal penalty had to be paid so that the legal payment could be legally applied to our accounts in heaven and we could be receive the legal approval of God and be declared to be legally righteous—even though we are not

Both are legalism and both have a god who needs something done to him in order to earn his favor. Both types have a form of godliness with no power and both types are lies that obstruct God's true healing plan, which is the plan to restore sinners to actual, not declared, righteousness. How? By restoring God's design law of love in the heart/mind as the way of living.

What is the greatest threat to lapsing into licentiousness? It is the false imposed law, that God runs His universe like humans run earthly governments which has led to all the distortions about God, including penal substitutionary thoughts about salvation. Why is this the greatest threat to holy living and the most likely cause of licentiousness?

For two reasons—first this is rules oriented, coercive and without reason. Thus, it is motivated by fear, violates the law of liberty and results in rebellion. For thinking people this view of God will be nonsense and many will reject the idea of God altogether and thus end up leading a licentious life.

Second—those who stay in the church believing in Christ, do so under a false legal view which leads to theologies that say things like, “all sin was placed on Christ at the cross and legally accounted for and punished by God then. If you accept Jesus as your Savior then His legal payment for ALL your sins, past, present and future is accepted in heaven and all your future sins are also already paid. We can't live victoriously, oh, try your best, but don't expect to, so once saved you are always saved.”

People seek to have the sin problem resolved in legal books, through legal application of Christ's legal payment, rather than seeking a new heart and right spirit. In fact, they don't even expect to live victoriously—they are told by their pastors that it isn't possible, don't even try.

Remember—under this false penal legal system of theology pornography rates are the same in Christian homes as non-Christian homes, spouse abuse and child abuse rates are no different in Christian than non-Christian homes. And teen pregnancy and abortion are higher in America than any western country, and America has the highest percentage of Christians.

The fact is that the penal legal religion doesn't result in freedom from licentiousness and never can because it gives a false diagnosis and thus provides a solution with no power to free people.

God prophesied through Paul:

Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the **man of lawlessness** is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and



will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he **sets himself up in God's temple**, proclaiming himself to be God. 2Thes 2:3,4

What temple? The Spirit temple—how? Notice it is the man of lawlessness, i.e. he rejects God's law, which is design law and replaces it with something that is not God's law—which is a system that functions like sinful beings, setting up rules and then enforcing those rules with threats of punishment—the false law. Seeking to change God's law just as Daniel prophesied. And what is the result of this?

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— ⁵ **having a form of godliness but denying its power**. Have nothing to do with them. 2Tim 3:1-5

Thus, God foretold through John that at the end of time a special message was to go to the entire world:

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. ⁷ He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water." Rev 14:6,7.

Which means what? If one has already accepted the false legal view it means be afraid of God because the time has come for God's tribunal to meet and the records of all bad behavior will be reviewed and punishment for sin will be determined, and you better come back to worship in the way God said or you will be punished.

But, when we come back to design law—the reality of who God is it reads differently. From *The Remedy*:

Then I saw another messenger flying in midair, and he had the eternal good news about God's character of love to proclaim to everyone living on earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and people—which represents a movement of people who arise to proclaim the truth about God's character of love throughout the world.⁷ He said in a clear, resounding voice, "Be in awe of God, and glorify him by living his methods of love, because the hour has come for everyone to make a judgment about God, and worship the Designer, Creator and Builder who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and springs of water— all of which operate upon his law of love."

And connecting all of this to why the legal view contributes to more licentiousness, we read the second angel's message:



A second angel followed and said, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.” Rev 14:8

What does this mean? From *The Remedy*:

A second messenger followed the first, proclaiming throughout the world: "Don't trust Babylon the Great—a symbolic description of religions that misrepresent God—as it is fallen into the lies about God and intoxicates the world with its pagan views of God, maddening the people with its adulterous idea that God coerces and must inflict punishment if not properly appeased."

The view that God's law is imposed and God polices His law like humans do their laws, and God will inflict punishment is the core idea within Christianity that has gone to the world. And it is a lie—and it has intoxicated the entire world and people have reacted to it by either becoming abusive like this God and coercing people with wars, or sanctions, or imprisonment; or they have rejected the idea of God altogether and thus the world is becoming increasingly secular why? As a direct rejection of this false view of God taken to the world by Christianity!

We are talking in the lesson today about freedom in Christ and this is genuine freedom—from fear, from addiction, from selfishness, from bad habits, but this freedom can only be realized and experienced when we come back to the truth about God—God who is love and who created all reality to operate upon His design protocols of love. The truth combined with love, which is found only in Jesus Christ, is the power that transforms us and enables us to be free!

Why is freedom so important? What happens if liberty or freedom is violated?

- love is damaged and eventually destroyed
- desire to rebel instilled
- destroyed individuality

What will God never do? Violate liberty or freedom, because to do so would destroy love. Thus the false human imposed law construct is revealed to be false. Many theological ideas are ruled out like:

- All the teachings in which God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death—even though presented under the guise of justice
- God makes all things happen
- Certain views of God's sovereignty: like God is in control—but of what?
 - Is God in control of our choices? Why not?
 - And if He is not controlling the choices of people then is He in control of the pain and suffering in this world?



SUNDAY

Read memory text: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” Gal 5:1

What kind of bondage?

What holds us in bondage?

- fear? what kind of fear? fear of rejection, fear of what people think? fear of someone getting their feelings hurt? fear of death?
 - I have so many patients who see me who are tender hearted people, but who have never learned to tolerate the negative responses from others. They live in fear of rejection, fear of someone being mad at them and make decisions based on what others might think, rather than on what is actually true, healthy and reasonable.
 - These people are not free but slaves—slaves to the attitudes of others
 - Hebrews 2:14,15 tells us Christ died to free those held captive by their fear of death
- opinions of others?
 - In addition to the attitude of others some are fearful of the opinions of others, if others think them ignorant, or disagree with their ideas, or are in authority in the organization or have a doctoral degree then their opinions must be right so the surrender thinking to someone’s opinion—these people are not free.
- habits?
 - Can be healthy or unhealthy—I have the habit of brushing my teeth, of drinking a glass of water each morning, of putting on my seat belt when I get in the car. I have many habits—am I a slave to my habits, or are my habits fulfilling my will?
 - In other words, are the habits I have formed habits that are developed because of purposeful self-discipline in harmony with truth and facts to make my life healthier, or are the habits formed by neglect and thoughtlessness and in harmony with impulse, emotion and desire?
- lies?
 - Truth sets free—lies enslave, are our beliefs based on truth, or do we cling to falsehood?
- guilt?
- health problems?
- others?

From *The Remedy*:

“Christ has set us free from selfishness, free from fear, free from ignorance about God—free to be his friends. So stand firm in the truth about God as revealed in Jesus, and don't let yourselves be duped back into a system of rituals and works motivated by fear and selfishness.” Gal 5:1



Read last paragraph, “This formula shares...” What do you hear? Is there legal elements being promoted in this paragraph?

What is meant by “at least not without forfeiting our lives.”? Are they suggesting we could pay the price ourselves if we gave our lives? But in fact, this is not true. They think this because they have a false diagnosis, which is a legal diagnosis. They think sin is a legal problem and thus requires the infliction of the just penalty, which God established in Eden as death, and thus in that model we could pay that penalty ourselves—but we would then be dead, but the legal penalty would have been paid.

The problem with this view is that it misdiagnoses the problem. Our problem with sin is not legal; it is our actual condition of being out of harmony with how God designed life to operate and thus we are terminal. We are dead in trespass and sin, i.e. out of harmony with how God built life to function.

So, would our death create a remedy? Would our death cure the condition? In other words, would our death provide what the law requires? You see in the false legal view the law requires death. But that is not so. When we understand design law, what does the law require? Harmony with it, which the Bible calls righteousness. It is like saying the law of respiration requires we breathe. So one of the founders of the SDA church wrote things like this:

- **The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character;** and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. {DA 762.2}
- **But the law requires that the soul itself be pure and the mind holy, that the thoughts and feelings may be in accordance with the standard of love and righteousness.**--RH, Apr 5, 1898. (2SM 211.) {2MCP 564.1}
- **The divine law requires us to love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves.** {A New Life NL 32.1}
- **That which God required of Adam before his fall was perfect obedience to His law. God requires now what He required of Adam, perfect obedience, righteousness without a flaw, without shortcoming in His sight. God help us to render to Him all His law requires. We cannot do this without that faith that brings Christ's righteousness into daily practice.** {2SM 380.4}
- **God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God's free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires.** {MB 54.2}
- **His law requires your heart's supreme affection for your Maker. It requires you to do unto others as you would have them do to you.** {BEcho, February 15, 1889 par. 8}

Notice, imposed law demands or requires punishment, design law demands or requires harmony with its design.



Would the death of a sinner restore the sinner to harmony with God's design? NO!

Thus Christ, who knew no sin, came and became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God. Christ destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness, in His human self, and restored God's design law of love in His human self, by the exercise of His human will, thus He rose again in a perfected humanity, in possession of a perfect human character. He offers this as a Remedy a free gift to all who will trust Him. Thus, we surrender our old fear and selfish selves and receive a new heart, with new motives of love and trust and become partakers of the divine nature!

Now, it is true to achieve this cost God and Christ a high price; it required Christ to die as the only means to reveal the truth, destroy the infection of fear and selfishness and perfectly seal God's law of love into His humanity. But this wasn't a legal price; it was the price that reality required.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Paul's command..." How would you describe what Christ has done for us? How do we stand free? What does it mean to stand free?

The lesson points us to some Bible texts and asks from what does Christ set us free:

Rom 6:14: "For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace." NIV

What does this mean? What law? What law lens?

Here is Rom 6:14: from *The Remedy*:

For distrust, fear and selfishness will no longer hold control over you, as you are no longer under the law's terminal diagnosis, but—having partaken of God's gracious Remedy—you are under his healing care.

Rom 6:18 "You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness." NIV

What does this mean?

From *The Remedy*:

Therefore you have been freed from distrust, fear and selfishness, and have been bonded to love, truth and liberty, doing what is right because it is right.

Romans 8:1,2: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death." NIV



What does this mean?

From *The Remedy*:

Therefore, those who trust in Christ Jesus are no longer destined to die,² because through Christ Jesus the law of love has cleansed and healed them from the law of selfishness and death.

It is always about reality—about our condition being out of harmony with how God built life to operate and God working through Christ to free us from this condition and restore us to righteousness, purity, love which results in life eternal.

Gal 4:3: “So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world.” NIV

So what would it mean to be freed?

From *The Remedy*:

Likewise, when we were childlike in character and immature in our thinking, we had no self-control and were slaves to selfish impulses.

So what does it mean to be freed?

Gal 4:8: “Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods.” NIV

From *The Remedy*:

In the past, before you knew God as revealed by Jesus, your minds were held in the bondage of fear and superstition by gods of your own darkened imaginations.

What does it mean to be freed? How?

Gal 5:1: “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”

From *The Remedy*:

Christ has set us free from selfishness, free from fear, free from ignorance about God—free to be his friends. So stand firm in the truth about God as revealed in Jesus, and don't let yourselves be duped back into a system of rituals and works motivated by fear and selfishness.



The last paragraph states, “The context suggests that Paul is referring to freedom from the bondage and condemnation of a law-driven Christianity, but our freedom includes much more. It includes freedom from sin, eternal death, and the devil.”

What is sin? Transgression of the law—what law? Which causes what? Thus freedom from sin frees us from death, because sin causes death.

What about freedom from the devil—how do we get free from him?

What is the devil’s power (Heb 2:14, John 17:3)?

TUESDAY

The lesson points out problems with submitting to circumcision for the purpose of getting right with God. First, they point out that to try and get right by keeping the law requires one to keep all the law.

Then, read second paragraph, “Second, the person...” Did Abraham get circumcised to save himself? Then why did Abraham get circumcised? Wasn’t it to demonstrate that his heart was already circumcised? So was there a circumcision that was not a means of salvation, but a result of salvation?

What about today? Are there any Christian rituals that function like circumcision, as an evidence of a changed life, but that do not change the life?

Baptism by water? Communion?

Have any of these ever come to get misapplied and function as means of salvation or requirements to salvation? If you don’t confess sins to a priest they are not removed from your ledger and God will punish you? If you don’t partake mass you don’t have the sacrifice of Jesus placed to your account in heaven? If you don’t undergo water baptism you don’t cleansing from sin?

Can any behavior be misunderstood and misapplied?

Can eating a healthy diet get misunderstood and misapplied that salvation is dependent on eating?

Can church attendance get misunderstood and misapplied such that day of worship becomes a test of salvation?

What is the only test? Have we actually be renewed in heart to be like Jesus!



WEDNESDAY

What causes a person to live a healthier life—having a list of rules to obey, go to bed at a specific time, eat this food, exercise so many minutes and feeling obligated to obey the rules or else they will get punished – or understanding the laws of health and choosing to live in harmony with them?

Who is more likely to cheat? Why do cheats never get away with cheating?

If you are paying a trainer to train you and he gives you exercises to do and you cheat and don't do them, do you get away with it?

What about in God's plan of salvation?

This is why the legal views fail—because they are all about cheating. They cheat people from true victorious living by proffering off legal loophole living. Just claim Jesus perfect record to your account—no need for you to apply God's principles to your life, all the sins are already taken care of...

This false freedom is the classic adolescent who asks, "If God will forgive me for having premarital sex, what's wrong with having premarital sex."

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, "This is not to imply..." What do you think about the sentence "It is not an abandonment of the law, nor a reduction of the law only to love; it is the way through which the believe could experience the true intent and meaning of the whole law!"

Can the law be reduced to love? Can God's law ever be anything other than some aspect of love?

What is revealed by the statement? A level of understanding that has yet to comprehend reality as God created it.

Read 1Cor 13

The last sentence of the third paragraph states, "Without love, the law is empty and cold; without law, love has no direction."

What does this mean? It means they don't comprehend love as design protocol or law, but as feelings, sentiment, emotions, compassion. They don't comprehend how love functions.

FRIDAY

discuss question 2



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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Sep 5, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

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

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church

12702 9th Street

Garden Grove, CA 92840

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

Phone: (714) 534-1987

Fax: (714) 534-3877

Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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

November 17,18, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr. SDA church in California.



The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 12 3Q 2017

Living by the Spirit

SABBATH

What does it mean to live by the Spirit? The Spirit is the Spirit of three prime attributes—what are they?

- Truth
 - And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. Jn 14:16,17
- Love
 - Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love 1Jn 4:8
- Freedom
 - Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 2Cor 3:17

If these are three prime attributes of the Holy Spirit—what would it mean to live by the Spirit?

What method does the Spirit use to bring salvation to people?

‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty. Zech 4:6

Why will the Holy Spirit not use might and power?

What does God want to achieve in people? Is it not complete and perfect love and trust?

Can love and trust be restored into sentient beings by threats and punishment?

What method?

By the truth of God’s character of love, given, demonstrated, communicated, proved in selfless love, leaving people free to reject that love.

What happens when you believe someone is out to harm you? What happens in your heart?

What happens when you believe someone is required to inflict punishment, and not only is required, but has the moral and legal right to do so? What happens when instead that person, rather than punishing, forgives, but more than that redeems, heals, restores you?

What is it that has separated us from God? Is it God’s anger and wrath, or is it the lies we have believed about Him, and our own fear and selfishness?



What would be necessary to reconcile us, to get through the barrier of such lies, fear and selfishness? Would it not be love and truth?

And metaphorically—if you were to set up a play to reveal that God is pure love and truth who is trying to reach us, but we are separated from God by lies and our own fear and selfishness, what might you act out? Might you act out a brilliant light being hidden and obstructed by a veil and that veil being ripped through to open the way for you to enter into the light?

What happened when Christ died? Did not the veil which separated the priests, which represent the believers, get ripped and the way into God's presence what opened?

And what did Christ tear through if not the lies we believe and the fearfulness we have that drive us to watch try and save ourselves? He tore through these barriers in order to provide us a new character and heal and save us!

Hebrews 10:19,20 from *The Remedy*:

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since Jesus died to bring us the truth about God and to eradicate selfishness from humanity, we no longer need to be afraid but can confidently enter the Most Holy Place—God's very presence—because Christ's death revealed the truth about God and ripped open the veil of lies told by Satan that blinded our minds, and destroyed the infection of selfishness that separated us from him.

Have you experienced the love of God as revealed in Christ so that any doubts, fears, insecurities that separate you from God have been ripped out of your heart and you have been reconciled back to oneness with our God of love?

From the book *Christ's Object Lessons*:

In the great and measureless gift of the Holy Spirit are contained all of heaven's resources. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. **If all were willing to receive, all would become filled with His Spirit.** {COL 419.1}

It is the privilege of every soul to be a living channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. **There is nothing that Christ desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love.** All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil to be a joy and blessing to human hearts... {COL 419.2}



The indwelling of the Spirit will be shown by the outflowing of heavenly love. The divine fullness will flow through the consecrated human agent, to be given forth to others. {COL 419.4}

The Sun of Righteousness has "healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. **So from every true disciple is to be diffused an influence for life,** courage, helpfulness, and true healing. {COL 419.5}

The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. **It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ.** When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. **The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance.** The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour. {COL 419.6}

Christ does not bid His followers strive to shine. He says, Let your light shine. If you have received the grace of God, the light is in you. Remove the obstructions, and the Lord's glory will be revealed. The light will shine forth to penetrate and dispel the darkness. You cannot help shining within the range of your influence. {COL 420.1}

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "'Walking' is a metaphor drawn..." When you think about walking, do you think of some arduous technically difficult task you must perform, or an ability that develops naturally?

How do we learn to walk physically?

Is effort put in? It is effort that the child must be coaxed into doing?

Does learning to walk spiritually require we put in effort? When does the most spiritual growth happen, when you are being prodded, coaxed, pushed or when you desire to grow spiritually?

Does walking physically require continued walking to keep walking? And spiritually?

Can we learn to walk by merely watching other people walk? And spiritually?

What interferes with learning to walk physically—diseases, lack of effort, injury, what about spiritually? Sin-sickness of heart, failure to engage with God, and mental, emotional, physical and spiritual injuries all interfere.



When a child learns to walk do they ever stumble and fall? When people learn to walk spiritually do they ever stumble and fall?

When a child stumbles and falls when they learn to walk physically, do we mock, criticize, ostracize the child or do we immediately seek to comfort, heal in injured and help the child back onto their feet?

Do we treat those who fall spiritually with the same attitude?

Should the child think after falling, “I’ll never learn to walk. Look at all these older children and adults they walk so well, some even run, I can barely stand, I’m just not good enough?”

Do those who fall spiritually ever fall into such traps and give up?

Should the adults/parents, when their child falls and perhaps gets hurt, think “I will never let my child fall again” and therefore pick their child up, carry them and never set them down again?

Are there lessons here we should consider in learning to walk by the Spirit?

Read last paragraph, “Paul’s comments about...” thoughts?

Is there any conflict with walking in the Spirit and obeying God’s law?

Can law keeping, sometimes, become an obstacle to walking in the Spirit? How and when?

What type of law and law keeping is opposed to the Spirit?

From the book *Christ’s Object Lessons*:

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. **True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God.** The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}

Do you hear two types of law being described in the quote above?

What is the natural result in your heart when you are required by an external authority to obey a law on threat of punishment—one that you have not agreed with?

What happens when you obey because you not only understand, and agree, but also because it is the way you prefer it be done?



Genuine law keeping isn't about an argument over the accuracy of one's definition of the commandments—should we have images of Christ in our church or not? Should we worship on Saturday or Sunday—this is not the question. Assuming that whatever law one is attempting to keep is the correct law—what happens in the heart of you keep it (the correct law) but do so under the imposed law model—i.e. you believe it is a rule that if you break God's justice requires that He punish?

This is how Satan has infected Christianity—by getting Christians to falsely believe God's law functions like human law, and millions have grown increasingly fearful of God while trying to keep His law, trying to stay out of trouble with God. This has resulted in their characters being hardened—leading to fracturing of the church into tens of thousands of groups, leading to using methods of force and coercion on those who break the rules we believe are God's, and has pitted Christians against each other arguing back and forth over this doctrine or that, while all are suffering with the exact same sickness of heart and refusing the genuine Remedy Christ has provided.

What is meant by love being fulfillment of the law? It is the design protocol of life and must be restored into the heart/mind/character in order for salvation to be experienced, why? Because that is what salvation actually is—healing and restoration to healthiness also known as righteousness.

The last sentence reads, “The genuine obedience that God desires never can be achieved by outward compulsion but only by an inward motivation produced by the Spirit.”

This is well said, what then does it mean in regard to the doctrines we teach about God and how He deals with sin?

If this is true, and it is, can God be the source of inflicted punishment for sin? Can God's law function like sinful human laws? Why not?

MONDAY

The title for the day is *The Christian Conflict* what is that conflict? With whom does each of us have the greatest battle to fight?

The lesson points us to Galatians 5:17 and Romans 7:14-24.

Gal 5:17: “For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.”

What does this mean? Does it mean you don't do the good you want to do or you don't do the evil you want to do?



What is it the natural heart wants? And if we live by the Spirit we no longer gratify those desires, so we don't do what the carnal nature wants.

Is this how you read it?

In Romans 7 there has been a long debate as to whether Paul is speaking of a converted or unconverted person, whether there is victory or not.

Let's read Romans 7:14-25 from *The Remedy*:

¹⁴We know that the law is consistent, reliable and reasonable; but I am inconsistent, unreliable and unreasonable, because the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness has warped my mind and damaged my thinking. ¹⁵I am frustrated with what I do! For having been restored to trust, I want to do what is in harmony with God and his methods and principles; but I find that even though I trust God, my old habits, conditioned responses, preconceived ideas and other remnants of the devastation caused by distrust and selfishness are not yet fully removed. ¹⁶And if I find an old habit causing me to behave in ways that I now find detestable, I affirm that the law is a very helpful tool revealing residual damage in need of healing. ¹⁷What is happening is this: I have come to trust God, and I desire to do his will, but old habits and conditioned responses—which present almost reflexively in certain situations—have not yet been totally eliminated and thus cause me to do things I do not want to do. ¹⁸I know that my mind was completely infected with distrust, fear and selfishness, which totally perverted all my desires and faculties, so that even when distrust has been eradicated and trust has been restored, the damage caused by years of distrustful and selfish behavior has not yet been fully healed. So, I find that at times, I have the desire to do what is right, but do not yet have the ability to carry out the desire. ¹⁹For the old habits and conditioned responses are not the good I want to do: No! They are remnants of my selfish, unconverted mind. ²⁰So, if I find myself doing what I no longer desire to do, it is not myself that acts, but the vestiges of old habits and conditioned responses that have yet to be removed. And through God's grace, they will soon be removed.

²¹So I find this reality at work: When I want to do good, my old selfish habits and residual feelings of fear are right there with me. ²²In my mind, I rejoice in God's methods and principles, ²³but I recognize that I remain damaged from years of being infected with distrust and practicing Satan's methods, so that even though the infection of distrust has been removed, the old habits of fear and self-promotion tempt me from within. ²⁴What a damaged and corrupt man I am! Who will deliver and heal me from a brain and body so diseased and deformed? ²⁵Praise be to God—for he has provided the healing solution through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I find that in my mind I am now renewed with trust in God and love of his methods, but my brain and body remain damaged by years of self-indulgent behavior.

My understanding, which I think is obvious in the paraphrase, is that when we are converted our hearts, our software, our inmost desires are to live in harmony with God and His methods. However, our individuality is still operating on hardware (bodies and brains) in which we have previously practiced



sinful living. Thus we have developed various habits, conditioned responses and automatic reactions, which go against our new desires and intentions. It takes time to change these imbedded patterns of response and I believe this is what Paul is describing in Romans 7.

Because of this tug of war between our reborn spiritual nature and our selfish nature, God has given us counsel that if we follow results in a reduction of the power of our selfish drives and improves our ability to resist; conversely if we don't apply God's counsel then the power of the selfish drives are more intense and our power to resist is diminished. Any thoughts on what those directions are?

- First and foremost a trust relationship with God in which the Spirit lives in us, then:
- Studying God's Word along with prayerful meditation—the law of worship, by beholding we become changed. We must assimilate new ways of thinking, new patterns of understanding, new methods of decision making, and by studying God's Word, worshipping and meditating on His character, creation, methods, precepts etc. we strengthen healthy brain circuits and leave dormant unhealthy ones, which over time are pruned back—thus we are changed.
- Choosing to help others—altruism activates love circuits and calms fear circuits; the law of exertion—if you want something to be stronger you must exercise it, thus exercise love circuits and they grow stronger.
- Healthful lifestyle choices, such as regular sleep, avoidance of intoxication, regular exercise etc. which all improved higher cortical function and reduce selfish impulses thus making it easier to choose to live in harmony with God's methods. In other words, you will be less irritable, less likely to act in ways you later regret.
- Forgiving those who do us wrong—which releases us from negative emotions, calming immune response and decreasing illness, again making it easier to live in harmony with God's principles.

Read bottom green section, “From your own experience...” anyone want to share wisdom they have learned?

- After having repented and experienced God's forgiveness—after having done all in your power to set right any wrong you have done—after having had a change of heart so that such an act in the future is offensive to you—then forgive yourself. Recognize history cannot change, but your heart desires and motives can be changed in a trust relationship with Jesus Christ—if you have experienced that change then don't live in shame and fear of past mistakes, but accept those past mistakes as symptoms of the sickness of sin with which you were born, and from which you are being healed by God's grace working in you.

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read the list of works of the flesh and then the fruits of the Spirit, so let's read Galatians 5:19-21:

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions,



factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

What do you hear?

How is idolatry and witchcraft works of the sinful nature?

What is the sinful nature? It is fear and selfishness, and what is the basis of idolatry and witchcraft? Fear and selfishness, about protecting self, getting for self. Pagan practices always have works, appeasement, attempts of the worshipper to influence, control, pay, bribe, or otherwise direct outcomes. Self does not die in such practices, but the misdeeds may be accounted for.

Look for this in Christianity—are there versions of Christianity which focus on accounting for the bad deeds, presenting offerings to God in order to assuage or propitiate His wrath? Such practices are paganism disguised as Christianity.

What about practices in Christianity where certain incantations must be recited in order to bring the power of the supernatural to bear to get what you want, whether it be healing, or a job, or a promotion etc. There is the belief that if the right words, or right rituals, or right incantations can be stated then God is required to dispense supernatural energy to effect the outcome we want—this is witchcraft.

Why will those who live like this not inherit the kingdom of God?

What is the kingdom of God? Is it primarily a kingdom of possessions, is it the kingdom of fear, of selfishness? Or is God's kingdom primarily defined by its attributes, methods, character? Which is what?

God's kingdom is the kingdom of love, truth and freedom—why won't those who live as described by the works of the flesh above inherit such a kingdom?

Is it because God makes the choice to refuse them? Or, is it because they are unfit to live their and they actually choose death rather than to live in God's kingdom?

WEDNESDAY

Read Galatians 5:22,23:

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

What are these? How do we assimilate them?



What is the last fruit listed here? Self-control—what does this mean?

What does this mean in light of certain religious experiences that claim the Spirit of God is present and people lose self-control?

What does this mean for those who pray that they don't want to be in control, so they ask God to take control?

If God has His way in our lives who ends up in control of our lives? We do—God heals us and restores us to His original design such that we are in governance of ourselves. Why? Because only free sentient beings are capable of genuine love and God ultimately is love and wants us to live in a universe where we experience genuine love.

Read first paragraph, “The Ten Commandments...” Can we understand the fullness of God's love by obeying the commandments?

Can the commandments be obeyed in ways that have no love at all?

Can God's law be fully understood written on stone? Why or why not?

God's law is a living law and can be fully understood only in living beings.

What is the highest and fullest revelation of God's law? Jesus!

What about “The idea that love for God and love for our neighbor void the Ten Commandments makes about as much sense as saying that love for nature voids the law of gravity.”

What is the problem with their assertion?

They are comparing a codified written *description* of a design law with an actual design law.

This occurs because they fail to understand the difference between design and imposed law, and fail to understand the purpose of the 10 Commandments.

The lesson is correct that love does not void the 10 Commandments, but what does the law of love do in regard to the commandments?

It puts the commandments in their proper place, which is what? A diagnostic instrument and protective hedge that was added because of our need. The law was not given as a remedy to sin, or a list of behaviors to which we are to conform. The 10 Commandments are not the law upon which life is built, but a codified description of that law specifically written for fallen human beings.



Angels didn't need a code to honor their parents, not commit adultery or warn about how sinful living would genetically alter them and pass down 3 and 4 generations. We fallen humans did.

Thus the Bible teaches:

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." Rom 7:7

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. ⁹ We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine ¹¹ that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. 1Tim 1:8-11

So, love does not void the law—but when God's design law of love is written again on the heart, its purpose on stone is no longer needed.

Read last paragraph, "The fact that Paul..." Why is love supreme? Because it is the principle upon which life is based!

Read 1Corinthians 13 from *The Remedy*:

¹If I am gifted to speak the language of people and angels but do not have God's love in my heart, I am only making meaningless noise, because I remain terminal and dying.²If I am gifted with prophetic insight and understand all mysteries and knowledge, and if I am trusted to move mountains but do not have God's love in my heart, I am a fraud because I am still dying in sin and am nothing at all.³If I give away all my possessions to the poor and die as a martyr tied to a burning stake but don't have God's love in my heart, I am still unhealed and have gained nothing.

⁴Love is the principle upon which life and health are built to operate, and when active in intelligent beings, love is patient and kind. Love gives in order to bless others and does not envy, boast, or promote self.⁵Love is not intrusive, rude, selfish, irritable, or hot-tempered. And love doesn't hold grudges or keep a record of wrongs.⁶Love takes no pleasure in evil but rejoices with the truth.⁷Love always protects, always heals, always restores, builds up, trusts, hopes, and perseveres.

⁸Love originates in God and therefore will never stop and never fail. But one day, prophecies will cease, talking will be paused, and human knowledge will fade.⁹We are finite—knowing just a part of all truth, and prophecy is just a piece of a greater whole.¹⁰But when God restores the universe to His perfect design of love, all imperfection will disappear.¹¹When I was a child, I talked like a child, bragging about myself; I thought like a child, focusing on the dos and don'ts,



and I reasoned like a child. But when I grew up, I embraced God's kingdom of love and put the childish ways behind me.¹² Our minds are so darkened by selfishness that we see God's kingdom poorly, like a reflection in a cloudy mirror; but when he returns, we shall see perfectly—face to face! Right now I know only part of God's reality; then—I will have all questions answered and fully know the truth, just as God fully knows me.

¹³ So these three endure: trust, hope and love; but the greatest of these is love.

THURSDAY

The lesson lists five keys to victory in the Spirit:

- To choose to apply to our lives what the Spirit leads
- To be willing to following where the Spirit leads
- To be reborn with new motives from the Spirit
- To conform our choices, practices and habits to harmonize with the Spirit of love and truth
- To choose to say no to the desire of the selfish nature, i.e. be willing to tolerate negative emotions in order to choose to follow where the Spirit leads

The way the Spirit works is the Spirit enlightens with truth we can comprehend and will convict us of what the right choice on any given subject is, but then the Spirit leaves us free to choose the right or not. When we choose to apply the truth to our lives then we receive divine power sufficient for the task. BUT we don't get the power until we make the choice!

Example of Lot! Lot was willing to leave, but didn't have the power on his own, so the angels provided the power to pull him out of the doomed city where he was emotionally attached.

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, "The life of the Christian..." Could this describe religious people?

Read and discuss questions 1-3



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Sep 5, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books.

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

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church

12702 9th Street

Garden Grove, CA 92840

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

Phone: (714) 534-1987

Fax: (714) 534-3877

Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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

November 17,18, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr. SDA church in California.



2017 Q3 Lesson 13 – The Gospel and the Church

Any initial reactions when you hear or read that title? As frequently happens, I immediately went to definition questions - what is the Gospel...or which Gospel? Any scriptures come to mind?

Romans 1:16-17 (NIV) - 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes, or in the Remedy: 16 I am not ashamed of spreading the good news about God and his character, methods and principles, as this is God's power which heals everyone who believes and trusts in him: firstly to the Jews—those initially called to assist in spreading the Remedy, and then to the Gentiles—those most recently called to help spread the Remedy. 17 For the good news is a revelation of God's true righteousness—character, methods and principles—that restores trust in God and results in re-creation of a righteous and Christlike character in humans, just as it is written: "The Christlike will live by choosing what is right in governance of themselves, and by trusting God with how things turn out."

One of the founders of our church adds to that by saying,

“...for the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, when it is interwoven with the practical life, when it is lived and practiced. The union of Christlike work for the body and Christlike work for the soul is the true interpretation of the gospel.” - {CME 7.3}

As you may know, at the time our denomination was founded Mrs. White encouraged the church to tightly couple the healing/health message with the gospel message...any idea why? This is what she said in a book called *Counsels on Health*,

“These lessons are for us. There are conditions to be observed by all who would preserve health. All should learn what these conditions are. The Lord is not pleased with ignorance in regard to His laws, either natural or spiritual. We are to be workers together with God for the restoration of health to the body as well as to the soul. {CH 31.1} And we should teach others how to preserve and to recover health. For the sick we should use the remedies which God has provided in nature, and we should point them to Him who alone can restore. It is our work to present the sick and suffering to Christ in the arms of our faith. We should teach them to believe in the Great Healer. We should lay hold on His promise and pray for the manifestation of His power. The very essence of the gospel is restoration, and the Saviour would have us bid the sick, the hopeless, and the afflicted take hold upon His strength. {CH 31.2} The power of love was in all Christ's healing, and only by partaking of that love, through faith, can we be



instruments for His work. If we neglect to link ourselves in divine connection with Christ, the current of life-giving energy cannot flow in rich streams from us to the people. There were places where the Saviour Himself could not do many mighty works because of their unbelief. So now unbelief separates the church from her divine Helper. Her hold upon eternal realities is weak. By her lack of faith, God is disappointed and robbed of His glory. {CH 31.3}

Romans 16:25 - Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the *revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past*

2 Corinthians 4:4 - The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. From the Remedy: Satan, the god of this pagan age, has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so they don't see or comprehend the truth about God—his methods and principles as revealed in Christ, who is God's very thoughts made audible and visible.

Galatians 1:11 - I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. From the Remedy: Brothers, I want you to be perfectly clear on this, the good news that I proclaim—the message of healing and restoration—the truth about the character of God as revealed by Jesus, is not something fabricated or concocted by human beings.

Ephesians 3:6 - This is the *truth previously hidden and not understood*: God loves all humanity, and all humanity is included in God's plan to heal and restore, and—through the incredible good news of God as revealed in Christ—all humans are included in the promises given to Abraham, and are therefore heirs of the blessings of salvation which come through Christ Jesus.

One more quote that provides some amazing insight about the law and the gospel and truth that should be constantly unfolding.

“Christ in His teaching presented old truths of which He Himself was the originator, truths which He had spoken through patriarchs and prophets; but He now shed upon them a new light. How different appeared their meaning! A flood of light and spirituality was brought in by His explanation. And He promised that the Holy Spirit should enlighten the disciples, that the word of God should be ever unfolding to them. They would be able to present its truths in new beauty. {COL 127.2}

Ever since the first promise of redemption was spoken in Eden, the life, the character, and the



mediatorial work of Christ have been the study of human minds. Yet every mind through whom the Holy Spirit has worked has presented these themes in a light that is fresh and new. The truths of redemption are capable of constant development and expansion. Though old, they are ever new, constantly revealing to the seeker for truth a greater glory and a mightier power. {COL 127.3}

In every age there is a new development of truth, a message of God to the people of that generation. The old truths are all essential; new truth is not independent of the old, but an unfolding of it. It is only as the old truths are understood that we can comprehend the new... But it is the light which shines in the fresh unfolding of truth that glorifies the old. He who rejects or neglects the new does not really possess the old. For him it loses its vital power and becomes but a lifeless form...No man can rightly present the law of God without the gospel, or the gospel without the law. The law is the gospel embodied, and the gospel is the law unfolded. The law is the root, the gospel is the fragrant blossom and fruit which it bears. The Old Testament sheds light upon the New, and the New upon the Old. Each is a revelation of the glory of God in Christ. Both present truths that will continually reveal new depths of meaning to the earnest seeker. Truth in Christ and through Christ is measureless. The student of Scripture looks, as it were, into a fountain that deepens and broadens as he gazes into its depths. Not in this life shall we comprehend the mystery of God's love in giving His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. The work of our Redeemer on this earth is and ever will be a subject that will put to the stretch our highest imagination. Man may tax every mental power in the endeavor to fathom this mystery, but his mind will become faint and weary. The most diligent searcher will see before him a boundless, shoreless sea. The truth as it is in Jesus can be experienced, but never explained. Its height and breadth and depth pass our knowledge. We may task our imagination to the utmost, and then we shall see only dimly the outlines of a love that is unexplainable, that is as high as heaven, but that stooped to the earth to stamp the image of God on all mankind. {COL 129.1}

OK, we have defined "the Gospel"... now, what is "the Church"? How would you define that? Is it a building? We have a whole bunch of churches in this area...which one is THE church? Is it a specific denomination, set of doctrines, or beliefs?

I thought it might be beneficial to check with one of the founders of **our** church to see what she had to say about what "the Church" is...turns out she has quite a bit to say about it - enlightening, significant, sobering, weighty things:

The church is God's agency for the proclamation of truth, empowered by Him to do a special work... – {AA 600.2}



The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places," the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10. – {AA 9.1}

During ages of spiritual darkness the church of God has been as a city set on a hill. From age to age, through successive generations, the pure doctrines of heaven have been unfolding within its borders. Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard. It is the theater of His grace, in which He delights to reveal His power to transform hearts. – {AA 12.1}

The church is very precious in God's sight. He values it, not for its external advantages, but for the sincere piety which distinguishes it from the world. He estimates it according to the growth of the members in the knowledge of Christ, according to their progress in spiritual experience. – {COL 298.1}

The real character of the church is measured, not by the high profession she makes, not by the names enrolled upon the church book, but by what she is actually doing for the Master, by the number of her persevering, faithful workers. Personal interest, and vigilant, individual effort will accomplish more for the cause of Christ than can be wrought by sermons or creeds.—The Review and Herald, September 6, 1881. – {ChS 12.1}

The present attitude of the church is not pleasing to God. **There has come in a self-confidence that has led them to feel no necessity for more truth and greater light.** We are living at a time when Satan is at work on the right hand and on the left, before and behind us; and yet as a people we are asleep. God wills that a voice shall be heard arousing His people to action.—Gospel Workers, 297-300 (1915). – {CW 41.3}

This is from the Teacher's Quarterly:

"God has commissioned the church as His transforming agent upon the earth. The omnipotent Savior might have bypassed humanity when reaching the lost world. What could sinful, weakened, vacillating humans contribute to this noble enterprise? Dispatch the sinless angelic host, mobilize the faithful creatures from other galaxies, or utilize divine remote controls: the omnipotent, omniscient Creator of the universe had these and thousands of additional options at His disposal. Nevertheless, He included the fellowship of redeemed individuals, the church,



as His distributing agency. ***Care should be exercised in expressing this truth.*** The church has the privilege and opportunity of sharing and modeling the gospel before fallen humanity. This sacred responsibility, however, is not proprietary. Humans do not possess franchise authority, and they cannot deny access to God. The Holy Spirit is God's primary disseminator of grace with the church, assuming the role of cooperating agency. **Rather than denying access to God, the church's work is to expand access.** What glorious opportunities! The church works hand in hand with God to evangelize and nurture fallen human beings. Miraculous transformation and reformation occur constantly within this divinely originated and ordained fellowship."

SUNDAY

Restoring the Fallen

Who are "the fallen?"

The quarterly asks – How should Christians respond when a fellow believer falls into sinful behavior?

Paul says, "we should restore that person gently." We have lots of different churches represented here...how do you think your churches do with this if you had to grade them? Should this response be any different with non-believers?

The terminology Paul uses in Galatians 6 refers to a mistake, a stumble, or a misstep - not a deliberate or defiant sin; and therefore, the proper response in such circumstances should not be punishment, condemnation, or disfellowship but restoration. When is that NOT the proper response?

The quarterly points out that the Greek word translated as "restore" is *katartizo*, and it means "to mend" or "to put in order." In the New Testament it is used to refer to the "mending" of fishnets (Matt. 4:21), and it is used as a medical term in Greek literature to describe the process of setting a broken bone. In the same way that we would not abandon a fellow believer who fell and broke a leg, as members of the body of Christ we should gently care for our brothers and sisters in Christ who may stumble and fall as we walk together on the path to God's kingdom.

This is also from the teacher's notes in the quarterly, and it's so well-said and kind of surprised me - in the best way:

"The church's constant objective is restoration, not condemnation. Many understand the terminology of church discipline punitively. Well-intentioned members, zealous to protect the church's reputation, declare that the erring must be separated in order to avoid contamination.



This is a very dangerous approach. The religious leadership of Christ's time was anxious about condemning the adulterous woman in John 8; but were they themselves sinless? Had they no need for forgiveness? Was there no divine condemnation for their hypocrisy? Perhaps the notion of protecting the church's reputation needs reexamination. Compare the work of a hospital. Hospitals exist for the purpose of physical healing and restoration. Does every patient leave the hospital alive? Obviously not. Does the presence of occasional casualties nullify the hospital's mission and purpose? Would your community declare that the local hospital should close because it lost a patient? Should hospitals limit their services to those with common colds and other easily curable diseases in order to enhance their track records and bolster their reputations, turning away trauma patients, cancer victims, and other difficult cases? Rather than dismissing difficult cases, physicians aggressively tackle them, researching new methodologies and techniques to affect healing. Disease is meticulously studied, new therapies are developed, and yesterday's death-sentence diseases become today's miraculous breakthroughs. Perhaps those who work with spiritual illness should adopt a similar attitude. Thus, discipline would become redemptive rather than punitive, and the church's reputation would rest upon the compassionate and aggressively creative way that believers fight the sin disease. Christians should forcefully battle sin, not sinners. Obviously, some will be lost. But should churches start limiting their ministry to good citizen types in order to bolster their success rate, their action would prove that they have forgotten their purpose. Discipline, in Paul's usage, refers to training in righteousness. It is a series of actions or behaviors whose objective is forming a more intimate relationship with God. Far from being punitive, Paul's discipline is restorative and positive. Like fine-tuned triage units, churches become centers for cooperation and accountability in achieving a common goal: the healing of sin-scarred hearts through the life-giving love of God."

WOW!! That is good stuff!

MONDAY

Beware of Temptation

Paul's appeal and counsel indicates a sense of urgency and genuine concern when he says to, "pay careful attention to" or "keep a careful eye on yourself", lest sin also take you by surprise. Can anyone else relate? Does your behavior or your reactions or responses sometimes catch you by surprise? Basically every. time. i. open. my. mouth. Even if Paul wasn't referring to any specific trespass or behavior, his words in Gal 5:26 against becoming "conceited" suggest that he is warning the Galatians (and us!) against feeling that they are in some way superior to those they are restoring.



The quarterly describes this sense of spiritual pride as one of the greatest dangers to the Christian walk...why? The lesson says it's because this spiritual pride makes us think we are somehow immune from committing certain types of sin...is that what makes it so dangerous? I believe the danger is much greater than that. Is it dangerous or damaging if a person has a terminal disease but doesn't know it...or is too proud to go to the doctor? Why? Because they will not seek help or partake of the remedy and be healed! That is why a sense of spiritual pride can be one of the greatest dangers to the Christian walk. The last paragraph in Monday's lesson says, "The sobering fact is that we all have the same sinful nature — a nature that is opposed to God." Yes! Our natural heart is at enmity toward God, it distrusts God - this is a terminal condition if left unremedied. Christ procured that heart-transplant remedy through His life, death, and resurrection and offers it as a free gift to all who are willing to receive it.

TUESDAY

Burden Bearing

Tuesday's lesson points out several practical spiritual insights related to Paul's instruction in Galatians 6:2, which says: "Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ". What do you think that is? Wednesday's entire lesson is devoted to that question, so start thinking about what the law of Christ is and how bearing each other's burdens might fulfill it.

There are 3 spiritual insights defined in Tuesday's lesson

1. All Christians actually do have burdens to bear - shocking, right? Where does this misconception come from, that somehow if you are following Christ, and paying your tithe, and worshipping on the right day, and eating the right foods, and donating to the Samaritan Center, and checking all those right boxes...that somehow you should be exempt from the burdens and trials of this life? This view is not biblical, for Christ himself tells us that, "In this world you will have trouble" (John 16:33) - it's guaranteed! But what...what is the rest of that text? "But take heart! I have overcome the world!" That promise of trouble is couched between two incredibly comforting and reassuring promises of hope - the first part is that He tells us, "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace." He does not want us to be bewildered or caught by surprise, and He wants us to have God's peace—that is beyond words and human explanation and transcends our circumstance—to fill our minds and strengthen our hearts as we trust totally in Christ Jesus.
2. God does not intend for us to bear all our burdens alone. How many of us are far more willing to help others carry their burdens than we are to allow or ask others for help with our own? Paul condemns this attitude of self-sufficiency as human pride...to which I have to say, "ouch"! Think about this: when we refuse to admit that we have needs and weaknesses, we rob



ourselves of the comfort and support of others...AND we prevent others from fulfilling the ministry God has called them to do. Wow!

3. Finally, God calls us to bear each other's burdens because it is through OUR actions that God's comfort is made manifest (this sounds a lot like what we just discussed as the definition of "the church"). The quarterly quotes John Stott in his book, *The Message of Galatians*, "Human friendship, in which we bear one another's burdens, is part of the purpose of God for His people." God comforts us not so we can be comfortable, but so we can be comfort-able - e equips us to be able to comfort others.

WEDNESDAY

The Law of Christ

Galatians 6:2 says, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Our quarterly points out that Paul's use of the phrase "the law of Christ" is unique - it is used nowhere else in the entire Bible, which of course has led to a number of different interpretations of what he meant. What do you think he means? I don't remember a commandment about bearing each other's burdens, so I don't think he's talking about that law. Do we think it's related to Galatians 5:14, which says, "For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: Love your neighbor as yourself." What about Romans 13:10, which says, "Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law." In Matthew 5:17, Christ even says He has not come to abolish the Law (capital L) or the prophets, but to fulfill them. This law of Christ is the law of Love.

The second part of Wednesday's lesson makes an interesting point about the two different terms Paul uses for the word "burden" in verses 2 and 5 of chapter 6 - 1 refers to a heavy load carried for a long distance, the other is interpreted as a ship's cargo, a soldier's backpack, or even a child in the womb. So, the first type of burden can be laid aside or shared, but the second type cannot. A pregnant mother must carry her own child, she can't hire that out. So, some burdens others can help us bear, but for others - a guilty conscience, illness, death - we must rely on God's help alone. Agree?

THURSDAY

Sowing and Reaping

Galatians 6:7 says, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows." What do you think Paul means when he says, "God cannot be mocked"? The author of the quarterly believes Paul's point is that people may ignore God or even flout His commandments, but they cannot outwit God. He is the ultimate judge, and in the end they will have to pay the price for their actions.



The quarterly calls Paul's reference to sowing and reaping a metaphor...is it? Or is it a natural design law upon which our reality is built? This is what one of the founders of our church has to say about it:

“The Spirit of God keeps evil under the control of conscience. When man exalts himself above the influence of the Spirit, he reaps a harvest of iniquity. Over such a man the Spirit has less and less influence to restrain him from sowing seeds of disobedience. Warnings have less and less power over him. He gradually loses his fear of God. He sows to the flesh; he will reap corruption. The harvest of the seed that he himself has sown, is ripening. He has a contempt for God's holy commandments. His heart of flesh becomes a heart of stone. Resistance to truth confirms him in iniquity. It is because men sowed seeds of evil, that lawlessness, crime, and violence prevailed in the antediluvian world. “All should be intelligent in regard to the agency by which the soul is destroyed. It is not because of any decree that God has sent out against man. He does not make man spiritually blind. God gives sufficient light and evidence to enable man to distinguish truth from error. But He does not force man to receive truth. He leaves him free to choose the good or to choose the evil. If man resists evidence that is sufficient to guide his judgment in the right direction, and chooses evil once, he will do this more readily the second time. The third time he will still more eagerly withdraw himself from God and choose to stand on the side of Satan. And in this course he will continue until he is confirmed in evil, and believes the lie he has cherished as truth. His resistance has produced its harvest (MS 126, 1901).”—Ellen G. White Comments, The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 1112.



2017 Q3 The Gospel in Galatians - Lesson 14: Boasting in the Cross

The Cross – Roman torture device which was intended to be the most humiliating, most painful, most drawn out period of suffocation that always ended in death. Even if that meant breaking of the legs to force death by suffocation.

So how can we boast about this?

Christians show the cross, wear the cross, put in on their churches and Bibles. Why?

- Because payment was made?
- God's anger was appeased?
- God showed us just how much He loves us?
- God created a cure for our incurable illness of sin?

SABBATH

Memory Text - Galatians 6: 14, "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the work has been crucified to me, and I to the world...."

Galatians 6:15 adds, "...what counts is a new creation."

Jeremiah 9:23, 24,"This is what the Lord says: 'Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, but let the one who boasts boast about this: **that they have the understanding to know me**, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delights,' declares the Lord."

Does the cross help to give us the understanding to know God?

Would we boast about the doctor we had found who had:

- **Kindness:** The ability to show compassion
- **Justice:** The ability to correctly diagnose
- **Righteousness:** The ability to restore the terminally ill to health and life

SUNDAY

Paul's own Hand

Paul takes a very personal, agonizing interest in the welfare of the Galatian Christians.



MONDAY

Boasting in the Flesh

Galatians 6:12, 13, “Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The **ONLY** reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh.”

He intimates that his opponents are hiding behind a mask.

Question: “What should this tell us about how even the “best” of motives can lead us astray if we aren’t careful? Is avoiding persecution a “best” motive?

TUESDAY

Boasting in the Cross

Second paragraph: “Jews found the idea of a crucified Messiah offensive, and Roman found crucifixion so repulsive that it was not even mentioned as a form of punishment suitable for a Roman citizen.”

It was predicted that we would misunderstand the cross. Isaiah 53:1-5, “Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely **HE TOOK UP OUR INFIRMITIES** and **CARRIED OUR SORROWS**, but **WE CONSIDERED HIM STRICKEN BY GOD, SMITTEN BY HIM, AND AFFLICTED. BUT he was pierced for OUR transgressions, he was crushed for OUR iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and BY HIS WOUNDS WE ARE HEALED.**”

Jesus’ preparation for the cross prior to the Garden of Gethsemane: John 13:1-5, “It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, **he now showed them the full extent of his love**. The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. **Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.**”



Have you considered the Cross in the light of the Seventh day Sabbath?

- **Just like when “The Word”, the part of God that we now know as Jesus created a day of rest to allow us to consider how he uses his power, Jesus once again shows us what he does with power over ALL things.** Christ worked, then created a day of rest for us to consider how he uses His power. So in both cases we can learn about Him, learn to trust Him, appreciate Him, which develops into love for Him...and He gives us the love and desire to love.
- We focus on Judas, and Peter, but Jesus knows that very same day, every single one of his disciples will either desert, deny or betray him. (Matthew 26:31-35)
- He gives them this gift, shows them he is able and willing to clean them no matter how dirty they get.
- Gives them/us an example of how to love others
- Shows us how to help others accurately see and know THIS GOD.
- **Possible parable in the cross? Death to self before finding rest in God/Christ, which brings us life?**

Disciples and the cross:

Darkness before Dawn, Page 36, E. G. White

“Before His crucifixion the Savior explained to His disciples that he was to be put to death and to rise again from the tomb, and angels were present to impress His words on minds and hearts. But the disciples were looking for temporal deliverance from the Roman yoke, and **they could not tolerate the thought that He in whom all their hopes centered should suffer an ignominious death.** The words which they needed to remember were banished from their minds; and when the time of trial came, it found them unprepared. The death of Jesus as fully destroyed their hopes as if He had not forewarned them. So in the prophecies the future is opened before us as plainly as it was opened to the disciples by the words of Christ. The events connected with the close of probation and the work of preparation for the time of trouble, are clearly presented. But multitudes have no more understanding of these important truths than if they had never been revealed. Satan watches to catch away every impression that would make them wise unto salvation, and the time of trouble will find them unready.”

- What has the Cross done to affect your relationship to the world?
- What difference has it made in your life?
- How differently do you live now than you did before giving yourself to the Lord, who died for you?



Angel's Response to Christ's birth:

2 Spirit of Prophecy, Page 16, E.G. White

"In Heaven it was understood that the time had come for the advent of Christ to the world, and angels leave glory to witness his reception by those he came to bless and save. They had witnessed his glory in Heaven, and they anticipate that he will be received with honor in accordance with his character, and the dignity of his mission. As angels approach the earth, they first come to the people God had separated from the nations of the world as his peculiar treasure. They see no especial interest among the Jews, no eager waiting and watching that they may be the first to receive the Redeemer, and acknowledge his advent. In the temple, which had been hallowed by daily sacrificial offerings, prefiguring his coming, and symbolizing his death, no preparations are being made to welcome the Savior of the world. The Pharisees continue to repeat their long, meaningless prayers in the streets, to be heard of men, in order to obtain the reputation of great piety and devotion. **The angels from Heaven behold with astonishment the indifference of the people, and their ignorance in regard to the advent of the Prince of Life.** The proud Pharisees, claiming to be God's chosen people, in their hypocritical devotions, are proclaiming the law, and exalting traditions, while men of other nations are dealing in fables, and are worshiping false gods. All alike were ignorant of the great event which prophecy had foretold would transpire."

Angel's Response to Christ's trial and death:

Desire of Ages, Page 700, E.G. White

"The angels of heaven witnessed every movement made against their loved Commander. **They longed to deliver Christ.** Under God the angels are all-powerful. On one occasion, in obedience to the command of Christ, they slew of the Assyrian army in one night one hundred and eighty-five thousand men. How easily could the angels, beholding the shameful scene of the trial of Christ, have testified their indignation by consuming the adversaries of God! But they were not commended to do this. He who could have doomed His enemies to death bore with their cruelty. His love for His Father, and His pledge, made from the foundation of the world, to become the Sin Bearer, led him to endure uncomplainingly the coarse treatment of those He came to save. **It was a part of His mission to bear, in His humanity, all the taunts and abuse that men could heap upon Him. The only hope of humanity was in this submission of Christ to all that He could endure from the hands and hearts of men.**"

Look at the Compassion our Creator has for us!



Understanding the Cross as a multifaceted Jewel – and through it, Christ:

- Perfected an unselfish, loving character to his death, which he gives us for free.
- Showed how much God values our freedom
- Ripped off the mask of Satan and his methods and view of God – how his kingdom would work. Satan is a liar and murderer. God did not kill Satan, but gave him the chance on this earth to show the universe his idea of governing, but from the moment Christ was born, Satan showed that he would kill God to accomplish his goals, and finally succeeded. (Christ laid down his own life....)
- The trapper became the trapped
- Opened his disciples' eyes to their true hearts and characters
- Witness to the whole Universe of watching beings, to further understand God
- Cuts off our affection from this world and points us to God
- Showed us the true meaning of sacrifice
- Said, "It is finished!" (what is finished?)
- "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." John 12:34
- "...unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds" John 12:24
- Saved one thief, changed the course of one man's life during a portion of one day so completely that Christ assured him he would be with Him in paradise.
- **Was a living/dying parable? (God told Moses to make a bronze snake, and the Israelites who were bitten by poisonous snakes and looked up at it and live. Numbers 21:6-9). This was to represent Christ curing us of the poisonous bite of the serpent Satan.**

Can we make an idol out of the cross, by misinterpreting it?

Later, they named that snake "Nehushtan" (means 'a brazen thing' or 'a mere piece of brass'), burned incense to it and worshipped it, so that Hezekiah had to break it into pieces. 2 Kings 18:4-4.
Worshipping the snake instead of who and what it pointed to?

Last Paragraph:

"The cross of Christ changes everything for the believer. It challenges us not only to reevaluate how we view ourselves but also how we related to the world. The world – this present evil age and all that it entails (1 John 2:16) – stand in opposition to God. Because we have died with Christ, the world no longer has the enslaving power it once held over us, and the old life that we once lived for the world is no longer. Following Paul's analogy, **the break between the believer and the world should be as if the two died to each other.**"

So, how do Christ and his angels view our lack of Compassion toward each other?



Last week, I quoted **Proverbs 24: 11-12**, which bears repeating today:

“Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, “But we knew nothing about this,” does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards YOUR life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?”

Desire of Ages, Page 825, E. G. White

“Divine love has been stirred to its unfathomable depths for the sake of men, and angels marvel to behold in the recipients of so great love a mere surface gratitude. Angels marvel at man’s shallow appreciation of the love of God. Heaven stands indignant at the neglect shown to the souls of men. Would we know how Christ regards it? How would a father and mother feel, did they know that their child, lost in the cold and the snow, had been passed by, and left to perish, by those who might have saved it? Would they not be terribly grieved, wildly indignant? Would they not denounce those murderers with wrath hot as their tears, intense as their love? The sufferings of every man are the sufferings of God’s child, and those who reach out no helping hand to their perishing fellow beings provoke His righteous anger.”

Testimonies for the Church volume 4, pages 319 and 320, E.G. White

“I have read of a man who, journeying on a winter’s day through the deep, drifted snow, became benumbed by the cold which was almost imperceptibly stealing away his vital powers. And as he was nearly chilled to death by the embrace of the frost king, and about to give up the struggle for life, he heard the moans of a brother traveler, who was perishing with cold as he was about to perish. His humility was aroused to rescue him. He chafed the ice-clad limbs of the unfortunate man, and, after considerable effort, raised him to his feet; and as he could not stand, he bore him in sympathizing arms through the very drifts he had thought he could never succeed in getting through alone. And when he had borne his fellow traveler to a place of safety, the truth flashed home to him that in saving his neighbor he had saved himself also. His earnest efforts to save another quickened the blood which was freezing in his own veins, and created a healthful warmth in the extremities of the body.”

Manuscript 29, 1900, E. G. White

“The angels of God will make effectual the work of men...O that those who are halting between two opinions could only understand the agencies continually at work to keep at bay the armies of the power of darkness! By presenting earthly advantages or earthly obstacles to defeat the purposes of God, and by various other methods, Satan would intercept every ray of light from the messengers of God. But if the curtain could be rolled back, and eyes now blind to the invisible agencies could view with restored spiritual vision **the conflict continually going on in behalf of the souls perishing away from Christ**, what a difference would be



made in the working of the agencies in this world! Decided advance movements would be made. Without delay their entire influence for good would be thrown on the side of Christ. They would behold **the intense interest of the angels of God in behalf of souls who are throwing away the opportunities and privileges now so valuable to them to obtain an experimental knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent.**"

We are culturally acclimatized by those around us, so people's actions vary from culture to culture. To make ourselves more beautiful to others, some put rings around their necks until their necks are very tall, expand their earlobes until they are very large, glue white bird feathers into their hair, get tattoos, etc. They often have no idea that what they have grown up with and consider a mark of beauty, others would consider bizarre. We pay others to make our hair look nice, paint our toenails and fingernails, etc.

I went into a Hair Salon this week, and immediately noticed the smell of hair products wafting in the air. A few minutes later, I realized that I could no longer smell the hair products. I had already gotten used to them, though breathing long term fumes might do me harm.

Consider how this applies to our sensitivity toward what is good versus bad, how we distance ourselves from others because of our culture.

- Americans have the need for the most distance from others than any other culture, about 4 feet from friends and extended family, 4-10 feet from acquaintances or colleagues, 10 or more feet from strangers.
- Per Edward T Hall and Proxemics, Beyond Culture, 1977, Europeans require half as much distance as the US in conversation, 4-7 feet.
- Some cultures want to touch you while they talk with you. For example, one of my patients from Vietnam put her hand on my arm the whole time we were talking.

That speaks to the distance we must gap between us and other humans, but how do we love someone we can't see?

- Jeremiah 3:14: "I am your husband."
- Isaiah 54:5 "Your maker is your husband – the Lord Almighty is his name."

What does it mean to love God with all your strength and heart? How do we go from being a stranger to God, then loving God with a love that is stronger than death? Thinks about how do we fall in love?

- What thoughts/feelings come to your mind when you think of falling in love with your girlfriend/boyfriend?
- What thought/feelings come to your mind when you think of falling in love with God?
- Differences? Similarities?

Compare: How do long distance relationships work?

Is loving God the same as knowing God? What does it mean to know God?



Spoken by Jesus in the sermon on the Mount: Matthew 7: 21-23,

“Not everyone who **says to me**, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord did we not **prophecy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?**’ Then I will tell them plainly, **‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’** The Complete Jewish Bible says, “**you workers of lawlessness!**”

Matthew 22:35-40,

“...an expert in the law, tested him with this questions: ‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’ Jesus replied:’ **Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.**’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: **‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ALL the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”**

1 John 4:8,

“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

1 John 3:1,

“How great is the love the Father has **LAVISHED on us**, that we should be called children of God? And that is what we are!”

How the Bible uses the word, “Knew.”?

Genesis 4:1, 17, 25 Yada – intimacy, NIV translated this way, “Adam made love to his wife”, “Cain made love to his wife” ...and they conceived...

“Seinfeld” TV show used this word to gloss over the details of intimate encounters, and it has become very popular usage in our culture to gloss over details of a story by saying, “and yada, yada, yada...”

Intimacy is dedicating ourselves to a person so we can engage them with our love and affection.

How does the cross help us to understand and intimately love God?

Jesus was giving his last talk to his disciples before his death in John 14, and said in verses 21, 23 and 24,

“Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who lives me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.....Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. **My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.** Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching.”

Peter thought he knew and loved and would die for Jesus, until after he denied Jesus. Proverbs 12:10,
“**The righteous know** the needs of their animals, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel.”

- Understanding the needs of those around us and taking care of them.



Jeremiah 22:15, 16, “Josiah...gave justice and help to the poor and needy and everything went well for him. **Isn’t that what it means to know me? Says the Lord.**”

1. Doing justice
2. Showing mercy to the poor and needy
3. Exemplifying a good and righteous character
4. Faithfully living out our covenant relationship with the Lord in every area of our life.

Luke 24:30-32, 45 – The story of how Jesus in disguise walked with the 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus after His resurrection. First He opened their minds, so they could understand scripture until their “Hearts Burned,” then He opened their eyes so they recognized Him.

How do we love perfectly?

1 John 4:15-21 to 1 John 5:1-4,

“If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God IS love. **Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.** This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.”

Jesus prayed his last prayer with the disciples prior to being crucified, in John 17:6, 26,

“This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.....I have made you known to them and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and **that I MYSELF may be in them.**”

The Signs of the Times, May 21, 1912, E.G.White.

“The death of Christ removes every argument that Satan could bring against the precepts of Jehovah. Satan has declared that men could not enter the kingdom of heaven unless the law was abolished, and a way devised by which transgressors could be reinstated into the favor of God, and made heirs of heaven. He made the claim that the law must be changed, that the reins of government must be slacked in heaven, that sin must be tolerated, and sinners pitied and saved in their sins. But every such plea was cast aside when Christ died as a substitute for the sinner.”



But the reverse is also true – fear casts out love, and turns into self protection

“Marriage is a Dance” seminar Ken and I attended years ago, run by men, which was very different for me. What I learned from men:

- Your marriage is like a sport team: no one person wins or loses. Either the whole team wins or the whole team loses. If one person is consistently right/winning, it makes the other person is consistently wrong/losing. Who would want their most loved team member to always be feeling like a loser?
- To be a winning team, do anything it takes, reading, brainstorming, counseling, praying, to come up with a win-win solution to your problem. If you don't, your whole team loses.
- They redefined unfaithfulness as creating fear in your spouse, not just running around on your spouse
- Love can be regained if you get into close proximity and remove the fear.
- Treat each other's hearts very carefully, as something of extreme value...really get to know your spouse, get a Phd in your spouse.

Sanctuary Service as a guide to getting to know and love God:

Come from outside the camp, through the Israelites, into the outer court, wash with the laver, eat the bread, see by the light, pray at the table of incense, go through Christ (the Curtain) and become covered with the gold from Christ as in the base of the ark (which was Acacia wood covered in gold), join with God above the ark, by Christ (the totally gold cover to the ark). The angels are watching and amazed by this whole process.

What is love in to us, to our culture?

We “love” those shoes, cute puppies, that dress, our children, all with the same word. Or we use similar sounding words like adore, captivated.....

How do you stay in love? What grows love in you?

- Truth
- Devotion
- Vulnerability
- Desire
- Worth
- Attractive
- Respond to being loved
- Amazement
- Appreciation
- Gratitude
- Learning about each other, not to take advantage, but to meet the other's needs
- Weed your garden
- Forgiveness
- Spend time with each other



- Share your life, not just your house

What decreases love?

- Lies
- Coercion
- Fear
- Indifference
- Lack of appreciation
- Allowing misunderstandings and resentments to grow
- Spending very little time with each other
- Taking advantage and presuming on the other
- Seeing marriage responsibilities as a duty, rather than as part of a partnership
- Disrespect

I have been asking people about how they relate to, know and love a God they can't see? Some of the responses have been:

- Use imagination to picture a scene and you and Jesus walking/talking together
- Remember miracles and answers to prayer that they and others have had.
- Other ways?

Luke 10:22-28,

"...No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, 'Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.'

"On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life? 'What is written in the Law? He replied, 'How do you read it?' He answered: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind,' and 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' "You have answered correctly.' Jesus replied, 'Do this and you will live.'

This was followed by the story of the Good Samaritan, who helped a man attacked by robbers. The brother was the Samaritan who had mercy on the wounded man, rather than the priest and Levite who walked past without helping.

Could you describe love as a hunger and thirst to be with the one you love and to share life with them?

Nehemiah 9:13-17,

"You came down on Mount Sinai; you spoke to them from heaven. You gave them regulations and laws that are just and right, and decrees and commands that are good. You made known to them your holy Sabbath and gave them commands, decrees and laws through your servant



Moses. In their hunger, you gave them bread from heaven and in their thirst you brought them water from the rock; you told them to go in and take possession of the land you had sworn with uplifted hand to give them. But they, our forefathers, became arrogant and stiff-necked, and did not obey your commands. They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles you performed among them.

Matthew 5:5,

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

What events in your life have caused you to love God more?

WEDNESDAY

A New Creation

What does it mean to be a new creation?

Third paragraph:

“It is the divine act in which God takes a person who is spiritually dead and breathes spiritual life into him.”

How have you experienced what this means?

- House flipping – renovation
- New direction
- Better understanding
- New purpose
- Higher goals
- Different methods
- Better outcome
- Can't keep doing the same things and expect a different outcome

What about claims that we can make ourselves into a new creation without Christ?

Example could be L. Ron Hubbard, American science fiction writer and founder of “Scientology” – said that, “Man has it within himself to make himself better.” It promises to help you “reach your full potential”. Scientology is defined as a religious system based on the seeking of self knowledge and spiritual fulfillment through graded courses of study and training. But it has been reported by people who have left the church that if you decide to leave the church, any of your family still in the church disconnects from you and never talks to you again, and the church does everything they can to try to destroy your life, your job, the respect others in your community might have for you.



THURSDAY

Final Remarks

Galatians 6: 16,

“Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.” The word translated as “Rule” literally refers to a straight rod or bar used by masons or carpenters for measuring. Figuratively, it came to mean rules or standards by which a person evaluates something.

Galatians 16: 17,

“Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.”

According to the **SDA Bible Commentary, Vol 6, page 989,**

“...Paul has marks that indicate whose slave he has become, and for him there is no other loyalty than to Christ...The scars Paul had received from his enemies while in the service of his Master spoke most eloquently of his devotion to Christ.”

- What are the “marks,” physical or otherwise, that you have because of your faith in Jesus?
- What has your faith cost you?

FRIDAY

Further Thought

Ellen G. White Comments, **The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 6, page 1113,**

“The cross of Calvary challenges, and will finally vanquish every earthly and hellish power. In the cross all influence centers, and from it all influence goes forth. It is the great center of attraction; for on it Christ gave up His life for the human race. This sacrifice was offered for the purpose of restoring man to his original perfection. Yea, more, it was offered to give him an entire transformation of character, making him more than a conqueror.

“Those who in the strength of Christ overcome the great enemy of God and man, will occupy a position in the heavenly courts above angels who have never fallen.

“Christ declares, ‘I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.’ If the cross does not find an influence in its favor, it creates an influence. Through generation succeeding generation, the truth for this time is revealed as present truth. Christ on the cross was the medium whereby mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other.

This is the means that is to move the world. (MS 56, 1899)”

Movie, “End of the Spear”. It depicted missionary men attempting to bring Christ to natives, but the natives killed them all upon arrival. These natives were all about taking revenge on the other tribes around them, so there were no old people in the village, as the other tribes would also take revenge and kill their people. Then the missionary’s wives went to the same people, took someone with them who had come from their own tribe and spoke their language. They did not take revenge on the killing of



their husbands, but helped the natives. **How they won the hearts of the natives was by telling them that when Jesus was speared, he did not spear back.** They understood that.

Discussion Questions:

In light of Paul's statement about having been crucified...to the world (Galatians 6:14):

- What relationship should Christians have with the world today?
- How should Christians relate to issues dealing with the environment, racism, abortion, etc.

I have an issue about legislating even good religious things, using the power of government to legislate morality. When that happened in the "Dark Ages" persecution inevitably happened, as the government/church tried to force others to believe as they did.

Consider this:

- If you don't believe in abortion, don't have one, if you don't believe current TV and movies are good for people, don't watch them, etc. "Vote with your feet".
- Being a part of changing people's heart through being used by the Holy Spirit, so that others won't want to do harmful things to themselves, each other, or the environment.



2017 Q4 The Book of Romans

Lesson 1: The Apostle Paul in Rome

I recently received an email from an online supporter, who pointed out that my comments about the KJV not being the version that Christ read, nor the most accurate English version, given its out of date King's English, could have been interpreted as making fun of people who value the King James Bible. Therefore, I want to make it clear I meant no offense to anyone. If my comments were offensive to you, please forgive me—no offense intended. I was merely attempting to bring an idea forward in such a way that people would stop and think about the issue.

A few weeks ago I read the following quotation and attributed it to EGW. I stated I had never heard this before, and there is a reason—She didn't write it. It was written by William Prescott. The confusion came because it was archived on the EGW estate website.

But the moral law, which is to be written in the heart, is the law of love. It is the expression of the very nature of the God of love as interpreted to us in the life and teachings of Christ, who said, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10 . **To keep this law is to love as God loves.** To the natural heart this is impossible, and so God has promised to give us a new heart: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." Ezekiel 36:26 . In harmony with this provision is the prayer of David: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a steadfast [margin] spirit within me." Psalm 51:10 . **We may call this conversion, or regeneration, or the new birth, or the new creation; but in any case it is the impartation of a new life from God, that life which is love, and is revealed in loving.** Those who have this experience are "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4), and that nature is expressed in obedience to the divine **law of love.**

"When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new covenant promise is fulfilled, 'I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.' And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? ... Here is the true test. If we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwells in us, our feelings, our thoughts, our purposes, our actions, will be in harmony with the will of God as expressed in the precepts of His holy law."

And this experience is guaranteed to us by the promise of God, and is provided for us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love: for we know that "the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us." Romans 5:5. "Salvation is of Jehovah." Jonah 2:9. Taken from the pamphlet, The Savior of the world - SOTW p. 81 <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/1409.319#333>



INTRODUCTION

The first paragraph states, “Five hundred years ago this month, Martin Luther, a 33-year-old theology professor, posted his Ninety-five Theses.”

Yes, Martin Luther took a stand against distortion, against church abuses, against ideas that enslaved the minds and hearts of people.

Yes, Martin Luther was a man who was true to his conscience and wouldn’t allow politics or church administration or church authority to intimidate him into compromising the truth, as he understood it.

Yes, Martin Luther said no to ecclesiastical authority and yes to following the Bible—and Martin Luther put the Bible in the language the people could read.

Did Martin Luther have all truth? Absolutely not, he had very strong anti-Semite beliefs and wrote quite offensively about the Jews. I have never read anything attributed to him that would indicate he rightly understood God’s law. He didn’t accept the books of James, Revelation, Jude and Hebrews as being inspired. These are just a few of the problems with Martin Luther. Given these, just to name a few...

Should we hold to the understandings and practices of Martin Luther?

How many would like to go to a doctor today who practiced medicine like they did 500 years ago?

How many would like to have your food prepared by cooks who stored and prepared food like they did 500 years ago?

How many would like to drink water from water sources they had 500 years ago?

How many would like to travel in conveyances they had 500 years ago?

How many would like to dress like they did 500 years ago?

How many would like marriage to function like it did 500 years ago?

How many women would like to give birth in the same setting they did 500 years ago?

Truth is unfolding—all truth, including Bible truth.

God is infinite and we are finite—how big is the gap?

We are to be moving forward in our knowledge, understanding and truth—for all eternity we are to grow in our knowledge of God.



Martin Luther was a man who moved forward in truth, a man who moved from darkness toward ever increasing light. Yet, We should not seek to promote the belief system that Martin Luther put forward—theologians who today promote Martin Luther’s theology do not move forward in the light, they promote darkness rather than light. Theologians who promote penal substitution, Martin Luther’s idea, have us moving away from truth and back into falsehood.

Such teachings don’t bring people to God, free people from oppression, transform people, but keep people trapped.

If you were in the sunlight walking into a cave you are moving away from light, but if you are deep in a cave and walking toward the entrance you are moving into the light. Both persons may at one point stand at the exact same place and be experiencing the exact same amount of light, yet one person is moving toward the light—This is Martin Luther 500 years ago moving out of the Dark Ages, but a person today who moves toward Luther’s theology is moving into darkness. All the theologians of today who insist on promoting Martin Luther’s ideas and penal substitution theology are moving away from the light.

We must acknowledge Martin Luther—give thanks to him and what he did to lead people out of the dark cave of misunderstanding—but we must NEVER go back to his understanding, we must move forward—always forward to ever more understanding and experience with our infinite God!

If you understand where Martin Luther was coming from you will have better understanding as to why he came up with penal substitution theology and why it was an improvement over where he was—yet is a terrible idea for anyone to believe today.

Two grand lies underpin the development of penal substitution—one lie Martin Luther was seeking to eliminate, but the other lie he did not.

The first lie is that God’s law functions like human law—merely a system of rules imposed that require legal adjudication and infliction of proper punishment by the ruling authority. Martin Luther never understood God’s design law—therefore all of his theology, while moving forward, is still infected with this core falsehood.

Why penal substitution? Because of the second lie that Martin Luther did recognize as a lie and wanted to eliminate from Christianity—the doctrine of purgatory.

The teaching of purgatory taught that if sinners didn’t get purged from sin in this life but were not totally damned, their souls would go to a place in between heaven and hell, in which the soul would be purged of any remaining sinfulness and eventually allowed into heaven. This held people in terrible fear, allowed for all kinds of abuses, such as extorting people for money. The old fund raising slogan of the day, “whenever a coin in the coffer rings a soul from purgatory springs.”

Thus, penal substitution was created by Martin Luther to directly undermine the church’s teaching on purgatory. In penal substitution it is taught that all sins of every person, past, present and future were



placed on Christ and the Cross, and Christ as the sinner's substitute was punished by God for all the sins of all the human race. Sinners must simply accept the legal payment of Jesus' innocent blood to their account in heaven. If they do then they are legally declared to be righteous, even though they are not, and when they die the credit from Jesus' is applied and no need for purgatory because all the punishment for the sin has already been carried out.

You can see how the idea of penal substitution was a step forward from the Dark Ages view of purgatory—however, it is a major move backward from the truth as we present it. And in fact, penal substitution itself is based on the lie that God's law functions like our law.

God prophesied in Scripture that the reformation will be completed by a group of people called the remnant, who come back to worship the Designer, who reject the imposed law construct, who throw off the penal legal ideas of salvation and instead experience the genuine healing and transformation available from the Remedy of Jesus Christ living in them.

The fourth paragraph states, "Yes, it was in Romans that Luther found the great truth of 'justification by faith' alone."

What is justification by faith?

What Luther taught—and what many theologians teach today—is not genuine justification by faith.

Justification by faith is also known as righteousness by faith because to be justified is to be made right or righteous.

Hebrews, speaking about the spiritually immature states, "Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness." (5:13)

And Hebrews goes on to describe what makes one immature, or still on milk: "Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death..." (6:1)

This is the do's and don'ts the penal legal theologies, focusing on law and deeds. Thus, according to Hebrews those who hold to penal substitution theology, which teaches that sin is behavioral, breaking God's imposed law, which requires imposed penalties, and that God sent Jesus to be our substitute in taking the punishment, are not acquainted with righteousness. Even their own position states that they are not acquainted with righteousness for they say: anyone who accepts the legal payment Jesus made will be declared righteous *even though they are not*.

By their own doctrinal statements they say that people are declared righteous *even though they are not* which means the people who follow this teaching are not righteous.

It is no wonder Christ has not returned. Christ is waiting for a people to throw off the lies about Him, to experience genuine healing, genuine righteousness, genuine transformation.



Now lest anyone think that because I am exposing the lies of penal substitution theology that I am rejecting the substitutionary nature of Jesus sacrifice for our salvation—let me make it abundantly clear.

We COULD NOT BE SAVED WITHOUT THE LIFE, DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST!!!!

Jesus was our substitute in that, Jesus took our terminal condition upon Himself and cured it, thus providing the healing remedy which transforms, heals, i.e. saves all who allow Him to do so. Or as the Scripture says:

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2Cor 5:21

Notices the great difference between what the Bible teaches and what penal substitution teaches. The Bible teaches that we *become* righteous, penal substitution teaches we are declared righteous even though we are not. The false imposed law has infected Christianity and resulted in a false legal salvation scheme that keeps millions trapped in a form of godliness that has no power to transform.

We must come back to the truth and experience God living within, renewed hearts and minds to be like Jesus.

Or if you prefer one of the founders of the SDA church, what the SDA church was supposed to be teaching today:

The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

This is genuine justification by faith. The penal substitutionary idea of justification by faith is a lie that gives people a false legal security but cheats them out of genuine victory, transformation, peace and healing.

The seventh paragraph states, “Yet, over the long years the Reformation has stalled.”

Why? What is your understanding of why the reformation has stalled?



What is obstructing its completion?

What message needs to go forward to complete the reformation?

Here is what the SDA church was founded to take to the world:

“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth... The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.” Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

The Reformation will only be complete when all the lies and distortions about God have been replaced with the truth and we present God in His genuine beauty and holiness—the glorious truth of His character of love—which REQUIRES we come back to design law and throw off the human imposed law construct, which means we must reject penal substitution theology. As long as we present God as the source of inflicted pain, suffering, and death—albeit legally applied—we fail to finish the Reformation. This is what Satan has done—he has infected Christianity with this lie about God's law so that theologians of all denominations actively present God in a false light.

The Reformation will only be finished when God is presented in His true character—just as Jesus revealed Him to be.

The last paragraph states, “We are Seventh-day Adventists, and we rest upon the principle of *sola scriptura*, Scripture alone...”

But if we allow Scripture to inform us of the God's books of truth, God's sources of enlightenment—what do we discover?

That the Scripture never teaches Scripture alone—isolated from science and nature and real life experiences. Instead, Scripture teaches that God has three threads of evidence to be harmonized: Scripture, science and experience.

Romans 1:20 God's divine nature is seen in what he has made so that men are without excuse.

All the passages in Scripture where we are instructed to meditate on God's creation and wonders—for what purpose? To learn about God.

The Bible says, “Taste and see that the Lord is good...” and Jesus told Thomas to put his hands in his side, stop doubting and believe based on his experience.



What did many of the parables of Jesus use to illustrate God's kingdom? Either nature or real life experiences or combinations of both.

And the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist church understood this:

The great storehouse of truth is the word of God—the written word, the book of nature, and the book of experience in God's dealing with human life. Here are the treasures from which Christ's workers are to draw. In the search after truth they are to depend upon God, not upon human intelligences, the great men whose wisdom is foolishness with God. Through His own appointed channels the Lord will impart a knowledge of Himself to every seeker. — {COL 125.2}

Jesus followed the divine plan of education. The schools of His time, with their magnifying of things small and their belittling of things great, He did not seek. **His education was gained directly from the Heaven-appointed sources; from useful work, from the study of the Scriptures and of nature, and from the experiences of life—God's lesson books,** full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart. {Ed 77.2}

Those who teach the imposed legal view, don't want to include science, nature and experience why? Because then their arbitrary law view will be eliminated. Thus they deny the Scriptures while claiming their authority comes from the Scriptures.

SABBATH

The third paragraph states, "And yet however localized the immediate issues that Paul was addressing, the principles behind them—in this case the question *how is a person saved?*—is universal."

Great question—how do you answer the question—how is a person saved?

What does it mean to be saved?

Before you answer it would you need to know from what a person is being saved? In other words, what is wrong that is causing a person to be lost, or damned, or to die?

What must God achieve in order for humans to be saved?

What must humans do in order to be saved?

What law lens do you understand this through?

When people have the false law lens they create false ideas about salvation and thus what was necessary. Here is a classic description of the false view:



Paul always speaks of people being reconciled to God (2Cor 5:19; Rom 5:10; Col. 1:20). He never refers to God being reconciled to us. **In spite of that fact**, however, we should recognize that sin affected both sides. Humanity's rebellion and sense of guilt alienated it from God, while **God was separated from humankind by His necessary hatred of and judgment on sin (His wrath). Christ's sacrificial death (propitiation) removed the barrier to reconciliation from God's side.** Knight, George, *The Cross of Christ*, p. 74.

This is a lie on many levels, thought to be true because of the belief that God's law works like our law, imposed rules that require punishment.

First, notice this view acknowledges what Scripture says that nowhere does Scripture teach something needed to be done to God for our salvation. But, "in spite of that fact..." we know better than Scripture.

This view claims that God was separates from humankind by His hatred of sin—No! This is a lie. God didn't separate from humankind because of sin, God BECAME human "He who knew no sin became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God."

God is like a physician whose child is sick, the physician father hates the sickness, but doesn't let the sickness drive the father away, no the father draws close to bring healing to the child!

Notice the penal substation view teaches the exact opposite of what the Bible teaches, it denies Scripture, it places barriers between the soul and God, it obstructs God's plan of salvation. It, based on the false legal view, is the reason the reformation has stalled.

What did John the Baptist teach? That Jesus is the Lamb of God who came to take away the *sin* of the world! It is our sin that separates us from God not some bad attitude with the heart of God.

So what is necessary for salvation? How do you explain it?

Here is another historic quote—what do you hear described here—do you agree or disagree? Why?

The work of gaining salvation is one of copartnership, a joint operation. There is to be co-operation between God and the repentant sinner. This is necessary for the formation of right principles in the character. Man is to make earnest efforts to overcome that which hinders him from attaining to perfection. **But he is wholly dependent upon God for success. Human effort of itself is not sufficient. Without the aid of divine power it avails nothing.** God works and man works. **Resistance of temptation must come from man, who must draw his power from God.** On the one side there is infinite wisdom, compassion, and power; on the other, weakness, sinfulness, absolute helplessness. {AA 482.2}

Would this be in harmony with Philippians 2:12,13:



Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

What is being described?

Is a legal adjustment being described where someone is declared righteous, even though they are not, or is genuine healing and transformation being described?

Why must we cooperate?

Why must we choose to align ourselves with God and choose to say no to evil?

When you made the choice to marry your spouse what did that choice do to you? Did it change you in some way? How? Did you close down your pursuit of other? Did your heart give its devotion, loyalty, trust to your spouse? Could such change occur by anything other than a voluntary choice?

Is this one of the reasons God uses the metaphor of marriage for Christ and the church?

In other words, can our characters be changed and we simultaneously retain our unique individuality without our active participation in choosing?

Again, what type of salvation process is this—is it legal or transformational?

Do you see how the penal legal model has infected Christianity and prevented millions from the true intimate relationship, healing and victory that God offers?

SUNDAY

Read fifth paragraph, “In his epistle to the Romans...” What were the hopes and promises made especially to the Jews?

Were the hopes and promises offered to the Jews of exclusive salvation, in other words, prior to Christ you had to be a Jew to be saved?

No—many non-Jews were saved in OT times, all the Patriarchs before Abraham, Melchizedek, Lot, Jethro, Naaman, Nebuchadnezzar, the shunammite woman, the Magi from the East.

Then what were the hopes and promises given to the Jews that now has been given to the Gentiles?

Was it not the privilege of being the conduits of the truth about God witnessed in their lives?

Although the whole earth is mine, ⁶ you will be for me a **kingdom of priests and a holy nation.** Ex 19:5,6



At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, ²⁹ so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) **and the aliens**, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come **and eat and be satisfied**, and so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. Dt 14:28,29

Was Israel not supposed to be the conduit of God's love, demonstrating the methods, principles and truth about God, putting His design laws of love into practice, and bring all nations to a knowledge of God?

Another quote on what the SDA church used to teach:

"Ye are the light of the world." **The Jews thought to confine the benefits of salvation to their own nation; but Christ showed them that salvation is like the sunshine. It belongs to the whole world.** The religion of the Bible is not to be confined between the covers of a book, nor within the walls of a church. It is not to be brought out occasionally for our own benefit, and then to be carefully laid aside again. **It is to sanctify the daily life**, to manifest itself in every business transaction and in all our social relations. {DA 306.5}

True character is not shaped from without, and put on; it radiates from within. If we wish to direct others in the path of righteousness, the principles of righteousness must be enshrined in our own hearts. Our profession of faith may proclaim the theory of religion, but it is our practical piety that holds forth the word of truth. The consistent life, the holy conversation, the unswerving integrity, the active, benevolent spirit, the godly example,—these are the mediums through which light is conveyed to the world. {DA 307.1}

What did you hear?

What is being described—design law, healing, transformation of character, restoration to genuine righteousness. Again and again and again, we find that the penal legal view is not found in Scripture, it is a lie of the false law construct.

Yesterday I did a live skype interview for a broadcast that broadcasts into Israel. It was hosted by a Messianic Jew, a man who was raised Jewish but has accepted Jesus as his Savior.

We talked about a lot of things—but what do you think the greatest obstacle to reaching Jews with the gospel of Jesus is?

Christians—look at the history of what so-called Christians have done to the Jews—ostracized, persecuted, imprisoned. We are talking about Martin Luther today, he wrote horrible things about the Jews. In fact I heard a radio interview this week in which a Christian was discussing Jesus with a Jewish professor in Israel and the professor said, "I only have one question for you: Is Martin Luther your brother?"



Many attribute Martin Luther's writings to directly impacting the holocaust. And the majority of those who participated in the holocaust would have identified themselves as Christians.

But it didn't start out this way. If you read the New Testament, the Gentile converts to Christianity were focused on taking up offerings to send to Jerusalem to reach the Jews. Yet all of this changed—why? Because the NT church operated on design law of love, but the idea of God's law changed to imposed rules and Christianity changed from believers who shared to bless others, to believers who carried out the Crusades, inquisition and many other atrocities. And which the Bible states will one day do it all again—no one can buy or sell save him who has the mark of the beast. Coercion in the name of God will occur again.

MONDAY

The question near the bottom asks, "What important principle can we take away regarding the whole question of mission from the fact that Paul sought to help from an established church in order to evangelize a new area?"

What is a principle? A design parameter, or protocol upon which reality works.

We talk about design laws a lot in here, can you think of one described above?

The law of love—which is the law of giving—absolutely. And it is also described as the law of impartation:

One of the divine plans for growth is impartation. **The Christian is to gain strength by strengthening others.** "He that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Proverbs 11:25). This is not merely a promise; **it is a divine law, [what kind of law?] a law by which God designs that the streams of benevolence, like the waters of the great deep, shall be kept in constant circulation, continually flowing back to their source. In the fulfilling of this law is the secret of spiritual growth. . . . {Amazing Grace 285.4}**

This is brilliant—this is the truth—this is design law!

Can you think of ways to sabotage this design?

- Getting people to hoard instead of give—by inciting fear, but undermining trust in God
- Selfishness—which is increased with fear and distrust of God
- What about over-giving? What about a person who wants to donate blood so they go and donate a pint every day, what happens then?
 - So, what if the person who wants to donate blood every day is told no by the blood bank? Is the blood bank being unkind, unloving?
 - What of the farmer who wants to donate food and doesn't want to be selfish so the farmer won't eat one morsel of food for himself—what happens then?



- What of the farmer who limits how much he gives away, keeping back seed stock, and enough to provide for his staff, his family, and pay for all his expenses—is he being selfish?
- So one way to sabotage this principle of giving is to trick compassionate people into giving beyond sustainable limits to the point of exhaustion, burnout, or even death.
- What of a nation who sets boundaries limiting how many people it allows into its borders every year—is this limitation necessarily an act of selfishness, or could it be done because the citizens of that nation want to help others and want to be a resource to benefit the less fortunate, but need to set boundaries to keep it sustainable?

The bottom pink section reads “Notice how much Paul’s great desire was to minister and to serve. What motivates you and your actions.”

This is one of the reasons for Come and Reason Ministries, to share, to give, to reach others, to bring real peace and healing. This is why we make so many materials to give away.

TUESDAY

Read last paragraph, “Not by Paul’s sermons...” What do we learn from this?

What events reached Nebuchadnezzar with the gospel? Was it not three friends of God being persecuted and thrown into a fire?

What events reached Darius with the gospel—what is not Daniel in the lion’s den?

What started Paul’s trouble with his conscience that the Damascus Road experienced brought to fruition? Was it not Stephen being stoned?

What helped spread the gospel in the first century? Was it not the witness of the martyrs?

What is the point?

Can some of the objectively wrong actions, painful events, even evil perpetrated upon us by others, be turned to witness the gospel if we allow God to empower us with grace in how we deal with the mistreatment?

But what happens if we embrace the world’s methods and believe we must fight to defend our rights?

What is the method in which we are to fight? 2Cor 10:3-5, we do not wage war as the world does...



WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Beloved of God...” What makes God’s love more special to those who have chosen Him?

Does God care more in His heart for those who have chosen Him than He does for those who have rejected Him?

Or, is it that those who choose God and respond positively to His love are special in that they participate, experience, grow, are transformed by His love and thus within THEM they increase their capacity for knowing, appreciating, responding, engaging, conversing, sharing with God. In other words, they are enabled to delve into deeper and deeper levels of loving interaction with God than those who refuse Him?

Thus, the love relationship becomes special in what it does within those who respond, but God doesn’t have a different disposition toward those who refuse His love!

Read the fourth paragraph, “*Saints* is the translation...” What does “holy” mean? Does it mean to be set apart by God? Set apart from what? From what does God want to set us apart? Is it not sin, evil, selfishness, fear, guilt, shame?

So, if God separates us from sinfulness, selfishness, fear, guilt, shame, what is He doing in us? He is healing us, restoring us, recreating us into His image—which is another way of saying He is making us right, or righteous, which is justification. And this is what it means to be holy—to be righteous—which is restored to God’s design, which is healthiness!

Read last paragraph, “The great news of the gospel...” Any concerns about the precision of this language?

Was God’s original intent for all humanity to find salvation in Jesus—or was God’s original intent for Adam and Eve to stay loyal and never sin?

The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of "the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal." Romans 16:25, R. V. **It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God's throne.** [principles mean what? and what is the law which is being described?] From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. **God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence,** and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. {DA 22.2}



THURSDAY

Read bottom section, “Here are three items that Paul selects as worthy of note in Roman Christians’ experience: (read all three)

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church

12702 9th Street

Garden Grove, CA 92840

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

Phone: (714) 534-1987

Fax: (714) 534-3877

Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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

November 17,18, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr. SDA church in California.



2017 Q4 The Book of Romans Lesson 2

The Controversy

SABBATH

“The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” John 1: 17.

Is the apostle John correct? Was the “law” given by Moses? It’s called the “Mosaic law,” so if not, then by whom?

Are we supposed to read Scripture concretely, or with another, more open, mindset? Is it possible that John, himself – the near constant companion of our Savior for 3+ years, had an “Imperial Law” mindset?

“The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Assuming that God Himself gave “the law” to Moses, then is there no grace and truth in the “Mosaic” law?

Consider the following:

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions **given to Moses**. PP 364.

What was the state of the Israelites at the time of the presentation of the “Mosaic” law?

What was the level of their moral development?

What kind of people *needed* a law on the books telling them not to commit incest [Lev. 18: 6-18.]?

What kind of people *needed* a law telling them not to avoid child sacrifice or bestiality [Lev 18: 21, 23]?

What was the level of their moral development at the time of Christ?

They were, by then, consummate “law” keepers and legislators. The written law was their bread and water. Might they have needed a deeper *revelation* of the same “grace and truth” present in the Mosaic law?



We need to understand that **EVERY** word of the imposed [written] law that came from God's mouth is a revelation of some aspect of His Design [natural] law, and therefore, a revelation of some facet of His Character of Love, and therefore, Life.

Here's what the founder of our church had to say on the subject:

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. Matt. 4:4.

SUNDAY

A Better Covenant

But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises. Heb. 8:6.

From the lesson:

"Perhaps the greatest difference between the religion of the Old Testament and that of the New is the fact that the New Testament era was introduced by the coming of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. He was sent by God to be the Savior. People could not ignore Him and expect to be saved. Only through the atonement He provided could their sins be forgiven. Only by the imputation of His perfect life could they stand before God without condemnation. In other words, salvation was through the righteousness of Jesus—and nothing else."

There's truth and error in this paragraph. Which is which?

Why was the "new" covenant better than the "old" covenant? [Hint: see Heb. 8: 9 as to the problem with the "old" one.]

Was there anything wrong with the "old" covenant *from God's side* of the contract? Of course not, the covenant was broken by the children of Israel soon after it was ratified. The bride had an affair during the honeymoon.

How is the "new" covenant built on "better" promises?

Are God's promises dependent on His mood?

Was He in a better mood for the "new" covenant?

Also from the lesson:



“Meanwhile, the moral requirements remain unchanged in the New Testament, because these were founded in the character of God and of Christ. Obedience to God’s moral law is just as much a part of the New Covenant as it is of the Old Testament.”

WHY? ^^^^^^^^^^^

MONDAY

Jewish Laws and Regulations

The lesson does an admirable job of distilling the various laws and regulations in to 5 broad categories [see below].

“It is convenient for us to classify Old Testament laws into various categories: (1) moral law, (2) ceremonial law, (3) civil law, (4) statutes and judgments, and (5) health laws.

This classification is in part artificial. In actuality some of these categories are interrelated, and there is considerable overlap. The ancients did not see them as separate and distinct.

The moral law is summed up by the Ten Commandments(Exod. 20:1–17).

This law sums up the moral requirements of humanity. These ten precepts are amplified and applied in various statutes and judgments throughout the first five books of the Bible. These amplifications show what it meant to keep the law of God in various situations. Not unrelated are the civil laws. These, too, are based on the moral law. These define a citizen’s relationship to civil authorities and to fellow citizens. They name the penalties for various infractions.

The ceremonial law regulated the sanctuary ritual, describing the various offerings and the individual citizen’s responsibilities. The feast days are specified and their observance defined. The health laws overlap the other laws. The various laws relating to uncleanness define ceremonial uncleanness, and yet they also go beyond this to include hygienic and health principles. Laws regarding clean and unclean meats are based on physical considerations.”

Which. Law. Lens. Are you looking through?

TUESDAY

As the Custom of Moses

At a lodging place on the way, the LORD met Moses¹ and was about to kill him. ²⁵ But Zipporah took a flint knife, cut off her son’s foreskin and touched Moses’ feet with it. “Surely you are a



bridegroom of blood to me,” she said. ²⁶ So the LORD let him alone. (At that time she said “bridegroom of blood,” referring to circumcision.) Exodus 4: 24-26.

On the way from Midian, Moses received a startling and terrible warning of the Lord’s displeasure. An angel appeared to him in a threatening manner, as if he would immediately destroy him. No explanation was given; but Moses remembered that he had disregarded one of God’s requirements; yielding to the persuasion of his wife, he had neglected to perform the rite of circumcision upon their youngest son. He had failed to comply with the condition by which his child could be entitled to the blessings of God’s covenant with Israel; and such a neglect on the part of their chosen leader could not but lessen the force of the divine precepts upon the people. Zipporah, fearing that her husband would be slain, performed the rite herself, and the angel then permitted Moses to pursue his journey. In his mission to Pharaoh, Moses was to be placed in a position of great peril; his life could be preserved only through the protection of holy angels. But while living in neglect of a known duty, he would not be secure; for he could not be shielded by the angels of God. PP 255.

Why did / do the Jews place such a heavy significance on circumcision?

From the bottom section in the lesson:

“What is your attitude toward church leadership? How cooperative are you? Why is cooperation so important? How could we function if everyone was doing only what he or she wanted to do, independent of the larger body?”

WEDNESDAY

The Gentile Believers

With them they sent the following letter:

The apostles and elders, your brothers,

To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:

Greetings.

²⁴ We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. ²⁵ So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul— ²⁶ men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷ Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. ²⁸ It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: ²⁹ **You are to abstain from food sacrificed to**



idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

Farewell. Acts 15: 23-29.

What do these [highlighted] requirements have in common?

Which laws are being observed [Hint: it's not the 10 Commandments]?

From the bottom section:

“Could we, in some ways, be laying on people burdens that are not necessary but are more from tradition than divine command? If so, how?”

THURSDAY

Paul and The Galatians

From the Lesson:

“It is an oversimplification to ask whether Paul is speaking of ceremonial or moral laws in Galatians and Romans. Historically, the argument

was whether or not Gentile converts should be required to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. The Jerusalem Council already had ruled on this question, but some refused to follow its decision.

Some read in Paul's letters to the Galatians and the Romans evidence that the moral law—the Ten Commandments (or, in truth, only the fourth commandment)—is no longer binding on Christians. Yet, they are missing the point of the letters, and missing the historical context and issues that Paul was addressing. Paul, as we'll see, stressed that salvation was by faith alone and not by the keeping of the law, even the moral law. Yet that isn't the same thing as saying that the moral law shouldn't be kept. Obedience to the Ten Commandments was never an issue; those who make it an issue are reading back into texts a contemporary issue, one that Paul wasn't dealing with. **How do you respond to those who claim the Sabbath is no longer binding upon Christians? How can you show the truth of the Sabbath in a way that does not compromise the integrity of the gospel?”**

WHICH LAW LENS?



The Book of Romans Lesson 3 4Q 2017

The Human Condition

SABBATH

Memory verse: “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Rom 3:23

What does this mean?

Does it mean all have broken a rule? Or does it mean all have a condition of heart that contaminates all their decision-making?

Read first paragraph: “Early on in the book...” I think this is very well said, but before we explore the meaning, let’s read the first paragraph in **FRIDAY**’s lesson:

“Thus the biblical terminology...” Do you hear these two paragraphs saying the same thing, or do you hear them differently? If differently, what do you hear differently about how they describe sin?

How do you understand sin? Is it merely behavior, or is it the heart condition that leads to the behavior?

And at its root, what is sin? It is untruthfulness and selfishness. As the Scripture says,

“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?” Jer 17:9
NKJV

So, what is the human condition?

Ephesians 2:1 “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins” NIV84

What condition is this? It is a terminal condition—how did we get this condition?

Ps 51:5: “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” NIV84

Do we need to feel guilty about having this condition? Why or why not?

What does this condition cause—unless treated? Sins, which are what? Actions that are selfish and ultimately lead to the sacrifice of others to advance self.

So, the sins, the bad deeds we have all done, are they the problem, or are they the symptoms of the problem?

What did Jesus say in Matthew 5? That the bad deeds are symptoms of the sick heart condition.



So, what is needed to deal with this human condition—a legal solution or a healing solution?

From Oswald Chambers:

Sin is something I am born with and cannot touch— only God touches sin through redemption. It is through the Cross of Christ that God redeemed the entire human race from the possibility of damnation through **the heredity of sin. God nowhere holds a person responsible for having the heredity of sin, and does not condemn anyone because of it.** Condemnation comes when I realize that Jesus Christ came to deliver me from this heredity of sin, and **yet I refuse to let Him do so.** From that moment I begin to get the seal of damnation. **“This is the condemnation [and the critical moment], that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light.” (John 3:19)** <http://utmost.org/the-nature-of-degeneration/>

Remember the analogy of an HIV infected couple having an baby born HIV infected? What did the baby do wrong? This is all humans since Adam and Eve.

Now two quotations from Ellen White, one of the founders of the SDA church:

All sin is selfishness. Satan's first sin was a manifestation of selfishness. He sought to grasp power, to exalt self... **The sowing of seeds of selfishness in the human heart was the first result of the entrance of sin into the world.** God desires every one to understand the evil of selfishness, and to co operate with Him in guarding the human family against its terrible, deceptive powers. The design of the gospel is to confront this evil by means of remedial missionary work, and to destroy its destructive power by establishing enterprises of benevolence. {Worker's Bulletin, September 9, 1902 par. 3}

There is a great work to be done for many of us. Our minds and characters must become as the mind and character of Christ. **Selfishness is inwrought in our very being. It has come to us as an inheritance, and has been cherished by many as a precious treasure.** No special work for God can be accomplished until self and selfishness are overcome. To many everything connected with themselves is of great importance. Self is a center, around which everything seems to revolve. {Historical Sketches 138.7}

So, what do Oswald Chambers and EGW say regarding sin? It is a condition of being, with which we were born and did not choose, but we have the option of choosing Jesus who can heal us from this condition.

SUNDAY

Romans 1:16,17:



For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. **17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, “The one who is righteous will live by faith.” NRSV

The Lesson asks what these verses mean to you?

What is the gospel? Good news? About what?

Well I did a web search asking the question “What is the gospel?”

Here are some of the top answers:

What exactly do Christians mean when they talk about the “gospel of Jesus Christ”? Since the word “gospel” means “good news,” when Christians talk about the gospel, they’re simply telling the good news about Jesus! It’s a message from God saying, “**Good news! Here is how you can be saved from my judgment!**” <https://www.crossway.org/articles/what-is-the-gospel-2/>

Is this the gospel? This is like the cartoon I have shown in some of my lectures of Jesus standing at a door knocking and the captions read:

“Let me in”
“For what?”
“So I can save you”
“From what?”
“From what I will do to you if you don’t let me in!”

Is this really good news?

Here is another online description from an article in *Christianity Today*:

“Therefore, the gospel is the truth that we are all sinners or **criminals before God, and under the sentence of eternal death** or separation from God and all that is good. In his love for us, God the Father sent God the Son to earth to become a man. Jesus was born without a sin nature, and lived a sinless life. He allowed himself to be crucified, and as he hung on the cross, **God the Father took all of my sins, put them on Jesus and punished him in my place.**

“**Jesus took the wrath of God for me**, and he died. His body was placed in a tomb, and on the third day he came back from the dead, never to die again. God in his love and grace has overcome our two enemies of sin and death, and those who acknowledge to Jesus that they are sinners, and trust him to save them from eternal condemnation are forgiven their sins and given the gift of life eternal with God.” <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2015/june/what-is-gospel.html>

Is this good news?



In this description, from where does death originate? Who is the source of pain, punishment and death?

God—this is the false gospel—the lie—the bad news that God is the source of inflicted pain and death and thus we need to create theologies that protect us from God.

We teach God requires human sacrifice to assuage His wrath, for if God was presented with the sinless blood of His Son He would lash out against us and destroy us all—or worse torture us all in hell for eternity. Is such a depiction of God really good news?

This distorted gospel is all based in the lie that God's law functions like human law—imposed rules requiring judicial oversight. But we are called to take the message to the world that we are to worship Him who made the heavens, earth, sea and all that is in them—we are to worship this Designer whose laws are the protocols upon which life is built and any break in those laws results in ruin and death unless remedied by the Designer.

So what is the good news? God is not like Satan has portrayed Him to be.

What lie did Satan tell in heaven? What is the truth that Satan obscured to angels and then to Adam and Eve? Is it not the good news about God?

- Must God hide Himself from sin, lest if God sees our sin God will have no self-control and lash out in anger and wrath and destroy us? Or did God become sin in order to save us?
- Is the problem with sin that God is offended, or angry, or must inflict punishment? If God would restrain Himself and refuse to lash out and destroy sinners, could sinners live forever in sin?
- Is the real problem of sin from God's behavior toward sinners, or what sin does to sinners?

So what is the gospel? It is the good news about God—that God is good, truth, love—always and never deviates to anything else in any way.

How is this good news the power of God for salvation?

Remember the cascade of destruction—if you believe your spouse is having an affair but they are not—what happens?

- lies believed break the circle of love and trust
- broken love and trust results in fear and selfishness
- fear and selfishness results in acts of sin
- acts of sin damage—a terminal condition

Healing Cascade:



- Truth believed destroys lies and wins to trust
- In trust open the heart and God pours His love in (character renewal)
- In love and trust we engage in acts of love, service, altruism
- Acts of service, love, altruism witness the kingdom of love and we grow in godliness

But the entire healing cascade starts with the truth about God—thus Jesus said, “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” Jn 8:32

The truth about what? God.

This is why life eternal is knowing God—Jn 17:3 and that by his death Christ destroyed him who holds the power of death that is the devil Heb 2:14. Satan’s power is to get us to believe lies about God that prevent us from knowing and therefore trusting God.

How does the evil one do this?

Therefore, what is Satan’s strategy? To prevent people from knowing the truth about God.

How? By presenting false gospels that misrepresent God as a being we need protection from—which is the predominate view in Christianity—and the reason for this is that Christians have accepted the lie about God’s law, which was prophesied in Daniel 7:25—that God’s law is like human law.

This is what Paul warned about in Thessalonians that the man of sin would set himself up in God’s temple proclaiming himself to be god. How? By getting Christians to teach that God is like Satan in character, a being who is the source of inflicted pain and suffering, an arbitrary being who makes up rules and then uses coercive power to enforce his rules.

This is why the sanctuary (Spirit temple) needs cleansing—it needs cleansing from the lies about God which have so deeply infected Christianity.

This is what I expose in my latest book *The God-Shaped Heart*

What does it mean the righteous, or just, shall live by faith?

That the righteous or just, are those who choose to do what they know is in harmony with God’s design (i.e. what is right or just) and then trust God with the outcomes.

So these verses from *The Remedy*:

I am not ashamed of spreading the good news about God and his character, methods and principles, as this is God’s power which heals everyone who believes and trusts in him: firstly to the Jews—those initially called to assist in spreading the Remedy, and then to the Gentiles—those most recently called to help spread the Remedy.¹⁷ For the good news is a revelation of



God's true righteousness—character, methods and principles—that restores trust in God and results in re-creation of a righteous and Christlike character in humans, just as it is written: "The Christlike will live by choosing what is right in governance of themselves, and by trusting God with how things turn out."

In the lesson a common misconception is promoted in point 1, in which they define the gospel. It is absolutely true that the Messiah has come and because of what He achieved we can, by placing our trust in Him, experience healing from sin and everlasting life. Absolutely true—and it is also true this is very good news for us sinners.

Yet, it is not true that this is *the* gospel, i.e. the good news that heals and sets us free. The good news that we can be saved is the **result of the gospel**, it is not *the* gospel—*the* gospel is the good news about God.

The Bible in Revelation 14:6 says the gospel is the “eternal gospel” that means it is good news eternally—both in eternity past as well as in eternity future—and the only good news that is eternally true, is the good news about God—the only eternal being, and the only genuinely good being.

The salvation of humanity is wonderfully good news that **is *the result*** of accepting and trusting in the eternal gospel—that God is our friend, that God is trustworthy, that God is love, and His methods are always in harmony with love and that God in Christ sacrificed Himself to fix all the problems that sin caused in His universe.

This is critical to recognize—remember that lies believe break the circle of love and trust and incite fear and selfishness. Healing starts with truth that destroys lies and wins to trust. But, if we replace the good news about God, with the good news that Jesus died so we can be saved, then we leave out the healing truth we need in order to have the lies about God removed and truly be won to trust. And instead we create false theologies that function to protect or hide us from God. This is what has corrupted Christianity and which we are called to oppose—the finishing of the Reformation is the elimination from our thinking the lies about God which stem from the false law and the replacement of the true gospel with this subtle distortion.

The bottom pink section states, “Do you ever struggle with assurance?” What are the reasons that cause this struggle with assurance of salvation?

Everything that undermines our true knowledge of God!

Life eternal is knowing God—JN 17:3, thus anything that undermines this true knowledge will undermine assurance.

What theologies do this?

The legal theologies that focus our minds on our sins, our misdeeds and our need for accounting—we must confess, we must get pardon, we must get forgiveness—and oh my, what if I forgot a sin and



never asked for the blood of Jesus to be applied? Is that one still paid for or will it keep me out of heaven?

What if I have a moment in which I lose my temper and curse someone and then get hit by a car and die before I can confess—is that sin pardoned or does it remain on the record books and will I have to die for it?

Such horrible ideas are all based on the lie that God's law functions like our laws, rules imposed which require imposed punishments, rather than the truth that God's laws are design laws and we have a condition which needs healing.

The question is not do we have symptoms, the question is are we partaking of Jesus—the Remedy?

MONDAY

The first sentence of the first paragraph states, “Amazingly enough, some people actually challenge the idea of human sinfulness, arguing that people are basically good.”

What do you understand sin to be?

I wrote the second chapter in the book *Servant God*, the chapter title is “What Is Sin?”

When I asked high school students to write down the answer to that question these were some of the answers:

- An act contrary to that for which God stands
- Something that separates us from God
- Doing something morally wrong
- Anything evil or unjust
- Something that brings us down
- The absence of anything good/anything not of God
- Doing anything you know deep inside is wrong
- Bad stuff
- A bad thing that Satan discovered and brought upon us
- The cause of all pain and suffering
- When you do something you feel guilty about
- Anything that makes God unhappy
- Something to be forgiven
- Whatever you do wrong, yet don't even care what you did

The next two answers were submitted by more than 10% of the students:

- Sin is not following the Ten Commandments



- Sin is going against the will of God

What do you hear in these descriptions? Have they gotten to the root of sin, or are they dancing around it? Are their answers like the following answers to the question: What is disease?

- Something that goes against what health stands for
- Something that requires quarantine
- Something that is unhealthy
- Something that is just bad or sick
- Something that makes you feel bad
- Doing anything you know deep inside is bad for you
- A destructive element Satan discovered and brought upon us

Do these descriptions really tell you what disease is or do they dance around it describe some of the results of disease or actions we take because of disease?

Two students had a different view of what sin is:

- The absence of love
- The opposite of God's character—sin is selfishness

These two would be like saying:

- disease is breaking the laws of health and cutting oneself off from the source of life
- disease is the opposite of God's design for life

So the majority responses were descriptions of some of the consequences, some of the symptoms, some of the behaviors that demonstrate sin—the minority describe the underlying cause for those symptoms.

The Bible describes sin in these two ways:

- Sin is lawlessness or transgression of the law (1Jn 3:4)
- Everything that does not come from faith is sin (Rom 14:23)

Are these describing something different or the same thing? How do you explain these verses?

What law? The law of love, which is design law, the protocols upon which life is built—every breath....

And what is it that causes love to be breached? It is broken trust, which happens when lies are believed.



Thus, when we don't trust God, we don't experience His love in our hearts, this results in fear and selfishness and thus we act to protect self rather than to live in harmony with God's design of love.

TUESDAY

The lesson talks about how there was this hope that with the twentieth century humanity would improve, advance, and move past its brutal past—however it was one of the most destructive and bloody in human history.

What do we learn from this? What were contributing factors to this?

There was a movement in the US in the early twentieth century called Eugenics, which arose from Darwinism, and is the idea that humanity can be improved by selective breeding. If we take the strongest and best amongst us and breed them together we can get subsequent generations stronger and more advanced—this is the idea.

It was started in America and led to forced sterilization of many people who were deemed genetically inferior, this would include those with mental handicaps and one of the primary places the forced sterilizations were carried out was in psychiatric hospitals.

It was the writings of thought leaders in America that influenced the Nazi's and led to the movement in Germany of a pure Arian bloodline and ultimately to killing those deemed to be genetically inferior.

Thus, introducing the philosophy of a godless universe in which the strong survive passing on the better genetic material to improve subsequent generations led to some of the most horrible moments in human history.

Now, does this mean that if people believe in God they don't commit atrocities?

It all depends on the God in which they believe—whenever people reject the truth about the God of love—as revealed in Jesus—and instead worship a god who is the imposer of law and must impose punishments for law-breaking, then those people eventually become abusive of others—consider the Crusades, Inquisition and many other atrocities carried out by those who claim a belief in God. Consider the Muslim extremists today.

The only protection is to come back to the truth about God as Jesus revealed.

The lesson asks us to read Romans 1:22,23 and answer “How do we see this principle being manifested now?”

Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

How do we see this manifested today?



- Sports teams?
- Movie stars?
- Cars, houses?
- What about a god who requires the blood of a human sacrifice to pay him for sin so he won't kill you?

Consider this quotation from one of the founders of the SDA church:

Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. **He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour.** He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God. {FLB 59.8}

Do we have Baal worship in Christianity today? Do you remember who Baal was?

Do we see people today worshipping a false god and thereby being corrupted by it?

Remember what happened in Rwanda? Those who worshipped an authoritarian god participated in genocide while those who worshipped a God of love protected the refugees.

Or, studies that demonstrate that the worship of an authoritarian god increases the likelihood of child and spouse abuse, but the worship of a God of love reduces the risk.

Yes, we become like the God we admire and worship and sadly Christianity has been infected with a distorted view of God, which is based on accepting a lie about His law—namely that it functions like human law.

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “But he wasn’t...” What does it mean they were “condemned by God’s law”?

Is there a difference in being condemned legally and then sentenced to an imposed death, and being diagnosed as terminal and condemned by the terminal state to die unless remedy is received?

So, how do we hear this? Is God using law books to judge our behavior and condemning us to die at His hand, or is God diagnosing our condition as being out of harmony with how life is construct by Him to exist and that we will die if we refuse to let Him cure us?

Which version leads you to trust God?



What was the problem the Jews had that Paul was working to disabuse them of? That sin was a matter of behavior and therefore righteousness was a matter of behavior—not so, sin is a state of being out of harmony with God and His design in heart and mind that leads to destructive behaviors. Righteousness is being healed, restored or set right in heart and mind and results in healthy, kind, loving, Christlike behaviors.

THURSDAY

Romans 2:4 states that that kindness of God leads to repentance—why?

Read first paragraph, “We should notice...” This is well said—it is God’s kindness that leads us to trust Him and repent, turn to Him for healing.

They are so right that God never uses coercion!

Question: what is coercion?

According to the dictionary coercion is: “use of force or intimidation to obtain compliance.”

Hmmm... then what would it mean if God used His power to inflict punishment upon those who refused to repent?

It would be coercion, which would violate the law of liberty, destroy love, incite rebellion and destroy individuality. Thus, we can only have harmony with Scripture and reality when we reject the imposed law that puts God in the role of inflicting punishment and return to design law which has the punishment coming out from the deviation from design and God in the role of healing and saving.

The lesson states in the last paragraph, “human effort can’t bring salvation...”

Why not?

- Because the payment has to be sinless or God won’t accept it?
- Because the ransom price was a sinless life and we don’t have one to give?
- Because God wouldn’t be satisfied and His wrath would not be propitiated without a sinless offering?
- Because we could never procure the remedy for our condition?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 3 and 4



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church

12702 9th Street

Garden Grove, CA 92840

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

Phone: (714) 534-1987

Fax: (714) 534-3877

Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

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

November 17,18, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr. SDA church in California.



2017 Q4 The Book of Romans - Lesson 4

Justification By Faith

To be perfectly honest, I have found this quarterly to be a challenge thus far...and I found this week's lesson to be a challenge. And one of the reasons I feel so strongly about this is illustrated by this letter the ministry recently received:

"Dear Dr. Jennings, Just finishing reading *The God-Shaped Heart* and have such a sense of relief on the one hand and a sense of being cheated by our church for 77 years not knowing the real character of God. The importance was always placed on a checklist instead of His character. What a relief to know the TRUTH! I'm sharing information about the book with others."

I relate to so much of this - the relief and gratitude and sense of being cheated and sadness for many missed opportunities.

"There is something wrong in Christianity. God's law of love - his design protocols on which reality is built to operate - has been replaced with a fallen human-law construct, and god has been falsely presented as a punishing dictator...and one who needs to be appeased, at the worst, even with the blood of his own son in order to survive His wrath. This idea, above all others, is at the root of Christianity's impotence, its inability to connect to the power of God for real healing and transformation of the heart." *The God-Shaped Heart* (Jennings, 2017).

And if you had any doubts about if or how deep this infection runs in Christianity, and even in our own denomination...this lesson and this quarterly should provide some evidence.

And if you think this is something new or that the church didn't used to teach how this false law construct and penal substitution theology hardens hearts and prevents real heart transformation from taking place (having a form of godliness but no power), one of the founders of our church describes it this way:

"Today a large part of those who compose our congregations are dead in trespasses and sins. They come and go like the door upon its hinges. For years they have complacently listened to the most solemn, soul-stirring truths, but they have not put them in practice. Therefore they are less and less sensible of the preciousness of truth. The stirring testimonies of reproof and warning do not arouse them to repentance. The sweetest melodies that come from God through human lips—**justification by faith**, and the righteousness of Christ—do not call forth from them a response of love and gratitude. Though the heavenly Merchantman displays before them the richest jewels of faith and love, though He invites them to buy of Him "gold tried in the fire," and white raiment" that they may be clothed, and "eye salve" that they may see, they steel their hearts against Him, and fail to exchange their lukewarmness for love and zeal. While



making a profession, they deny the power of godliness. If they continue in this state, God will reject them. They are unfitting themselves to be members of His family. {CCh 67.3}

The memory text is a familiar one from Romans 3:28:

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”

What does it mean to be “justified”?

- 1) Having a good, legitimate reason for something,
- 2) show that something is reasonable, right, or true,
- 3) printed on a page so that the letters at the right or left edge form a straight line,
- 4) **declared** or made righteous in the sight God.

In fact, this is from www.biblestudytools.com:

“Justification is the declaring of a person to be just or righteous. It is a legal term signifying acquittal...”

Accordingly it is not surprising that salvation is often viewed in legal terms. Justification points to the acquittal of one who is tried before God. And in Scripture it is not too much to say that righteousness is basically a legal term. The law that mattered was, of course, the law of God, so that righteousness signified conformity to the law of God...which, of course, it does - but ONLY if you correctly understand God’s law. We’ll talk more about the possible meanings of justify in Tuesday’s lesson.

What about the reference to “the law” in our memory text - which law?

I believe this is talking about the actual, codified moral law - the MRI-ish diagnostic instrument designed to reveal/highlight/pinpoint our disease, but has no power to heal or save.

Why was this Justification by Faith concept so revolutionary - both in Christ’s day and in Martin Luther’s Reformation?

Compared to the Jewish leadership’s corrupt temple practices in Christ’s day and the Catholic Church’s corrupt practices of indulgences in Luther’s day...of course the concept of justification by faith and trust in God alone was revolutionary!

These paragraphs in Saturday’s lesson kind of set the tone for this week’s lesson and kind of give you an idea of where we’re headed:

“The phrase [justification by faith] itself is a figure based on law. The transgressor of the law comes before a judge and is condemned to death for his transgressions. But a substitute appears and takes the transgressor’s crimes upon himself, thus clearing the criminal. By accepting the substitute, the criminal now stands before the judge, not only cleared of his guilt but also



regarded as never having committed the crimes for which he was first brought into court. And that's because the substitute—who has a perfect record—offers the pardoned criminal his own perfect law keeping. In the plan of salvation, each of us is the criminal. The Substitute, Jesus, has a perfect record, and He stands in the court in our stead—His righteousness accepted in place of our unrighteousness. Hence, we are justified before God, not because of our works but because of Jesus, whose righteousness becomes ours when we accept it “by faith.”

Talk about good news! In fact, the news can't get any better than that.

SUNDAY

The Deeds of the Law

Sunday's lesson takes a bit of an about face here with what I believe is some very accurate and well-stated analysis of the moral law's functional role and what it was designed to do:

“To be under the law means to be under its jurisdiction – [what is the jurisdiction of the law of love]? The law, however, reveals a person's shortcomings and guilt before God. The law cannot remove that guilt; what it can do is lead the sinner to seek a remedy for it. This [moral] law can't save us any more than the system of Judaism could save the Jews. To save a sinner is not the moral law's function. Its function is to reveal God's character and to show people wherein they fall short of reflecting that character - it is a diagnostic instrument. The law can no more save us than the symptoms of a disease can cure the disease. The symptoms don't cure; they point out the need for the cure. That's how the [moral] law functions.”

YES!!

MONDAY

The Righteousness of God

At first appearance, Monday's lesson appears to take bit of a sharp turn back toward the penal model, but I want to dig into the Selected Messages quote in the middle of the page. Did this quote give anyone else more than a moment's pause? It says,

“Righteousness is obedience to the law. The law demands righteousness, and this the sinner owes to the law; but he is incapable of rendering it. The only way in which he can attain to righteousness is through faith. By faith he can bring to God the merits of Christ, and the Lord places the obedience of His Son to the sinner's account. Christ's righteousness is accepted in place of man's failure, and God receives, pardons, justifies, the repentant, believing soul, treats him as though he were righteous, and loves him as He loves His Son.” —Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, book 1, p. 367.

Then the lesson asks, “How can you learn to accept this wonderful truth for yourself?”



Well, that one kinda threw me for a loop! I'm thinking wait a sec...that sounded like straight-up penal substitution...and I'm thinking wow that does not fit in or coincide with lots of other stuff I've read written by this same author.

So, you know that this ministry has never, ever wanted to tell folks what to think, but simply wants to get people TO think and to learn how to think for themselves. You may also remember a couple of times in this class when Dr. Jennings has walked us step-by-step through the process he goes through when trying to unpack a tough scripture or a tough quote like this. Well, apparently I need a couple more lessons, because when I was preparing for this lesson and read this quote, I sent Tim an email with the subject line that read simply, "HELP!!!" and asked him for some advice on how to walk through this quote using the natural law/healing remedy model instead of the penal model. I found this methodology so helpful, I thought maybe it would be useful for you too, so I want to share with you what he shared with me.

- The first thing to do when confronted with such a quote is to go to the source and read it in context (which makes perfect sense), so here is the quarterly's quote expanded for context:

"Without the grace of Christ, the sinner is in a hopeless condition; nothing can be done for him; but through divine grace, supernatural power is imparted to the man, and works in mind and heart and character. It is through the impartation of the grace of Christ that sin is discerned in its hateful nature, and finally **driven *from the soul temple***. It is through grace that we are brought into fellowship with Christ, to be associated with Him in the work of salvation. Faith is the condition upon which God has seen fit to promise pardon to sinners; not that there is any virtue in faith whereby salvation is merited, but because faith can lay hold of the merits of Christ, the remedy provided for sin. Faith can present Christ's perfect obedience instead of the sinner's transgression and defection. When the sinner believes that Christ is his personal Saviour, then, according to His unfailing promises, God pardons his sin, and justifies him freely. The repentant soul realizes that his justification comes because Christ, as his substitute and surety, has died for him, is his atonement and righteousness. {1SM 366.3} Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Romans 4:3-5). Righteousness is obedience to the law. The law demands righteousness, and this the sinner owes to the law; but he is incapable of rendering it (this should remind you of another familiar quote...we'll look at it in a sec). The only way in which he can attain to righteousness is through faith. By faith he can bring to God the **merits of Christ**, and the Lord places the obedience of His Son to the **sinner's account**. *[Keep some of these key terms in mind so we can define and decode them here in a bit]* Christ's righteousness is accepted in place of man's failure, and God receives, pardons, justifies, the repentant, believing soul, treats him as though he were



righteous, and loves him as He loves His Son. This is how faith is accounted righteousness; and the pardoned soul goes on from grace to grace, from light to a greater light. He can say with rejoicing, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5-7). {1SM 367.1}

It already sounds better when read in context, right?

Several points—

- God communicates to people where they are
 - just as you would speak and communicate differently to your two-year-old child then you would to your teenage child, right?

Understanding the limits of cognitive abilities, comprehension, and maturity impact what and how we communicate - just as does when dealing with spiritual matters.

- There is one truth, but there are many ways to express it
 - and people at different moral levels are spoken to differently. EGW here is speaking to people here who are still stuck in the false law thinking. Yet she is trying to lead them out of it. Jesus used similar techniques in many of His parables. This all becomes clear when we “decode” some of the key words.
- What are the “**merits of Christ**”?
 - These are the traits of character, i.e. the *perfect* character Christ has developed (as stated in DA 762). His new, perfect, human character is the remedy - the character He has promised to reproduce in us! Did you notice early in the quote where sin is being driven from? Not from record books, but from the **soul temple**, but how? By the application of the merits (which is the character) of Christ! Yet later the quote mentions merits being placed to the **sinner's account**?

Okay, in heaven what is it that's being recorded in the heavenly records? All of our sinful deeds?

“Remember, your character is being daguerreotyped [photographed] by the great Master Artist in the record books of heaven, as minutely as the face is reproduced upon the polished plate of the artist. What do the books of heaven say in your case? Are you conforming your character to the Pattern, Jesus Christ? Are you washing your robes of character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb? "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" [Revelation 22:12]. . . . {TSB



62.1}

So, when we have faith (trust) in Jesus and open the heart, the Holy Spirit takes what Christ achieved (His merits—His perfect character) and writes or applies it to our hearts and minds (Heb 8 - I will write my law on your hearts and minds).

It is then (and only then) placed to our sinners account - because the only way the records in heaven change is by **changing our characters on earth**.

Now combine this quote with one of our favorites from DA 762

“The law requires...righteousness, a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God’s holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a **perfect character**. These (merits!) He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can ‘be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus’.”

- Combine these quotes and you realize that we have remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God—not through some legal action, thus the ***pardon*** mentioned in the original quote is not a legal court action, but the reality that God doesn’t hold our sins against us and never has.
- But our minds have feared this, like Adam running and hiding in Eden - and thus we needed to be reassured that God is not holding it against us and therefore we are told that God pardons us, but only if we are truly healed, because if we refuse to be healed He doesn’t say, “the laws upon which I have constructed life to operate are suspended and you in your fear and selfishness are going to be healthy anyway - **he can’t do that!**”

Oh my word, I love every bit of that analysis! How much differently does that quote read now?

TUESDAY

By His Grace

The quarterly points out that the word “justify” is built on the same Greek word as “righteousness” - interesting, right? Is it reasonable that a term that means “being set right or right-i-fied” and a term that means “doing right because it is right” could come from the same Greek root word?

The lesson says,



“Hence, there is a close connection between ‘justification’ and ‘righteousness’”, but maybe not for the reasons stated in the quarterly. “We are justified when we are ‘declared righteous’ by God.”

Why do you think the lesson put “declared righteous” in quotes?

In my mind, the account of Abraham’s conversion tells a different story, and we heard a bit of it in the quotes we just read. Abraham trusted or believed God, and it was counted/accounted/imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

Look at the order of events! Was he justified or set right when or because God declared him righteous? Or was his natural heart actually converted from distrust (or at enmity) toward God to a heart that trusts and is open to God - as it was originally designed.

And once his heart had been set right...or justified...then - and only then - did God declare him righteous - because he WAS! And because this is a ***REAL*** state, not a wink-wink-nudge-nudge “state” - an actual change of heart takes place - it’s not a “declaration”, it’s a real transformation...and because God is not a liar...He will not declare us to be righteous even though we are not.

He will not declare us to be healed and well even though we are still terminal.

Sadly, the quarterly doesn’t stop there:

“Before this justification a person is unrighteous and thus unacceptable to God; after justification he or she is regarded as righteous (whether it’s true or not) and thus acceptable to Him.”

What did God do after Adam and Eve sinned in the garden?

Is a sick patient “unacceptable” to a physician? Or is the disease or illness unacceptable to a physician?

WEDNESDAY

The Righteousness of Christ

Paul further expounds on the great news of salvation in Romans 3:25, using the fancy word “Propitiation”.

What is your first, reflex reaction when you hear the word propitiation?

Although I have now come to believe that the Bible does NOT teach penal substitution, is there any doubt why and how there is so much confusion with all the legal language and terminology used -



particularly in Romans and most of Paul's writings?

When you read the Bible, what language do you read it in?

If you read the Bible in English, then there is a translation bias toward legal language. When Constantine converted, Christianity accepted a change in the way it viewed God's law, away from the construction protocols for life and accepted the idea that God's law functions just like laws did in Imperial Rome.

Thus Christianity began seeing God as a legal dictator. ALL BIBLE TRANSLATIONS have been done AFTER Constantine converted. This means the translators, while sincere, all had preconceived ideas about the law being imposed and therefore, when they translated they projected legal language that was not in the original text.

This passage in Romans 3 is a classic example and is a favorite of the penal proponents. Listen to verses 23-25 in the KJV:

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;”

Do you hear how this could sound like a legal problem and solution, with words like justification, atonement, justice, propitiation etc? Of course! This is because of the fact that the translations occurred after the infection of imposed law into Christianity, and also because in English our legal language has a Latin basis. But the Bible doesn't actually present a legal problem with a legal solution, it presents a problem of our actual terminal condition with a healing solution.

The Greek translated as either “sacrifice of atonement” or “propitiation” is the word hilasterion, which is the same word used for the lid to the ark of the covenant. Notice, this is not a legal word, it is a noun - the place of reconciliation - so, Jesus is the means and place of reconciliation or restoration to unity with God.

But when the translators interpreted the word they projected onto it what *THEY* believed happened at the mercy seat. And what did they believe happened? A legal process of expiation of sin by the sprinkling of blood.

In other words, they already had false ideas about God's law and what the plan of salvation is; believing in an imposed law, they falsely believed the plan was to take care of legal requirements, thus when they interpreted the word they added legal ideas not actually in the text. When one realizes God's law is not imperial, not imposed, but the protocols upon which life is built to operate, then one realizes that humankind is not in legal trouble, but suffering from a condition, a state of being, that is



terminal, out of harmony with God's design.

In this light one realizes God's plan of salvation is to heal and restore. Thus, the sprinkling of blood was not for the purpose of taking care of legal penalties, but for the purpose of cleansing and restoring, regenerating and recreating in righteousness.

The lesson couldn't be more obvious – according to Leviticus the life is in the blood– and thus in sprinkling the blood the priests were symbolically sharing the LIFE of Christ. The application of the blood is the pure life, or character of Christ, partaken of by the believer, which regenerates and transforms us.

Here is how this passage in Romans reads in Dr. Jennings' The Remedy paraphrase:

“3:21 But now God has revealed, a healthy state of being – a character that is right and perfect in every way, that did not come from the written code, but is exactly what the Scriptures and the 10 Commandments were pointing your minds toward. 22 This perfect state of being comes from Christ and is created within us by God when we trust him. Our trust in him is established by the evidence given through Jesus Christ of his supreme trustworthiness. There is no difference amongst any ethnic group, 23 for all humanity is infected with the same disease of distrust, fear and selfishness, and are deformed in character and fall far short of God's glorious ideal for mankind. 24 Yet all, who are willing, are healed freely by God's gracious Remedy that has been provided by Jesus Christ. 25 God presented Jesus as the way and means of restoration. Now, through trust established by the evidence of God's character revealed when Christ died, we may partake of the Remedy procured by Christ. God did this to demonstrate he is right and good, because in his forbearance he suspended, for a time, the ultimate consequence of being out of harmony with how he designed life to exist and has been falsely accused of being unfair. 26 So, he did it to demonstrate how right and good he is at the present time, so he would be seen as being right when he heals those who trust in Jesus.”

Can you hear the difference in these two versions of the same scripture?

[Pink Box] Satan, likely, expected God to destroy the world after it sinned; instead, God sent Jesus to save it. What does that tell us about the character of God? How should our knowledge of His character impact how we live?

THURSDAY

Without the Deeds of the Law

Apparently Ellen G. White was asked the question, “What is justification by faith?” She gave an interesting answer when she wrote:



“It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 456.

Paul’s point is that although obedience to the law is not the means of justification, the person who is justified by faith still keeps the law of God and, in fact, is the only one who can keep the law.

An unregenerate person who has not been justified can never fulfill the requirements of the law. Which law?

Again, the order of events is this: the kindness of God leads us to repentance - the truth about his character of love and His trustworthiness wins us back to trust. When we are won back to trust, our hearts are set right - back to His original design (justification by faith!) - then we open our hearts to him and He pours out his Holy Spirit and we get a heart transplant - He reproduces the perfect character Christ achieved through His life, death, and resurrection in us.

“By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

[REPEATED] And if you wonder if or how this false law construct and penal substitution theology hardens hearts and prevents real heart transformation from taking place (having a form of godliness but no power), one of the founders of our church describes it this way:

“Today a large part of those who compose our congregations are dead in trespasses and sins. They come and go like the door upon its hinges. For years they have complacently listened to the most solemn, soul-stirring truths, but they have not put them in practice. Therefore they are less and less sensible of the preciousness of truth. The stirring testimonies of reproof and warning do not arouse them to repentance. The sweetest melodies that come from God through human lips—**justification by faith**, and the righteousness of Christ—do not call forth from them a response of love and gratitude. Though the heavenly Merchantman displays before them the richest jewels of faith and love, though He invites them to buy of Him “gold tried in the fire,” and white raiment” that they may be clothed, and “eyesalve” that they may see, they steel their hearts against Him, and fail to exchange their lukewarmness for love and zeal. While making a profession, they deny the power of godliness. If they continue in this state, God will reject them. They are unfitting themselves to be members of His family. {CCh 67.3}



The Book of Romans Lesson 5 4Q 2017

The Faith of Abraham -- Jennings

Last week I spoke at a conference on the Atonement. There were several other speakers there, none of whom advocated for penal substitution. Two of the speakers felt that penal substitution was a metaphor that held value and should be kept in our tent, but all felt it was not the most accurate or helpful understanding.

Jean Sheldon presented incredible historical evidence that the imposed law versus design law conflict goes all the way back to Babylon, and is at the root of the distortions about God.

One speaker presented ideas I had not heard before and which helped me understand new avenues of danger when one separates the three threads of evidence. Science alone risks leading to godlessness, Scripture alone risks confusion (34,000 different Christian groups) and Experience alone not only leads to mysticism, but also risks social justice gospels in which people's experiences are put central and the Cross of Christ is removed. In fact in some of these social justice gospels it is argued that the death of Christ was an interruption to God's plan of salvation and was not necessary for our salvation. Very interesting and important that we are aware of this, because they use the righteous truth of equality in all humans as the avenue to remove the cross... be aware.

SABBATH

Read memory text: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Rom 3:31 KJV

What law? Do you hear rules or design law?

What is faith? Trust, confidence, belief? When you understand how God's design laws function does your trust and confidence, belief, faith in God increase or decrease?

How do we establish the law by faith?

The newer translations say we "uphold" the law—how do we uphold the law by faith?

When we understand design law, and we are won to trust then we, in our beliefs, our testimony, our comprehension, our choices and our longings hold to, value, identify with, align ourselves with, side with God's law, thus our lives become living vehicles through which God's law is lived out. We demonstrate, sustain, uphold or reveal that only in harmony with God's design law is their life, health and happiness.

Read third paragraph, "In Romans 4 Paul..." Is this an accurate description of what Paul is teaching?



This is the view one gets when one replaces the truth of God's design law with the lie that God's law functions like imposed human law. So let's clarify it.

1. Does God promise grace? Yes
2. Does there need to be a human response to God's grace by having faith—which is what? Trust? Do we need to have this response? Yes
3. When we trust God does that result in a legal action in which God declares us to be righteous when we are not? No! This is the lie—this belief is based on the lie that God's law is like ours and thus needs a legal pronouncement, which God declares us righteous when in reality we are not. So it teaches God promotes a legal fraud, or fiction, or a lie. So, now we have a god who lies. Further, it teaches Christians that there is no transformation, there is legal declaration—so Christians have a form of godliness with no power.
4. The lesson states this is how it worked with Abraham—is it? No!

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

- When Adam sinned did God get changed?
- Did God's law get changed?
- Did the condition of humankind get changed?
- What changed in humankind? Love and trust were replaced with distrust, fear and selfishness.

So, in order to restore humankind to unity with God, i.e. save the species, does something need to happen to God? To God's law? No! Something needs to change in the condition of human beings. So notice what the Bible actually says about Abraham:

What shall we say, then, of Abraham, the father of our race? What was his experience? ²If he was put right [which is what? Justified] with God by the things he did, he would have something to boast about—but not in God's sight. The scripture says, "Abraham believed God, and because of his faith God accepted him as righteous." Romans 4:1-2, GNB

What is the natural state of the human heart? Enmity (Rom 8:7), which is distrust of God!

But Abraham now trusted God, or was no longer hostile or distrustful of God; he was no longer against God in his heart—thus Abraham experienced a change in his heart attitude toward God and AFTER this heart change then God recognized him as being right with God, AKA righteous—i.e. justified, i.e. set right, because his heart had changed from distrust to trust. This is true righteousness or justification—there is nothing legal involved.

Read fourth paragraph, "It is crucial to remember..." When you hear the word "salvation," what do you hear? Do you instantly hear "healing"? Or do you hear saving from punishment? And if you have the salvation from punishment idea, from where does the punishment come? Then, in that model from who are you being saved? This is the problem with the penal view it has us setting up beliefs in which



we need to be saved from God. It causes a double bind that incites fear and ultimately keeps people separated from God.

What do you make of the undeserving language, if we deserved it we would be owed it and it would be a debt owed us and not a gift.

What law lens do you see this through? This is imposed law language, rights, ownership, indebtedness, earning.

What about design law lens? Does this Romans 13:8 have any bearing on the question?

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the **continuing debt to love one another**, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. Rom 13:8

When Adam sinned, did God love Adam less? Did God's love long for Adam, wanting to save Adam and all humans? Do we deserve this love? Did God love Adam in Eden before sin—did Adam deserve God's love then? Does sinless Gabriel deserve God's love? Do sinless beings "earn" God's love?

This description of undeserving instills a false idea—that we are undeserving because we are sinners, but if we were not sinners then we would deserve it. Hmm... think that through in your love for your children...

So, with this in mind, do we earn the Remedy to our sin condition or is it a complete gift from God and we can never procure it? It is a free gift, that we do not earn, it is totally from God's love for us. And that love flows from God because God is love, not because we are good.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "In this passage, [Rom 3:31]..." What does it mean faith does not make void the law of God?

What law lens are we thinking through?

If you have faith or trust in your doctor, who has a remedy for your otherwise terminal condition, does your faith in your doctor and his remedy make void the laws of health?

If a person was born HIV positive does their obeying the laws of health remedy their condition? No, obeying God's law does not remedy our condition, accepting the Remedy that Jesus procured doesn't do away with the laws upon which life is built.

When we come back to design law all this tension fades away, because the tension between faith and law only exists when we believe in the false imposed law.



Second paragraph asks, “What, for instance, was the entire sanctuary ritual if not a representation of how sinners are saved—not by their own works but by the death of a substitute in their stead?”

Do we believe that Jesus is our substitute and that His life and death and resurrection were a REQUIREMENT for the salvation of humankind? ABSOLUTELY YES!

We believe in Substationary Atonement—but we deny PENAL substitution. IN other words, Christ’s substitution was not for penal, legal, appeasement, payment to God purposes! It was for fixing what sin did to God’s creation!

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” 2Cor 5:21

The last paragraph states, “Paul sets forth David’s restoration to divine favor as an example of justification by faith.”

Read Romans 4:6-8:

This is what David meant when he spoke of the happiness of the person whom God accepts as righteous, apart from anything that person does:

“Happy are those whose wrongs are forgiven,
whose sins are pardoned!

Happy is the person whose sins the Lord
will not keep account of!” GNB

So, what do you hear? Those who come to Scripture with the belief that God’s law functions like human law read in legal language, however, is that what is truly being described.

From *The Remedy*:

David says the exact same thing when he describes the blessedness of the person to whom God bestows his perfect cure without them working to earn it:

⁷“Happy are they whose wicked minds are restored to perfect purity, whose selfishness is eradicated.

⁸“Happy is the person whose infected heart the Lord transforms to perfection.”

Think about it—which brings more happiness—to have an historical or legal record of evil and sin erased, or to have evil and sin removed from the character, mind and heart?

I explore the 51st Psalm in *The God-Shaped Heart*:



¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

From where do you think David wants his sin blotted out—recorded history or his heart, mind, and character?

²Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

He realizes something is wrong within his heart that needs purifying.

³For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

⁴Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.

He acknowledges his condition is terminal and that he cannot run from it; no matter where he goes he carries his sinful self there. God's diagnosis of his terminal condition is perfectly accurate.

⁵Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

He realizes this problem has been within him his entire life. He was born this way, infected with fear and selfishness.

⁶Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

He understands that what God wants is to heal what is broken in his heart and mind.

⁷Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

He acknowledges that only God has the healing solution. Only the Creator can re-create him back to God's original intent.

Notice, that this justification of David is all about healing the inner workings of David's heart.

MONDAY

Read first two paragraphs, "The issue..."

"If one believes that he or she must earn acceptance—that he or she must earn a certain standard of holiness...."

Do you mean like, after I accept Jesus I must quit smoking, overcome my addiction, quit my Sabbath job, stop wearing jewelry etc. before I can be baptized? I must reach a certain standard of holiness before I can become a Christian?



Do we say on the one hand that it is all by grace through faith and we must merely accept the free gift from Jesus, but on the other hand, does the church in practice require sinners to reach a certain standard before they accept them into baptism and membership?

This entire concern evaporates when we come back to understand God's law correctly. If you had HIV infection, or metastatic cancer, would you think: "well if I keep the Sabbath, or eat right, or exercise regularly," or any other work, that by working hard you could cure yourself?

You would immediately accept you have a condition for which you cannot remedy.

The problem occurs when we accept the lie that God's law is like ours and sin is breaking rules that require payment, then sometimes people try to be good so they won't be in trouble with the one in charge.

The lesson states justification is a gift from God—what do you understand justification to be?

Some have been confused about what we teach in here, because I am teaching about setting our hearts and minds right, winning us back to trust and restoring us to Christlikeness, thus some accuse me of making our trust the justifying element. NOT SO!

This is my understanding, point-by-point, see if you agree and if not, where to we diverge?

- Adam & Eve were created perfect and sinless
- They were free moral agents who had the ability in themselves to develop a perfect character by exercising their sinless abilities to choose to be loyal and live in harmony with God and His design
- They instead chose to believe lies, and formed defective characters infecting humanity with fear and selfishness
- Sin did not change God or God's law, but changed the condition of humankind
- Only God could fix what Adam did to humankind—no person born of natural human ability could fix what Adam did to the human species
- Jesus partook of our humanity in order to fix what sin did to His creation
- The species human was set right, fixed, put right, made righteous, also known as justified in the singular person of Jesus Christ
- Christ in His victory becomes the new head of humanity, the second Adam who eradicated the infection of fear and selfishness and restored God's law of love perfectly, developing a perfect human character
- Christ's victory procured the Remedy which is freely available to all individual humans who will accept it
- We as individuals are set right, or justified, when we in heart are won from distrust to trust and fully open our heart to God.



- Then, like Abraham, when we trust God, God recognizes that we are now in a right relationship with Him and pours His Spirit into our hearts and minds taking the perfect character of Christ and reproducing it in us.

Where do we diverge?

Read fourth paragraph, "The sinner must come..." What does this mean?

When I was in California, one theologian asked about the imputed righteousness of Christ, suggesting that the imputed righteousness a legal application to our accounts whereas imparted is what happens in us. He was suggesting my approach denies the legal, elements, which are called imputed righteousness, whereas the healing transformational within us is the imparted righteousness.

Have you heard this before? Let me state this plainly, this so-called difference in imputed and imparted is a difference created by theologians, who see the world through the false imposed law lens. This difference is not real, the reality is that imputed and imparted have the same function, outcome. Two different ways to describe the same process, but perhaps from two different vantage points. Imparted focusing on the recipient, imputed focusing on the attitude of the giver, but both describing something happening in the heart, mind, character of the sinner. Listen to how EGW used imputed:

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us boldness to approach the throne of grace. **By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him.** The image of Christ is cherished, and it captivates the whole being. {AG 96.4}

Abundant grace has been provided that the believing soul may be kept free from sin; for all heaven, with its limitless resources, has been placed at our command. We are to draw from the well of salvation. . . . In ourselves we are sinners; but in Christ we are righteous. **Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just.** He looks upon us as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds. {AG 181.4}

We aim too low. The mark is much higher. Our minds need expansion, that we may comprehend the significance of the provision of God. We are to reflect the highest attributes of the character of God. . . . **The law of God is the exalted standard to which we are to attain through the imputed righteousness of Christ.** {OHC 364.2}



He would have us comprehend something of His love in giving His Son to die that He might counteract evil, **remove the defiling stains of sin from the workmanship of God, and reinstate the lost, elevating and ennobling the soul to its original purity through Christ's imputed righteousness.** TMK 206

So what is being affected by the imputed righteousness of Christ? The sinner is being affected. What about the records in heaven? Are they being affected by the imputed righteousness of Christ?

What is recorded in the records?

Remember, **your character is being daguerreotyped [photographed] by the great Master Artist in the record books of heaven, as minutely as the face is reproduced upon the polished plate of the artist.** What do the books of heaven say in your case? Are you conforming your character to the Pattern, Jesus Christ? Are you washing your robes of character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb? "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" [Revelation 22:12]... {TSB 62.1}

So, when we open the heart in trust, the Holy Spirit takes what Christ achieved, His perfect character and reproduces it in us. This is imputing the righteousness of Christ to us, which transforms our character which is recorded in the record books of heaven!

TUESDAY

The lesson focuses on Romans 4:14-17:

⁴ For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, ¹⁵ because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

¹⁶ Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. ¹⁷ As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. NIV

What does this mean?

What is Paul saying about law keeping? What cannot come by law keeping? Righteousness, which is being set right, which is healing or recreation into Christlikeness.

Why not?



From *The Remedy*:

For if it were possible to develop perfect motives, methods and principles by performing rituals or following a certain code, then there would be no need to trust God for his healing power in our lives, and his promised inheritance would be meaningless.¹⁵ The written law or code simply exposes the extent of our sickness of mind and heart which, if not cured, results in death. If it weren't for the written law, we wouldn't even know how sick we are, for without some standard of health to measure by, no defect could be diagnosed.

¹⁶Therefore the restoration to a perfect state of being and the inheritance of eternal life on a renewed earth come by trusting the One who made the promise to do it. This transformation is accomplished by God's graciousness and is guaranteed to all the children of Abraham—not only his genetic descendants who were given the written diagnostic code, but also to his spiritual descendants, who—just like him—trust God. Abraham is the father of all who trust God.¹⁷ As it is written: "I have made you the father of many different ethnic groups." The God in whom Abraham trusted—the Creator God who is the source of all life and who calls things into existence from nothingness—considers all of us who trust him to be descendants of Abraham.

What are the implications for us today? What about the genetic descendants of Abraham today—do they have some other avenue to salvation than Jesus?

What about the promises made to Abraham and his descendants—are those promises to the genetic descendants or to all those who become like Abraham in character—which is only experienced through accepting Jesus?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "As we saw yesterday..." What was the promise?

Jesus is the promise! But what did the promise of Jesus accomplish? How would you describe it?

Simon asked of the panel in California last week, if a person who doesn't believe in Christ asks you "What did Jesus' death do for me? What would you say?"

How about this for a simple answer: Jesus came so that we might be freed from fear and selfishness and live in love being at peace with God and each other.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "We often hear..." Why do people say this? Because they think the law of God functions like human law, and they think the old covenant was a covenant of the people keeping rules—which they failed to keep perfectly. So they are told that the new covenant is Christ, as our substitute, kept the rules perfectly for us, received our legal punishment for all sins ever committed,



we are legally accounted as perfectly keeping the rules. Therefore, we don't have to worry about the law or rules any more—because we could never keep them anyway.

But design law resolves all this. We are dead in trespass and sin (terminal) and Christ came and cured this terminal condition and offers us His remedy for free. This free remedy heals us but doesn't change the laws of health, including the moral laws of spiritual health.

Read fourth paragraph, "In the New Testament..." What is true in this paragraph and what is not true?

- Does both the law and gospel appear in the New Testament? Yes
- Does the law show what sin is? Yes
- Does the gospel point to the remedy for sin? Yes
- Is the death and resurrection the remedy for sin? Yes, but I would include Jesus' life before the death also.
- If there is no law there is no sin—true? Yes, but what does it mean? If there are no legal rules there are no legal violations, i.e. crimes, and thus no legal way to warrant punishment? Or, if there are no laws of health then one cannot violate the laws of health? If there is no gravity one cannot jump off a building and be hurt. If there is no law of respiration what cannot drown.
- Only the context of law does the gospel make sense. Does the type of law determine if the it makes sense or if our teachings become nonsense? If we are talking design law things make sense, but the moment we substitute God's design law for human imposed law then all kinds of nonsense emerge.
 - For instance, if we accept the imposed law view, then sin is breaking a rule for which we are in legal trouble. We are on death row, and are in debt to God and His law. Now, notice the non-sense this leads to:
 - The Bible says God forgives us our debts as we forgive our debtors
 - If you owed someone a debt of \$10,000 and couldn't pay it, but your brother comes along and pays off the debt for your. Does the person who you owed the money to then turn to you and say: "Now that I have been paid in full, I forgive you your debt"? Can you forgive a debt that has been paid?
 - Or, God is just and therefore God uses His power to kill the innocent so that the guilty can go free.

The false law model causes all kinds of nonsense.

However, design law brings beautiful clarity.

Read last paragraph, "We often..." What is the problem with this paragraph? Again they are arguing from a false law model, and suggest the problem is inflicted punishment.

But design law makes it clear—God could not get rid of His design laws and have the universe still exist. As Jesus said in Matthew 5:18



Here is the simple truth: Heaven and earth would disappear if even the slightest change were made to God's design protocol for life—what you call his Law. I am not here to destroy the Law, but to accomplish everything it requires. *The Remedy*

Many Christians, who have the imposed law construct believe the law was done away with at the Cross because of texts like Col 2:13,14:

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. NIV

But here is from *The Remedy*:

When your condition was terminal, when selfishness reigned unchecked in your minds, and when your hearts were tied to the destructive cravings and practices of the world, God intervened and brought you the life-giving Remedy—Jesus Christ. He reclaimed you from your terminal condition, ¹⁴ nullifying the pathology report that certified you as dead in sin; he made it clear that the written code, with its regulations, was only a diagnostic instrument designed to expose our terminal state and teach us the need for a true cure, and he nailed it to the cross. *The Remedy*

FRIDAY

Read question 3

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

November 17,18, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr. SDA church in California.

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



The Book of Romans Lesson 6 4Q 2017

by Tim Jennings

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Sadly, we have had three class members who have had family members pass away in the last several weeks. Our hearts and prayers go out to each one:

- Dean Scott (our board member and Director of Media Production) lost his sister, Valerie
- Linda Ojala (who substitute teaches sometimes) lost her father, Don Wheeler
- George Graves (long time supporter) lost his mother, Mary Lou Graves

Adam and Jesus

Before we even get to the lesson, an online listener Bobby Miskimen posted this on our Facebook page quoting one of the founders of the SDA church, examining our position and previous statements one righteousness by faith:

Righteousness within is testified to by righteousness without. He who is righteous within is not hard-hearted and unsympathetic, but day by day he grows into the image of Christ, going on from strength to strength. He who is being sanctified by the truth will be self-controlled, and will follow in the footsteps of Christ until grace is lost in glory. The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven. { RH June 4, 1895, par. 7 }

Reading the other quotes provided in the lesson regarding imputed righteousness further clarify what she meant by this phrase.

So, in my mind there is a distinction, but these are merely 2 steps in the same process:

- 1) By God's imputed righteousness, the human heart is restored to its original design (Ezekiel 11:15-21), the good tree is restored (Luke 6:43-45), we are grafted into the vine (John 15:1-5), etc.
- 2) The Holy Spirit, in cooperation with our new heart/spiritual nature, works out the imparted righteousness of sanctification



I would be interested if you agree or not.

Yes I agree, and we could state it like this:

- Imputed righteousness, which is justification, is the righteousness that sets our hearts right, changes the heart from distrust to trust. This would be the act of grafting us back into trust with God
- Imparted righteousness, which is sanctification, is the flowing into the heart of the Holy Spirit who takes the righteousness of Christ and reproduces it in us, thus changing our desires, motives, attitudes to be like Christ.

So, to give confirmation this is what the founders of our church meant, and that imputed righteousness is not this legal fiction taught in the penal view of God declaring someone to be righteous when they are not, but is the actual setting of the heart right from distrust to trust, from the same founder who wrote that imputed righteousness is our title to heaven we read:

The proud heart strives to earn salvation; but both our title to heaven and our fitness for it are found in the righteousness of Christ. The Lord can do nothing toward the recovery of man until, convinced of his own weakness, and stripped of all self-sufficiency, he yields himself to the control of God. Then he can receive the gift that God is waiting to bestow. [Notice the heart must change, this is the title to heaven, the imputed righteousness changing the heart from distrust to trust, then we receive the imparted righteousness with transforms us] From the soul that feels his need, nothing is withheld. He has unrestricted access to Him in whom all fullness dwells. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah 57:15. {DA 300.1}

I read an article in the Adventist World NAD magazine October 2017 edition, which I felt it was important to bring up as the subject is pertinent to this quarter's lessons. I read this article with incredible sadness, the sadness a doctor might feel at seeing a patient riddled with cancer—this article is riddled with the imposed law lie.

The Title of the article is: *The Fountain of Every Good: The Paradigm shift we call the Reformation.* Laszlo Gullusz Ph.D. p 22

The fresh understanding of the gospel in the sixteenth century brought changes of such an extent that Diarmaid MacCulluch, a well-known scholar writing on the history of the Reformation, summarizes this paradigm shift as "All things made new."¹ Martin Luther's

¹ Diarmaid MacCulluch, *All things Made New: The Reformation and Its Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2016).



foundational contribution to theology was the recognition that salvation is a free gift of divine mercy, and humans can do nothing to get it except to receive it through faith alone.

This idea was revolutionary, since it stood in sharp contrast to the medieval understanding of salvation in which the concept of merit played a crucial role. **Sin was considered to be a problem of being, which needed healing through a process of transformation.** [Is this incorrect? Does the Bible not teach we are dead in trespass and sin? That we have carnal natures, that our hearts are selfish, that we need to be reborn, regenerated, recreated, that we are born in sin and conceived in iniquity? Does not salvation actually mean healing, Saved, *sodzo* in Greek means to heal—so is this idea of sin being a problem of being wrong? But it is put in this article as if it is wrong—and this is the problem with the Penal Substitutionary view it leads people away from the right diagnosis, substitutes a false legal diagnosis and then gives them a religion with a form of godliness but no power.] **Consequently, it was believed that salvation was the result of becoming a “holy person by cooperating with grace by all means possible.”**² [Is this false? Did Jesus not teach, “be ye therefore perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect?” (MT 5:48) Are we not called to be a holy priesthood? (1Pet 2:5,9) Is the author suggesting that Protestantism actually teaches salvation does not result in becoming a holy person by cooperating with God? What are the options here?

- We become holy on our own;
- We become holy in cooperation with God;
- God uses His power to make people holy without any cooperation;
- We don’t become holy at all;
- God plays a grand fraud and no one becomes holy, God merely pro-claims they are!

This system implied that humans must add their effort to the work of God’s grace in order to achieve salvation, since eternal life came a reward for cooperating with divine grace. [The fault lies in viewing the salvation problem through imposed legal lenses, thus adding our effort is viewed as adding to the healing or saving value of Christ’s achievements; as if Christ’s achievements alone were not enough to save us. The Protestants view is correct to reject any idea that suggests Christ’s achievements alone were insufficient to save humanity, or that any actions on our part adds to what Christ accomplished to save the species. However, they are wrong to suggest that there is no cooperation with Divine agencies for our personal salvation. This is all resolved when we return to Design law. In that reality we understand that Christ, singly and alone put the species human right with God in His own human personhood while simultaneously procuring the Remedy that heals all who trust Him. In other words, the species was put right with God in the person of Jesus, who also procured what was necessary to save individual members of the species, who by faith are connected to, i.e. grafted into Christ, who is the righteous vine. But we must trust Him and cooperate with Him for the partaking of and application of His remedy in our lives. This cooperation does not create the

² Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform* (Downers Grove Ill.: InterVarsity, 1999), p. 373.



remedy or earn the remedy, it only partakes of the remedy freely provided by Christ. So the Catholic view is that our works add to what Christ has done and our works are necessary for us to merit or be worthy or earn salvation in Christ. We reject this idea. However, the Protestant view that the sin problem is legal and salvation is something declared which does not actually happen within the believer is also wrong and needs to be rejected.] **Purgatory, a concept considered the theological foundation for a vast church business in the medieval period (including the payment for salvation by purchasing indulgences), became for the Reformers the symbol of all that was wrong with this view of salvation.** [Protestants quite correctly reject purgatory along with anything we do to merit, purchase, or pay for salvation. This idea of purchasing salvation came in because of accepting the false impose law view. And in fact, to be rid of purgatory was one of the main reasons Luther came up with the idea of a legally declared justification. He wanted to take away the power the institutional church had over people with the doctrine of purgatory and thus taught that all sins, past, present and future were placed on Christ and punished in Christ, thus we accept the legal application and are declared righteous and there is no need of purging sins. Protestants are right to reject purgatory, but have erred in continuing to view salvation through the imposed law lens thus making the process a legal one, rather than the healing reality it is] The “theology of the cross” lay at the heart of Luther’s argument, highlighting the centrality of God’s mercy despite human sin, instead of demanding from people virtue as a prerequisite for grace.

The key expression in Luther’s thought is the “righteousness of God” (*iustitia Dei*). In Romans 1:18-3:20 **Paul establishes that argument that all people are guilty, and so the main problem of humanity is facing God’s justice.** [Here we see the false law infection clearly. Paul does not teach that all people are guilty, he teaches that all people are sinful, i.e. have a condition of being which is terminal “dead in trespass and sin” (Eph 2:1, Col 2:13) are carnal, which without God’s intervention will result in death. (Rom 6:23, James 1:15, Gal 6:8) Futher, Paul teaches that the sin problem is not God inflicting punishment, but what unremedied sin will do when God stops holding its damaging consequences at bay!] **In pre-Reformation theology the “righteousness of God” was equivalent to the punishment by the divine judge.** [Again the infection of the impose law view in both Catholic and Protestant theology] **Luther challenged this view** as the result of his study of Psalms, Romans, and Galatians in the period between 1513 and 1517 while he lectured on these books at Wittenberg University.

Luther established biblically that the *iustitia Dei* is not to be understood in terms of God’s righteousness, by which God is Himself justified, but as the righteousness by which He justifies sinful human beings. [Yes, this is so, but wrongly taught as a legal accounting rather than the truth of actually setting humanity right with God] **Righteousness is a gift from God given for the benefit of humanity. It is a gift by which God declares believers righteous even though they are not in themselves righteous.** [Here is the legal distortion, God declaring us to be righteous, even though we are not. Now while it is true that we are not in ourselves righteous, it is not true that we are not righteous when we experience a heart change from distrust to trust. That is righteous, i.e. set right with God. This idea that we are declared



righteous even though we are not is a deep lie that keeps millions trapped in a form of godliness with no power].

This new definition of righteousness points to God as “the fountain of every good.”³ [Note, this “new definition,” because it was made up by Luther to counter the abuses of a works system that led to indulgences, all based on the false law construct. Protestants and Catholics alike are both stuck arguing back and forth inside the false law arena, thus neither view presents the true gospel nor the true view of righteousness by faith] The cross reveals “an exuberantly happy God who glories in sharing His happiness. He is not stingy or utilitarian, but a God who glories in being gracious.”⁴ This is revealed in the climactic statement of Paul’s argument for justification by faith in Romans 4:25: “[Jesus our Lord] was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification” (NIV).

Today, however we need an even stronger focus on the Reformation principles of justification by faith. This biblical teaching has the potential to give us a fresh experience of the work of God, the power of God, the wisdom of God, the strength of God, the salvation of God, and the glory of God so needed in today’s secular post-modern culture. Reformation matters, even after 500 years.

So an overview of history:

- Adam and Eve were created sinless with the capacity to exercise their ability to develop perfect sinless character, they didn’t
- Humanity infected with fear and selfishness God intercedes to save humanity
- The Jewish nation was given truth about God to take to the world to bring all the world into a saving relationship with God—however they became legalistic and exclusive, focusing on rule keeping rather than love for God and others—i.e. no heart change in many
- Jesus came and threw off the legal approach to salvation and revealed the truth about God while developing a perfect human character, destroying the devil’s power (lies Heb 2:14), destroying death (selfishness 2Tim 1:9,10) and destroying the devil’s work (effacing the image of God in man 1John 3:8).
- The New Testament church taught that Jesus overcame sin and Satan for humanity becoming the second Adam perfecting humanity and that He accomplished this singly and alone and that no other human being can add to what Christ did to save humanity.
- However, the NT church taught that the saved must partake of what Christ accomplished, and this partaking was a cooperative relationship with God in which the sinner had to make choices to trust God and to follow in their actions God’s methods and designs. Their choosing to do so does not create the Remedy to sin, nor add to what Christ accomplished but is the internalization and participation in Christ’s accomplishment. All of which result in internal

³ Alister McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 222.

⁴ Michael Reeves and Tim Chester, *Why the Reformation Still Matters* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2016), pp. 209-210.



transformation of heart and mind—being reborn, circumcision of the heart by the Spirit, having the law written on the heart, having the mind of Christ etc. This is what Paul meant by work out your salvation with fear and trembling, or James that faith without works is dead. It would be like saying faith in your doctor, without taking the remedy he provide is worthless, i.e. doesn't heal.

- The NT church operated upon design law, not imposed law—it was all about healing and renewal
- Then the imposed law lie re-infected Christianity and the idea of renewal of the heart was retained, but legal confusion combined with this and it came to be believed that the healing required legal actions done by both the sinner and the church. Thus the gospel became corrupted to exploit people based on fear, such as the teaching of purgatory and the selling of indulgences, and the idea that one had to act in a certain way or do a certain ritual in order to be saved. Thus human works were blended with the idea of healing to create a false system
- The Protestant reformation threw off the idea of human works providing salvation, teaching instead the reality that the remedy to sin was accomplished by Jesus singly and alone and no human work could add to what Christ has done. However, they simultaneously rejected the idea of sin being a condition of being requiring heart transformation and renewal, thus they have perpetuated a false legal view that has a form of godliness with no power.
- The SDA church was founded to finish the Reformation—to take the good start made by Luther and complete it, which requires that we come back to design law, which eliminates the legal misunderstanding infecting both Protestant and Catholic theologies. Thus, our founders wrote things like this, regarding the cooperation between man and God for salvation, something the Review article above rejects:
- **There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies-- divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding,** but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus...** Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}

SABBATH

What do you think of from the Title? Do you think of two paths, two directions, two conditions, two inheritances, two outcomes?

- Adam—fear, selfishness, sin—terminal condition that results in death
- Jesus—love, truth, holiness—remedy that cures the terminal condition and results in eternal life



Jesus took up humanity, damaged and terminal by Adam's choice to break God's design thus corrupting the human species, and cured the sin-condition.

Read Memory Text: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Rom 5:1,2

What does this mean? What law lens do you hear it through? Do you hear a legal process? Do you hear this: "Therefore, being declared legally innocent, we are no longer under God's death sentence because of the legal payment of Jesus, whom we also have access to God's grace...."

What does justification mean? It means putting right, setting right in actuality, not in legal accounting. In other words, when you justify the margins on your document, you actually move the words that are out of line and put them in line you DON'T leave the words misaligned and then declare you have moved them.

This legal declaration of righteousness is a lie, brought about by accepting the lie that God's law functions like our law and tricks good people into accepting beliefs that not only don't heal, but actually undermine trust in God and therefore injure.

Read first paragraph: "Paul has established..." When they say, "the point that justification, or acceptance with God, comes only through faith..." are they saying that justification and acceptance with God are one and the same?

If so, what are they saying justification is doing? Is it doing something to get God to accept us? In the legal view the problem with sin is not the sinner, it is God's attitude of unacceptance, legal condemnation, rejection, wrath and anger and thus, we need Jesus to pay the legal price to this offended god so that this god will now accept us. This is paganism and we must reject it if we are to come to the knowledge of God and reveal Him to the world.

Genuine justification is setting right that which is wrong or deviant. Human beings, after Adam's sin were wrong, or out of harmony with God and God's design—in a terminal condition. Jesus took up humanity, terminal, dying, and set the human species right, first IN HIS OWN HUMANITY. Jesus is the second Adam, the new head of the human race, thus the species human was justified in the person of Jesus—not by a legal declaration, or legal imposition of punishment, but by a healing act. Just like justifying your margins you actually move the words out of harmony to be in line, Jesus took humanity upon Himself and actually moved humanity back into perfection—back into perfect harmony with God and God's design law of love!

This is true justification. Now, all human beings who trust Jesus can partake of what He achieved, and we are individually justified when our hearts/minds/characters are moved from distrust to trust and in trust we open the heart and receive the indwelling Spirit who takes what Christ achieved and reproduces it in us!



What does it mean the righteousness of Christ alone “is enough to give us right standing with our Lord.”

Again, do you hear this as influencing God; that the problem is God’s unaccepting attitude?

Such views are a result of the false imposed law lens.

With design law, it is true that the righteousness of God makes us acceptable why? BECAUSE God will only accept life, healing, restoration. He will not accept death, disease, decay, pain and suffering. It would be like you if your child had some terminal disease, the only thing acceptable to you is full complete healing and cure. Thus the righteousness of Jesus, which is the Remedy, the perfection of humanity, without it we remain terminal.

So, one of the founders of the SDA church wrote, regarding the robe of Christ’s righteousness and what it means to be covered by that robe of righteousness:

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. **Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character** He offers to impart to us... When we submit ourselves to Christ, **the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

Do you see this is healing, this is not a legal process. In fact, the legal view cheats people from this genuine restoration to righteousness by telling them they are declared righteous even though they are not. We must look higher, expect higher, trust higher, and let God heal our hearts!

Read the next paragraph, “Through the fall of one man...” Do you hear the infection, the lie, the distortion that keeps millions trapped in sin?

This is so deeply imbedding that most Christians don’t even question it.

But what did John the Baptist say about Jesus? Did he say:

- The Lamb of God who takes away the punishment of God for sin?

Or

- The Lamb of God who takes away the record of our sins?

Or did John actually say:

- The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world?

George MacDonald, 19th Century Congregationalist Theologian and Preacher wrote:

The Lord never came to deliver men from the consequences of their sins while those sins yet remained ... Yet, feeling nothing of the dread hatefulness of their sin, **men have constantly taken this word that the Lord came to deliver us from our sins to mean that he came to save them from the punishment of their sins.**

This idea has terribly corrupted the preaching of the Gospel. The message of the Good News has not been truly communicated. Unable to believe in the forgiveness of the Father in heaven, imagining him not at liberty to forgive, or incapable of forgiving forthright; not really believing him God who is fully our Savior, but a God bound—either in his own nature or by a law above him and compulsory upon him—to exact some recompense or satisfaction for sin, **a multitude of religious teachers have taught their fellow men that Jesus came to bear our punishment and save us from hell. But in that they have misrepresented his true mission.** George MacDonald, *Discovering the Character of God* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989), p. 39

The church cannot finish its mission while taking a pagan concept of God to the world. We must come back to worship Him who made the heavens, earth, sea and all that in them is—the Designer, which requires we reject this false legal view and embrace the truth about God who is love and His law is the law upon which reality is built.

Further, do you notice the false legal view has sins being erased from record books, from history and the historical memory of the universe, rather than sinfulness being erased from the hearts, minds, characters of sinners.

Again, a lie that cheats good people from experiencing healing of their inner being, but instead living in fear of some sin not being confessed and then not being removed from the record books. Or living in fear of someone finding out the history of some sin they committed.

Some have the idea that we won't have any memory or record of the sins of the righteous in heaven because they have been erased from the record books. Hmmm.... think about the following:

- Did David confess his sins and have them forgiven by God? Are they erased from history? Do angels know when we discuss David?
- When the woman washed Jesus feet with expensive ointment and was being criticized Jesus said, "I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." Lk 7:47 NIV84
- Revelation states "And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. ⁴ These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they



kept themselves pure.” Rev 14:3,4 –what does this mean? Is it not the song of their experience, thus only they can sing it because only they went through it? But would they have to remember what they went through in order to sing the song?

- In the book Education I read the following: “ "In His temple doth everyone speak of His glory" (Psalm 29:9), and the song which the ransomed ones will sing--the song of their experience--will declare the glory of God: "Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord." p. 308 –Would people have to remember their experience in order to sing the song of their experience?

And one of the founders of the SDA church wrote this:

Every question of truth and error in the long-standing controversy has now been made plain. The results of rebellion, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, have been laid open to the view of all created intelligences. The working out of Satan's rule in contrast with the government of God has been presented to the whole universe. **Satan's own works have condemned him. God's wisdom, His justice, and His goodness stand fully vindicated.** It is seen that all His dealings in the great controversy have been conducted with respect to the eternal good of His people and the good of all the worlds that He has created. . . . **The history of sin will stand to all eternity as a witness that with the existence of God's law is bound up the happiness of all the beings He has created.** With all the facts of the great controversy in view, the whole universe, both loyal and rebellious, with one accord declare: "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." {Mar 346.2}

We will remember, the record books are not erased; our memories of what we went through serve as part of the evidence that provide security from ever being deceived again and markedly enhance our love, confidence, trust and appreciation for God.

It is Satan who wants the records erased, because the records of reality, of truth, reveal the amazing perfection, goodness, righteousness, holiness of God and the evil, corruption and vileness of Satan.

Our personal histories give glory to God demonstrating His goodness in not rejecting us sick in sin, and that His methods when applied to sinners heal, regenerate and renew us back to perfection.

Read next paragraph, “Paul contrasts Adam and Jesus...” Yes—Jesus came to undo what Adam did—which was to the actually fix the condition of the human species, not to perform some legal process.

Yes—Christ is our substitute—in that “he who knew no sin became sin for us [substitution] so that we might become the righteousness of God.” 2Cor 5:21

This is healing, restoration, regeneration, recreation, actually putting right what was not right, which is the condition of the human heart and mind. This is true salvation, justification, and the purpose of



substitution—to heal and procure the remedy—perfect sinless human character—which no one born of sinful mother and father could ever do.

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read Romans 5:1-5 and then summarize the message, so let's read these verses from *The Remedy*:

¹Therefore, if our minds and hearts have been set right through trust, we are at peace with God through the Remedy achieved by our Lord Jesus Christ.²It is through Jesus that we know the truth about God and are won back to trust, and thus open our minds to experience God's gracious healing power. Our joy is found in the hope of full restoration into beings possessing Godlike character.³Because of this, we rejoice in our trials and afflictions, for we know that trials bring to light our shortcomings and defects of character.⁴If we persevere, choosing God's methods, the defects are removed and character is purified, and pure character increases our hope for God's kingdom.⁵And our hope will not be disappointed, because God pours out his love into our hearts and thereby matures, ennobles, and restores us into his image by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given to us.

Read first paragraph, “Being justified...”

Does this even make any sense? Remember the analogy of the person who stops brushing their teeth and gets cavities, goes to their pastor and the pastor tells the suffering person that Jesus brushed His teeth perfectly and if they accept Him as their substitute then God will declare them to have perfect teeth even though they don't. They just need to leave believing that their teeth are legally declared by God to be without any cavities. So they leave claiming they believe it, but in just as much pain with just as much decay—and thus trust in God is undermined because their experience contradicts what they are told to believe.

This false penal/legal model not only cheats people out of genuine healing it subtly destroys human reason and intelligence, because people know by their experience that they are hurting, struggling, decaying in heart and mind, yet they are told that despite this God in heaven declares they are perfectly righteous. It creates a terrible disconnect where God operates on some plane of existence disconnected from us—a fantasy island, which causes people to actually distrust God. And thus they create theologies to be protected or hidden from God.

Again, this entire distortion happens because people accept the lie that God's law functions like human law, imposed rules requiring legal imposed punishments, and thus create an entire false theology to deal with the wrong diagnosis.

Read next paragraph, “At the same time...”



“What more glorious news could there be for sinners?” How about the truth—that our condition was cured by Jesus, not punished by God.

So in the view put forth by the lesson:

- Who is punishing Jesus?
- Who is the source of pain, suffering and death?

In this controversy between good and evil, who wants to paint God as the one who causes pain suffering and death?

- In this legal penal view, who do we need protection from? So whose agenda does the legal view serve?

This false view leads to all the theological doctrines that function to hide us and protect us from God, and thus cheats us out of the reunion, the reuniting, the reconciliation, the unity, the at-one-ment God offers us to enter into with Him!

Can you reason out the problems that occur when we teach all sins have been laid upon Christ and punished in Christ?

- Does that mean, Hitler, Stalin, abortionists, who have ended hundreds of millions of lives, thus preventing quadrillions of sins from ever being committed reduced the sufferings of Jesus?
- If some people suffering either many days or all eternity (depending on your view) how could Jesus pay that penalty for all the sins of the world in only a few hours?
- If God forgives us our debts as we forgive our debtors, how is it we say our debt was paid? If someone pays your debt, can the person who received payment then turn to you and say, “now that I have received the proper payment, I forgive your debt”?
- Does this mean that if God were not to use His power to inflict punishment for sin that sinners could live eternally in sin because there really isn’t anything harmful about sin other than God will punish you for it?

From the book *Hard Sayings of the Bible* published by IVP:

In some sense, God’s wrath is built into the very structure of created reality. In rejecting God’s structure and establishing our own, in violating God’s intention for the creation and substituting our own intentions, we cause our own disintegration. P 542

The human condition, which Paul describes in Romans 1:18-32, is not something caused by God. The phrase “revealed from heaven” (where “heaven” is a typical Jewish substitute word for “God”) does not depict some kind of divine intervention, but rather the *inevitability of human debasement* which results when God’s will, built into the created order, is violated. Since the created order has its origin in God, Paul can say that the wrath of God is now (constantly) being revealed “from heaven.” It is revealed in the fact that the rejection of God’s truth (Rom 1:18-20), that is, the truth about God’s nature and will, leads to futile thinking



(Rom 1:21-22), idolatry (Rom 1:23), perversion of God-intended sexuality (Rom 1:24-27) and relational-moral brokenness (Rom 1:28-32). P 543

The expression “God gave them over” (or “handed them over”), which appears three times in this passage (Rom 1:24,26,28), supports the idea that the sinful perversion of human existence, though resulting from human decisions, is to be understood ultimately as God’s punishment which we, in freedom, bring upon ourselves. P 543

In light of these reflections, the common notion that God punishes or blesses in direct proportion to our sinful or good deeds cannot be maintained... God loves us with an everlasting love. But the rejection of that love separates us from its life-giving power. The result is disintegration and death. P 543 Kaiser, W., et al., *Hard Saying of the Bible*, Intervarsity Press, 1996,

From one of the founders of the SDA church:

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. **By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.** {1SM 235.2}

The idea that God must use His power to inflict punishment for sin is Satan’s lie from the beginning. Another quote from the book *The Desire of Ages*. I like to quote this because it not only is put together so beautifully, but provides historical documentation on how the SDA church used to see it, and exposes how deeply the imposed law lie has infected the church:

In the opening of the great controversy, **Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed,** that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. {DA 761.4}

But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. **Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will.** This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. **But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by**



Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. **For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.** {DA 761.5} [What do you hear? Lies believed break the circle of love and trust, broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness. Humans had fear and selfishness in us because we believed lies about God, thus truth about God could dispel the lies and win us back to trust, and in trust to receive the perfect character of Christ to restore us to God's ideal. But Satan, having known the character of God—rejected it. He didn't believe lies about God, but preferred selfishness to love, thus revealing truth to Satan doesn't dispel lies and win to trust and therefore there was nothing God could do for him.]

Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; **but mercy does not set aside justice. The law reveals the attributes of God's character, and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition.** [Why? Because God's law is design law and to change the laws upon which all reality is built would be to destroy all reality] **God did not change His law,** but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Corinthians 5:19. {DA 762.1}

The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and **developed a perfect character.** These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. **Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."** Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Do you see the entire healing view based upon Design law here? No legal imposed law construct!

MONDAY

The middle of the states "Romans 5:9 says we can be saved from God's wrath through Jesus. How do we understand what that means?"

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! Rom 5:9 NIV84

What does this mean?

What is God's wrath based upon what we just read in *Hard Sayings of the Bible* on Romans 1? God letting go to reap what sin does when God isn't holding its destructive consequences at bay.



So from *The Remedy*:

Now that we have been won back to trust, cleansed in mind and set right with God by all that Christ accomplished at the cross, it is ridiculous to think that God would let us go! Rom 5:9

But read the next paragraph and see how the lesson authors describe the meaning of Romans 5:9, “On the eve of their departure...”

So, what do you hear the wrath of God is? What do they describe the blood of Jesus functionally doing? This is paganism, a god who is wrathful and who uses his power to inflict pain and death unless held at bay by the blood of a human sacrifice.

The correct understanding is what the Bible actually teaches, and what we read above—God strives with all His agencies to win His intelligent creatures back to love and trust in order to heal them from their terminal condition, but if they insist on rejecting Him, He will sadly—in harmony with His law (character)—grant them freedom to reap what they have chosen, separation from Him which results in ruin and death. This is God’s wrath, letting them go.

TUESDAY

In the first paragraph the lesson makes an excellent point worth noting—God designed that human beings should live forever. In other words, death was not designed by God, but is an intruder to God’s order.

The lesson asks us to read Romans 5:12 “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned...” NIV84

and then the lesson states, “Commentators have argued more over this passage of Scripture than most others.”

Why?

Read next paragraph, “One point they argue over....” I like how they said Jesus is the only remedy!

From *The Remedy*:

Therefore, the infection of distrust of God—which deformed humanity's heart and mind with selfishness and fear, and which results only in death—infected the human race when Adam accepted Satan's lies about God and broke trust with him. This infection of fear and selfishness is inherited by all human beings, so all are born infected.

When we come back to Design law all the confusion clears up.



WEDNESDAY

Read Romans 5:13,14:

for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. ¹⁴Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. NIV84

What does this mean? If it is a legal problem, and there is no law, and then no accountability—then why were people still dying from Moses to Adam? What does this reveal? That sin is not a legal problem, but a condition of being that is terminal without Remedy:

From *The Remedy*

This is revealed by the fact that before the written law was given, the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness was already present in the world. But this infection of distrust, fear and selfishness is not diagnosable without the law.¹⁴ Nevertheless, even without being diagnosed as infected with this terminal condition, humans still died, all the way from the time of Adam to Moses—even those who did not break a specific command, like Adam did—revealing that the problem is the infected state of our minds and not a legal issue with God. Adam, the first man, being the conduit through which the infection entered humanity, also represents the one man who is the conduit of the antidote that cures all those who accept it.

Read third paragraph, “It is true that...” Do you see any problems here? What?

Who is the punisher according to this paragraph? So what is the problem with sin? Is the problem sin itself, or a god who punishes you for it? And if God is the punisher for sin, then what do we need salvation from? From the punishment of God, so God sent Jesus to be punished—this is the corruption, all based on the false law view, just as George MacDonald described in the earlier quote.

This teaching, right here in this paragraph, is what obstructs the final message of mercy from going to the world, from what some call the work of the 3 angels to lighten the world with the truth about God to prepare for the second coming of Christ.

THURSDAY

The lesson states “As humans, we received nothing from Adam but the sentence of death...” How do you hear this?

Could you state what we received from Adam more accurately?



Read third paragraph, “Look at the opposing...” Yes, Christ came to undo all Adam did—excellent, this is worthy of deep contemplation, let's examine the contrast and understand what it means.

- Death from Adam—life from Christ
 - Why death—what causes death? From where does death originate? Wages of sin, sin when full grown—thus sin comes from transgressing God's design protocols, laws, of life
 - Then where does life originate—in God, and it flows out to all that live in harmony with His laws (designs) so Christ by his death destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light—how?
 - By destroying the infection of fear and selfishness at the Cross and establishing in humanity the perfect character of love, i.e. the law of love the protocol of life!
- Disobedience from Adam—obedience from Christ
 - What does this mean? Adam broke the law upon which life is built to operate and thus his condition became terminal. Christ restored the law upon which life is built and the healed the terminal condition
- Condemnation from Adam—Justification from Christ
 - From where does Adam's condemnation come? From the condition itself, from being fearful and selfish, rather than operating on love, truth and freedom. Where does being set right originate? In Christ's singular victory of overcoming the drive to survive, the fear and selfish temptations with perfect love and thus establishing a new human character, which put humanity back right with God and His design for life.
- Sin from Adam—righteousness from Christ
 - Sin is what? Transgression of the law, or being out of harmony with God's design protocols for life i.e. the law of love. Righteousness is being perfectly in harmony with God and His designs for life, and thus Christ developed a perfect righteous character. Heb 5:8,9 and thus when made perfect became the source of salvation for all who obey him.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



The Book of Romans Lesson 8 4Q 2017

Who is the Man in Romans 7?

by Dr. Jennings

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

November 17,18, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr. SDA church in California.

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

Two weeks ago I had the privilege of speaking at the Arlington TX SDA church and we had a great event, met so many friends who already watch us online, and new friends who heard this message for the first time. We gave away many DVDs and had an extremely positive reception.

I want to thank especially Allen Webber and Alyce Whitten who were integral on helping organize this event and also making me feel so welcome when there.

On a sadder note, one of the people I met there, Heidi Medcalf sent the following email last night:

My best friend, Amber lost 10 of her family members (Holcombe family) in the tragic church shooting last Sunday.

Will you please pray and request ongoing prayer during our Bible study class tomorrow?

In addition, I always like to offer up a praise with every prayer request to God. Through this awful tragedy, we are already seeing God's hand performing miracles. Brian and Carla (Amber's Uncle and Aunt) loved the Lord and lived for Him in everything they did. Their oldest son Scott did not believe in God and did not have a relationship with Him, which is why he was not in church with the rest of the family members on that fateful day. Through this tragedy of losing his family, he said he has never seen so much "love" from others and now professes that Jesus is Lord and though losing his entire family, he now sees.

It has been a very emotional week. In talking to Amber's Grandfather (Pappa) he said the following "I've read the book, I know the story and I know how it ends, and therefore I'm ok. I also asked Amber the following question...."If your family knew that by losing their life, Scott would come to know his Savior and one day they would all be reunited in Heaven together, would they have given their lives so that he could know his Father?? She said YES, 100% no doubt about it. We held each other and thanked our Father who is always working for our good and asked Him to hasten his return.



Thank you again for your beautiful message that God is love, the whole world needs to hear the message and I have faith that they will, soon!!!

*Your sister in Christ,
Heidi*

Dr. Jennings was one of a select group of Christian mental health leaders to be invited to the White House to meet with Donald Trump's staff on Wednesday, November 8, 2017, to discuss mental health, opioid addiction and faith-based initiatives. Other attendees included Tim Clinton, PhD, President of the AACC who helped organize this event, James Dobson PhD who advocated for the importance of healthy families in promoting mental wellness, Daniel Amen MD who advocated on educating young people on brain health, Paul Meier MD, Caroline Leaf PhD, Henry Cloud PhD, and others.

Dr. Jennings had the opportunity to dialogue with these thought leaders, including Pastor Paula White, the President's pastor and friend who was integral in bringing this event about. During the meeting with White House staff the attendees had an opportunity to hear the President's initiatives on mental health issues from a variety of staff, including Kellyanne Conway. Attendees were able to provide direct feedback to the President's staff, discuss potential obstacles to effective mental health treatment and suggest solutions. The President's staff was extremely informative, open, and demonstrated a deep commitment to treating the whole person, mind, body and spirit. The President's staff informed attendees of his personal deep commitment to Christian principles, and the many specific changes he is making to improve mental health care in America.

Specifically President Trump has directed the Department of Health and Human Services to:

- Develop programs to address the opioid crisis to include expanded treatment, expanded court ordered treatment, drug courts, diversion from incarceration to treatment, improved communication with families and involvement of faith-based programs
 - Late October, 2017 the office of civil rights put out guidance that if a person has experience an opioid overdose and was treated in an emergency room that confidential rules did not prevent the medical staff from contacting family to inform them of the overdose. This should improve family involvement in getting those struggling with such addictions into treatment and recovery.
- Focus on early detection and early treatment of serious mental problems (i.e. in adolescence)
- Developing crisis intervention programs to provide behavioral health services on site (in community), rather than the ER or hospital, which would increase family and community involvement in care and stabilization
- Integrating physical health care into the care of those with serious mental health problems and substance use disorders
- Enforcing mental health parity laws to ensure those with mental illnesses get the treatment they need



Additionally, this administration is initiating a national program to train primary care providers to ask about suicide on a routine basis in their offices as most people who commit suicide see a primary care provider shortly before committing suicide, but are rarely asked about suicide at those visits.

The President has initiated an office of innovation which has taken up the task of reforming the prison system in America from merely a system of incarceration and punishment, to rehabilitation and reintegration into society. They are seeking to reduce the financial burden on society by reducing the number incarcerated and also returning those incarcerated back into functional society. They are exploring all options, including improved mental health treatment of those in prison, reducing TBI in youth and teaching the young to care for their brains as research has demonstrated that those in prison are more likely to have some form of brain trauma; and faith-based prison ministries to assist those incarcerated in experiencing transformation of heart motive to get a real new start in life.

Dr. Jennings was very encouraged by the meeting and informed this is the first in what is planned as an ongoing dialogue between the faith community and the White House. Please keep us in your prayers that we can effectively communicate and promote God's healing truths!

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, "Few chapters in the Bible..." Why? What causes the confusion? Could it be the assumptions one holds before one goes to the text?

If one conceives of law in a certain way before they read the text will it color how they understand what is being said?

The last paragraph states, "Whatever position one takes, what's important is that Jesus' righteousness covers us and that in His righteousness we stand perfect before God, who promises to sanctify us, to give us victory over sin, and to conform us to the 'image of his son' (Rom. 8:29)."

What does it mean to be covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness?

Why does covering us with the righteousness of Christ cause us to stand perfect before God?

- Does the description above sound like we are standing perfect before God before we are actual perfect before God—why would we need sanctification if we are perfect before God?
- And what kind of a trick is going on if we are somehow able to get God to believe we are perfect, yet we are not perfect? What kind of a God wouldn't know that?
- This confusing description, which is written to bring hope, yet instead causes doubts, is based on misunderstanding God's law, and therefore teaching the robe of Christ righteousness is a metaphor that teaches a legal accounting process rather than a healing and transforming experience in the believer.



Here is one view from the book *Christ's Object Lessons*, do you agree with this view or prefer a different one?

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. ... When we submit ourselves to Christ, **the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life.** *This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.* Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. p. 311

Do you agree? So when does the Lord see us covered with the robe of righteousness—before or after we have been healed in heart and mind?

What would it mean then if we teach people the metaphor is a declaration of being seen as perfect before God BEFORE we are healed within? It means we are cheating people, we are leading them to believe a system of lies and falsehood that has a form of godliness, but has no power. This false view leads people to believe they need to have their sins hidden from God—why? Because the legal view has God as the source of inflicted punishment for sin.

In the book above, what was described was healing—nothing legal going on here, it is all about restoration, recreation to righteousness.

SUNDAY

Read Romans 7:1-6:

Do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to men who know the law—that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? ²For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. ³So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.

⁴So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. ⁵For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. ⁶But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code. (NIV84)

Why does Paul use a legal analogy? To whom was he writing? What is the point?



“By dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law...” What once bound us?

- sin, selfishness, fear, survival drive
- our carnal natures
- lies we believe
- guilt and shame

So, verses 4-6 from *The Remedy*:

Therefore, your selfish, fear-ridden heart died when you accepted the truth revealed by Christ's death, and you received a new heart from him who was raised from the dead, in order that you might grow in character—to be like Jesus—and live to honor God.⁵For when we were controlled by the infection of fear and selfishness—which resulted from distrust—the destructive passions revealed by the law were ravaging our bodies, we were terminally ill and spreading death wherever we went.⁶But now, as we die to the distrust, fear and selfishness that once bound us, the law no longer diagnoses us as infected and terminal. In fact, the law now confirms that we have a new heart—not by observing rules, but created within by the Spirit. We are now healthy and loving like Jesus.

First paragraph states, “The Jews had difficulty grasping the fact that this system, given to them of God, should end with the coming of the Messiah. This is what Paul was dealing with—Jewish believers still not ready to abandon what had been such an important part of their lives.”

Did the system of animal sacrifices, circumcision of the body, feasts provide salvation?

Did a person have to participate in that system to be saved?

- Naaman
- Shunammite woman
- Nebuchadnezzar
- Good Samaritan
- The Woman at the Well

Why were the Jews not ready to abandon the system that was such a part of their lives? Was it because they ascribed a value to that system that the system did not actually possess?

What about those who hold to the penal/legal model? Do they have difficulty letting it go? Why? Do they ascribe a value to it that it does not actually possess?

Read last paragraph, “Again, given all else that Paul...” What is the importance of the Bible Sabbath?

What law lens do you see it through?



If we say the Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience, that God declared it to be holy and unless he decrees a different day it remains holy by decree—what type of law are we promoting?

What is the importance of the Sabbath? Is it a test of obedience or a gift for some reason?

The Sabbath was made for man not man for the Sabbath—what is its purpose?

What does it do? What makes it holy?

How did the Sabbath as a day of rest come to exist? It was created that way!

What was associated with the creation of the Sabbath? What was happening in the universe during the creation of planet earth?

What do days 1-6 of Creation week reveal about God? that he is powerful

What do we learn about God on day 7? the character of the one who holds the power, truth presented in love but leaving His intelligent creatures free!

So, what is the importance of the Sabbath? It was given to man, man was not given to the Sabbath, so what was it given to man for?

The Sabbath is evidence of God's character of love, and His methods of governing, truth presented in love while leaving his intelligent beings free! The Sabbath declares every week that God runs His universe on Design law. This is why we are to REMEMBER the Sabbath—think, remember—what? God as Creator and His laws as the laws upon which reality are built.

How did Sunday become an official day of worship? By legislative vote—what type of law is this?

So, the two days of worship stand as evidence of two methods of governing or two types of law (design versus imposed)—the days themselves are not the two methods or laws, but are evidences of two methods or laws.

What is the flag of the United States? It is a sign or symbol of the United States of America—is the flag *the* USA? No, it is only a sign. Can a person carry the US flag in combat, but be fighting for the enemy?

If we teach the Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience are we representing the truth about God's design law or imposed law? Imposed law, thus we are promoting the Sabbath as a mark for the beastly system of coercion.

Can someone keep Sunday as their day of worship, yet present the truth about God as a God of love and His design law as His method of governing?



C. S. Lewis taught this idea in the last book of the Chronicles of Narnia series when he describes a Calormene soldier named Emeth and his encounter with Aslan the lion. Emeth was a worshiper of Tash and as a result was terrified when he came face to face with Aslan:

I fell at his feet and thought surely this is the hour of death, for the Lion will know that I have served Tash all my days and not him.

But Aslan's response?

Son thou art welcome. But I said, alas Lord I am no son of thine but the servant of Tash. He answered, Child all the service thou hast done to Tash I account as service done to me.

I questioned the Glorious One: Lord, is it then true that thou and Tash are one? The Lion growled and said, It is false. Not because he and I are one, but because we are opposites, I take to me the services which thou hast done to him. For I and he are of such different kinds that no service which is vile can be done to me, and none which is not vile can be done to him. Therefore if any man swear by Tash and keep his oath for the oath's sake, it is by me that he has truly sworn, though he know it not, and it is I who reward him. And if any man do a cruelty in my name, then, though he says the name Aslan, it is Tash whom he serves and by Tash his deed is accepted.

Emeth questions once more:

Lord, I have been seeking Tash all my days.

Beloved, said the Glorious One, unless thy desire had been for me thou shouldst not have sought so long and so truly. For all find what they truly seek.¹

Is it primarily about the day—or is it about the heart, mind and character of the person to be like Jesus?

In addition to the Sabbath being an evidence of God's design law, how are we to relate to it? According to Isaiah it is to be called a delight, a day of celebration, rejoicing, rest and gladness—really the Sabbath is supposed to be a weekly vacation from the stressors of this sinful world—to set aside our burdens and relax—to rest and rejuvenate.

Imagine you went to your favorite beach resort to relax on vacation, but when you got there it was taken over by terrorists and you were held there against your will—how relaxing and enjoyable would your vacation be?

When we present the Sabbath an arbitrary test of obedience, as a day of restriction of liberty, a day in which we can't do this and can't do that, a day that if you do the wrong thing it will go against you in the heavenly courts, we misrepresent God's law, God's character, undermine trust and destroy the



purpose of the Sabbath to be a day of rest and gladness. Thus, we can observe the right day and crucify the Lord of the day.

So the lesson is correct, Paul is not doing away with the Sabbath or the 10 Commandments—he is doing away with the legal understanding of sin and salvation and putting the Commandments in their proper place, a diagnostic instrument. So, if the Sabbath is not a day of rest, joy, rejuvenation, recovery—if the Sabbath is a day of fear, insecurity, worry about whether you did this or that, then the Commandment reveals there is still healing to do in your heart—for perfect love to come in and cast out all the fear and self-referenced thinking about God and the law.

MONDAY

The lesson asks if the 10 Commandment law was done away with at the Cross?

Read Romans 7:7-11 from *The Remedy*:

What shall we say then? Is the law evil and selfish because it increases the amount of evil and selfishness we see? Absolutely not! I would not have known what evil and selfishness looked like if it wasn't for the diagnostic efficacy of the law. I would not have realized that coveting was evil and selfish if the law didn't say, "Don't covet."⁸ But selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the law is only a diagnostic instrument—and not a Remedy—magnified every covetous desire within me. For apart from the diagnostic ability of the law, sin is unrecognizable.⁹ Once I thought I was healthy and free from the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness, but then the commandment examined me, exposed how utterly infected I was, and diagnosed me as terminal.¹⁰ I discovered that the very commandment given only to diagnose my condition I had unwittingly attempted to use as a cure, and thus my condition only worsened.¹¹ For selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the commandment could only diagnose and not cure, deceived me into thinking that I could be cured by working to keep the commandments; but instead, my terminal state only worsened.

What was the problem the Jews had with the law? They thought it could function as a cure—but it was only given to help expose or diagnose what was wrong.

Read fourth paragraph, “Thus, Paul explains...” What do you think of the lesson’s definition of sin: “sin is a violation of the revealed will of God...”?

Can you find this definition in Scripture? What definitions can we find in Scripture?

- sin is the transgression of the law 1Jn 3:4
 - Which means what? Deviating from God’s design
- everything that does not come from faith is sin. Rom 14:23
 - Which means what? Lies believed break the circle of love and trust resulting in fear and selfishness—which is deviant from God’s design of love.



Thus both definitions are about breeching God's design protocols of love.

What about the definition that sin is the violation of the revealed will of God?

- After the 70 year captivity what was God's revealed will? To return to the Promised Land
 - Did Esther and Mordecai return to the Promised Land? Were they sinning?
- What was the revealed will of God in regard to whether Israel should have human kings?
- Did God come to change His will on this?
- Who chose their first two kings?
- Was God helping them sin?

What do you think of the new definition of sin? It is based on authoritarianism i.e. seeing God as a dictator, God said it, you better do it, or it is sin.

We must come back to design law, and then realize it is about the motive of the heart.

- Were either Moses or Abraham sinning when they argued against the reveal will of God?

Read the next paragraph, "In Paul's line of argument..." So how did Christ fulfill the law? What law? How do you understand it?

If the law is like human law then Christ fulfilled it by taking our punishment, but if the law is Design law, Christ restored the design protocols back into humanity and destroyed the deviations that cause death.

- Which view do you find more consistent with how reality works?
- Which view leads you to have greater trust in God?
- Which view undermines trust in God?
- Then which view do you think Satan would support?
- Which view is the common view in the world today?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Because the Jews revered..." This is well said!

Read third paragraph, "*Carnal* means 'fleshly...'" How does Christ free us from the slavery to sin?

Slavery takes our freedom—how does sin take our freedom? Is this a legal slavery, or an actual condition of being?

Read Romans 7:14-20 in *The Remedy*:

We know that the law is consistent, reliable and reasonable; but I am inconsistent, unreliable and unreasonable, because the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness has warped my mind and damaged my thinking.¹⁵I am frustrated with what I do! For having been restored to trust, I want to do what is in harmony with God and his methods and principles; but I find that even



though I trust God, my old habits, conditioned responses, preconceived ideas and other remnants of the devastation caused by distrust and selfishness are not yet fully removed.¹⁶ And if I find an old habit causing me to behave in ways that I now find detestable, I affirm that the law is a very helpful tool revealing residual damage in need of healing.¹⁷ What is happening is this: I have come to trust God, and I desire to do his will, but old habits and conditioned responses—which present almost reflexively in certain situations—have not yet been totally eliminated and thus cause me to do things I do not want to do.¹⁸ I know that my mind was completely infected with distrust, fear and selfishness, which totally perverted all my desires and faculties, so that even when distrust has been eradicated and trust has been restored, the damage caused by years of distrustful and selfish behavior has not yet been fully healed. So, I find that at times, I have the desire to do what is right, but do not yet have the ability to carry out the desire.¹⁹ For the old habits and conditioned responses are not the good I want to do: No! They are remnants of my selfish, unconverted mind.²⁰ So, if I find myself doing what I no longer desire to do, it is not myself that acts, but the vestiges of old habits and conditioned responses that have yet to be removed. And through God's grace, they will soon be removed.

What kind of freedom is being described?

If we focus on a legal model, then what would the experience of the person struggling in Romans 7? Wouldn't it be by cycles of guilt, fear of punishment, seeking legal payments and erasure of records. But what is being described is the reality of a person whose heart has been renewed, but even though the heart is renewed, they haven't yet made Christlike living the automated practices of their life.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Using the law as a mirror, the Holy Spirit convicts a person that he or she is displeasing God by not fulfilling the requirements of the law."

What does this sound like? Does this sound very childlike—"you broke the rule and have to go to the principal's office—you're in trouble now!"

Why is God displeased? Is he displeased because we break his rules, that this somehow disrespects him and offends his holiness? Or, is he displeased because breaking his law is breaking the protocols upon which our life and health depend and he is quite unhappy to see those he loves injured and dying?

Read last paragraph, "Unfortunately, by failing to renew..." Do you agree? Is victory over sinful living possible in a trust relationship with Jesus?

What is sad is that the lesson is correct in this paragraph, that victory over sin in our lives is possible in a trust relationship with Jesus with the indwelling power of the Spirit. However, they fail to realize that their legal approach to the sin problem introduces multiple concepts and ideas that keep people



from genuinely trusting God and thus from experiencing victory. So, the legal system sets them up for perpetual insecurity, fear, and discouragement, leading many to give up and leave the church altogether.

We must rid our minds of the legal salvation models that cause so much devastation and imprison so many good people in religion without power to live victoriously.

THURSDAY

Read Romans 7:21-25 from *The Remedy*:

So I find this reality at work: When I want to do good, my old selfish habits and residual feelings of fear are right there with me.²²In my mind, I rejoice in God's methods and principles,²³but I recognize that I remain damaged from years of being infected with distrust and practicing Satan's methods, so that even though the infection of distrust has been removed, the old habits of fear and self-promotion tempt me from within. What a damaged and corrupt man I am! Who will deliver and heal me from a brain and body so diseased and deformed?²⁵Praise be to God—for he has provided the healing solution through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I find that in my mind I am now renewed with trust in God and love of his methods, but my brain and body remain damaged by years of self-indulgent behavior.

Read first two paragraphs, “In this passage...” What do you understand is happening?

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph, “After Christ died on the cross...” What force did the ceremonial law have before Christ died on the cross?

Could salvation be found in keeping the ceremonial law?

- This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.¹⁰ They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order. Heb 9:9,10
- I want your constant love, not your animal sacrifices. I would rather have my people know me than burn offerings to me. Hosea 6:6

What is life eternal?

So what force did the ceremonial law have prior to Christ's death?

¹ C. S. Lewis, *The Last Battle* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 164–65.



2017 Q4 The Book of Romans - Lesson 9

No Condemnation — by Dr. Wendell Moses

SABBATH

Memory Text: There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Romans 8:1

- There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (KJV)
- Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (NASB)
- So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. (NLT)
- There is no condemnation now for those who live in union with Christ Jesus. (GNT)

Premise #1: The Bible is about God, not us.

Read the entire passage for this week's lesson from Phillips translation or Today's English Translation.

- What is the theme of these passages?
- The word "spirit" is present 18 times in these 17 verses
- TEV: 18x, NLT: 15x, KJV: 16x, NASB: 17x
- The emphasis is our "life in the Spirit" not guilt

Lesson Theme: (What the lesson should really be about) God gave and is continuing to give of Himself in both Father, Son and Spirit that we may be like Him. That is the way He designed it in the beginning and that is still His ultimate goal.

Read the entire page: In the third paragraph:

- It was the only way "He could relate to us,"
- Why is that?
- Did God not know how we felt?
- Isn't the pathos of the Old Testament an indication that indeed God does know what it is to be human?
- He speaks in such human terms.
- He expresses emotion of father, mother, child
- He shows the heart of yearning after His children who are wandering away from Him.
- Christ did call himself "the human"
- (son of man) depiction
- That is for our benefit, not His.
- The deficits of understanding and relationship are human in origin, not God derived.



- God was not damaged when sin entered the universe and subsequently to this earth. His children were the ones who were damaged.
- God's interventions have been for our restoration and healing, not to correct any deficiency in God.

At the bottom of the paragraph: "Obedience to law had not been, nor ever can be, a means of salvation."

- Why?
- We are to be a "new creature"
- External versus internal sources of behavior
- When we are born again in Christ we become new creatures.
 - "Unless you are born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God"
 - You cannot perceive or understand it
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17 & John 3:3
 - It is not a deficiency on God's part
 - It is our deficiencies that God came to repair
 - It wasn't God that was broken, it is me / us.

SUNDAY

In Jesus Christ

What is the emphasis of Romans 8:1

- What do you see?
- If your emphasis is on your record, you concentrate on "condemnation"
- If your emphasis is on your relationship, you concentrate on the contrast in how you walk (relationship with Christ)
- TEV "There is no condemnation now for those who live in union with Christ Jesus."
- Verses 8:1 - 11 are all about our life in union with Christ and the contrast with our human nature.

Read the first paragraph. (As I noted in the margin - excellent)

The next two paragraphs paint a different picture.

- It is little to do with our union with Christ.
- Consumed with the images of fault, perfection of records, and condemnation.

Romans 8:2

- What is the law of the Spirit of life?
- Is this not the law of life?
- Is this not what righteousness truly means?
- This is not imposed, arbitrary rule, but God's eternal design from the foundation of the world.
- This is how life should be.



Read the quote from the “The Desire of Ages” at the bottom of the page?

The last sentence of the pink section says: “Are a slave, or are you free in Christ? How can you know for sure?”

- Is that not the purpose of the law?
- The Law of God is a diagnostic instrument to see where are treasure, emphasis and heart truly is. It will be the standard of our devotion.
- The moral law is descriptive, not proscriptive.

MONDAY

What the Law Could Not Do

Read the first paragraph... Why do we need Jesus/God?

- We need to return to our original design.
- Christ Jesus is not a patch.
- The Trinity is our center / our Core.

Read Romans 8:3,4

- “What the Law could not do, because human nature was weak, God did. He condemned sin in human nature by sending his own Son, who came with a nature like our sinful nature, to do away with sin. God did this so that the righteous demands of the Law might be fully satisfied in us who live according to the Spirit, and not according to human nature.”
- Read second paragraph and onward. (Especially the 2nd and 6th)

TUESDAY

The Flesh or the Spirit

Read the bold print at the top. Read the text and then the question. “Dwell on these texts.. .What do they say to you about the way in which you are living?”

Should you concentrate on deeds / behavior?

- On to what should you concentrate your life’s energies?
- Matthew 22:37 “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’”
- Proverbs 23:7 (Thoughts are source of behavior)
- “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.”
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (Law of Love)
- “Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud; love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth. Love never gives up; and its faith, hope, and patience never fail.”
- Matthew 5:22, 28 (Sermon on the Mount)
- “But now I tell you: if you are angry with your brother you will be brought to trial, if you call your brother ‘You good-for-nothing!’ you will be brought before the Council, and if you call



your brother a worthless fool you will be in danger of going to the fire of hell....But now I tell you: anyone who looks at a woman and wants to possess her is guilty of committing adultery with her in his heart.”

Read first paragraph

- This is the real meaning of this week’s lesson:
- The source of your inner being: is it God via His Spirit, or is it our broken humanity.
- This gives new meaning to what is natural
 - What currently is “natural” is actually a perversion of what life is suppose to be like.
 - How we were created to be in the beginning, before sin, is what is to be Natural.

Paul contrasts Life of Christ with Life apart from Christ.

- Paul’s purpose?
- Read first sentence of the 5th paragraph:
- “This was Paul’s answer . . .”
- It wasn’t “enough” for salvation before. Only by rebirth of the inner person that healing could occur.
- Psalms 51:10 (GNT) “Create a pure heart in me, O God, and put a new and loyal spirit in me.”

WEDNESDAY

Christ In You

Read the first paragraph “Paul continues his theme. . .”

- Life according to the Holy Spirit of God
- Life according to my sinful and carnal nature
- Romans 8:13 (GNT) “For if you live according to your human nature, you are going to die; but if by the Spirit you put to death your sinful actions, you will live.”
- One leads to eternal life, the other to eternal death.
- This is not an imposed punishment.
- This is how the universe is designed.

Read the central portion of the 3rd paragraph: “But as in baptism, there is not only a burial but also a resurrection. . .”

- Even after the old man of sin is destroyed, it still is possible to sin. God does not destroy our freedom.

The highlighted are at bottom of page: The power of God that was able to resurrect Jesus from death is able to recreate His character in us.

Colossians 1:27 “God’s plan is to make known his secret to his people, this rich and glorious secret which he has for all peoples. And the secret is that Christ is in you, which means that you will share in the glory of God.”



THURSDAY

The Spirit of Adoption

The Spirit of Adoption

We can be God's restored children.

Read EGW comments in middle of page.

Middle of Page Question: "What give us the assurance that God has indeed accepted us as children?"

- Romans 8:16: "God's Spirit joins himself to our spirits to declare that we are God's children."
- How do you know?
- Is this a mystical feeling?
- "I know that I know that I know that I know ..."
- Do you believe God's word even when it doesn't feel like it.
- What is a healthy conscience?
- How about the written law?
- It says volumes about who God is and what He is like!

FRIDAY

Any of the provided passages can be useful in our walk

Teacher's Comments: Read the bottom section of "The Lesson in Brief"

- Do: Build a friendship with God
- What are willing to do?
- What are some of the ways?
- What are the key moments?
- What has thinking about who Christ is accomplished in you personally?
 - 2 Corinthians 3:18 NLT "So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image."

Hold to Affirmative Truth

"Often, as you seek to present the truth, opposition will be aroused; but if you seek to meet the opposition with argument, you will only multiply it, and that you cannot afford to do. Hold to the affirmative. Angels of God are watching you, and they understand how to impress those whose opposition you refuse to meet with argument. Dwell not on the negative points of questions that arise, but gather to your minds affirmative truths, and fasten them there by much earnest prayer and heart-consecration."—Testimonies for the Church 9:147, 148. ChS 126.2



“If the canvasser walks with God, if he prays for heavenly wisdom that he may do good and only good in his labor, he will be quick to discern the needs of those with whom he comes in contact. He will make the most of his opportunities to draw souls to Christ, not dwelling upon doctrinal subjects, but upon the love of God, upon His mercy and goodness in the plan of salvation. In the spirit of Christ he will be ready to speak a word in season to him that is weary. CM 102.2

The great need of the soul is to know God and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. The Bible abounds in practical lessons, which the canvasser may safely present. If he can by this means impart a knowledge of practical religion, he will be feeding the people, who need just such precious food.” —Manual for Canvassers, 35, 36 (1902). CM 103.1

The religion of Christ is not to be placed in the background and its holy principles laid down to meet the approval of any class, however popular. If the standard of truth and holiness is lowered, the design of God will not then be carried out in this institution. CH 245.1

But our peculiar faith should not be discussed with patients. Their minds should not be unnecessarily excited upon subjects wherein we differ, unless they themselves desire it; and then great caution should be observed not to agitate the mind by urging upon them our peculiar faith. The Health Institute [The name of the battle creek sanitarium in its early days.] is not the place to be forward to enter into discussion upon points of our faith wherein we differ with the religious world generally. Prayer meetings are held at the Institute, in which all may take part if they choose; but there is an abundance to dwell upon in regard to Bible religion without touching objectionable points of difference. Silent influence will do more than open controversy. CH 245.2

In exhortation in the prayer meetings, some Sabbathkeepers have felt that they must bring in the Sabbath and the third angel's message, or they could not have freedom. This is characteristic of narrow minds. Patients not acquainted with our faith do not know what is meant by the third angel's message. The introduction of these terms without a clear explanation of them does only harm. We must meet the people where they are, and yet we need not sacrifice one principle of the truth. The prayer meeting will prove a blessing to patients, helpers, and physicians. Brief and interesting seasons of prayer and social worship will increase the confidence of patients in their physicians and helpers. The helpers should not be deprived of these meetings by work, unless it is positively necessary. They need them and should enjoy them. CH 245.3

The consciousness of rightdoing is the best medicine for diseased bodies and minds. The special blessing of God resting upon the receiver is health and strength. One whose mind is quiet and satisfied in God is on the highway to health. To have the consciousness that the eye of the Lord is upon us, and that His ear is open to our prayers, is a satisfaction indeed. To know that we have a never-failing Friend to whom we can confide all the secrets of the soul, is a happiness which words can never express. Those whose moral faculties are clouded by disease are not the ones to rightly represent the



Christian life or the beauties of holiness. They are too often in the fire of fanaticism or the water of cold indifference or stolid gloom. CH 628.2

Those who do not feel that it is a religious duty to discipline the mind to dwell upon cheerful subjects, will usually be found at one of two extremes: they will be elated by a continual round of exciting amusements, indulging in frivolous conversation, laughing and joking, or they will be depressed, having great trials and mental conflicts, which they think but few have ever experienced or can understand. These persons may profess Christianity, but they deceive their own souls.... CH 628.3

It is essential that all shall know what atmosphere surrounds their own souls, whether they are in co-partnership with the enemy of righteousness, and unconsciously doing his work, or whether they are yoked up with Christ, doing His work.... Mar 63.2

Satan would be pleased to have anyone and everyone become his allies in the work of weakening the confidence of brother in brother, and sowing discord among those who profess to believe the truth. Satan can accomplish his purpose most successfully through professed friends of Christ who are not walking and working in Christ's lines.... Mar 63.3

This is the day of the Lord's preparation. We have no time now to talk unbelief or ... to do the devil's work. Let everyone beware of unsettling the faith of others by sowing seeds of envy, jealousy, disunion; for God hears the words, and He judges, not by assertions which are yea and nay, but by the fruit of one's course of action.... Mar 63.4

As yet the four winds are held until the servants of God shall be sealed in their foreheads. Then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle. How carefully we should improve the little remaining period of our probation! How earnestly we should examine ourselves! ... Mar 63.5

It is discipline of spirit, cleanness of heart and thought that is needed. This is of more value than brilliant talent, tact, or knowledge. An ordinary mind, trained to obey a "Thus saith the Lord," is better qualified for God's work than are those who have capabilities, but do not employ them rightly.... Men may take pride of their knowledge of worldly things; but if they have not a knowledge of the true God, of Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, they are deplorably ignorant, and their knowledge will perish with them. Secular knowledge is power; but the knowledge of the Word, which has a transforming influence upon the human mind, is imperishable. Mar 63.6

Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. James 4:11. TMK 184.1

If Satan can employ professed believers to act as accusers of the brethren, he is greatly pleased, for those who do this are just as truly serving him as was Judas when he betrayed Christ, although they may be doing it ignorantly.... TMK 184.2



Floating rumors are frequently the destroyers of unity among brethren. There are some who watch with open mind and ears to catch flying scandal. They gather up little incidents which may be trifling in themselves, but which are repeated and exaggerated until a man is made an offender for a word. Their motto seems to be, "Report, and we will report it." TMK 184.3

These talebearers are doing the devil's work with surprising fidelity, little knowing how offensive their course is to God. If they would spend half the energy and zeal that is given to this unholy work in examining their own hearts, they would find so much to do to cleanse their souls from impurity that they would have no time or disposition to criticize their brethren, and they would not fall under the power of this temptation. TMK 184.4

The door of the mind should be closed against, "they say" or "I have heard." Why should we not, instead of allowing jealousy or evil surmising to come into our hearts, go to our brethren, and, after frankly but kindly setting before them the things we have heard detrimental to their character and influence, pray with and for them? ... TMK 184.5

Let us diligently cultivate the pure principles of the gospel of Christ, the religion, not of self-esteem, but of love, meekness, and lowliness of heart. Then we shall love our brethren and esteem them better than ourselves. Our minds will not dwell on the dark side of their character; we shall not feast on scandal and flying reports. But "whatsoever things are ...of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," we shall "think on these things" (Philippians 4:8). The Review and Herald, June 3, 1884. TMK 184.6

We see one going astray. What are we going to do? Cut him off from us and leave him in the hands of Satan? Or are we going to bring him into the hands of Christ, where we can pray for him and lead and guide him? What are we going to do? Build up the barriers between God and the soul? No, that is the devil's work, and we don't want to do his work; we want to do Christ's work, the work of the Spirit.... 9MR 59.3

"Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish" (Matthew 18:14). I know something of what I am talking. The objectionable characters are the very ones who are sick. They need your help, and for these very ones you should put forth extra effort. Do not cut the knot of difficulty by sending them where the devil wants them, but bind them with the cords of love—just where Christ did. Christ said in regard to Zacchaeus, that He came to save that which was lost—that which was hopeless in the eyes of others. The Pharisees found fault with Him, because He was so tender and merciful toward others, but here Christ has shown what He would do. What we want is to melt our hard hearts in pieces before God. 9MR 59.4

All this harshness—because I am in position of a teacher, I must rule, and you must come right to my ideas and under my control—that is not the way at all. It is not the way to present [yourself] before them. The right way is to do as God exhorts parents—bring them [children] up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. How is that? We sit down and read to them from the Bible—I don't want to



Speak to you my words, but let God speak to you. Let God speak to them out of His Word. Read to them with such tenderness that tears are in your voice. That is what you want to do. 9MR 60.1

TEV: There is no condemnation now for those who live in union with Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit, which brings us life in union with Christ Jesus, has set me free from the law of sin and death. What the Law could not do, because human nature was weak, God did. He condemned sin in human nature by sending his own Son, who came with a nature like our sinful nature, to do away with sin. God did this so that the righteous demands of the Law might be fully satisfied in us who live according to the Spirit, and not according to human nature. Those who live as their human nature tells them to, have their minds controlled by what human nature wants. Those who live as the Spirit tells them to, have their minds controlled by what the Spirit wants. To be controlled by human nature results in death; to be controlled by the Spirit results in life and peace. And so people become enemies of God when they are controlled by their human nature; for they do not obey God's law, and in fact they cannot obey it. Those who obey their human nature cannot please God.

But you do not live as your human nature tells you to; instead, you live as the Spirit tells you to—if, in fact, God's Spirit lives in you. Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ lives in you, the Spirit is life for you because you have been put right with God, even though your bodies are going to die because of sin. If the Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from death, lives in you, then he who raised Christ from death will also give life to your mortal bodies by the presence of his Spirit in you.

So then, my friends, we have an obligation, but it is not to live as our human nature wants us to. For if you live according to your human nature, you are going to die; but if by the Spirit you put to death your sinful actions, you will live. Those who are led by God's Spirit are God's children. For the Spirit that God has given you does not make you slaves and cause you to be afraid; instead, the Spirit makes you God's children, and by the Spirit's power we cry out to God, "Father! my Father!" God's Spirit joins himself to our spirits to declare that we are God's children. Since we are his children, we will possess the blessings he keeps for his people, and we will also possess with Christ what God has kept for him; for if we share Christ's suffering, we will also share his glory.

How many times the word Spirit is present in Romans 8:1 - 17

TEV: 18x
NLT: 15x
KJV: 16x
NASB: 17x

Romans 8:1 - 17 (Phillips) "No condemnation now hangs over the head of those who are "in" Jesus Christ. For the new spiritual principle of life "in" Christ lifts me out of the old vicious circle of sin and death.



The Law never succeeded in producing righteousness—the failure was always the weakness of human nature. But God has met this by sending his own Son Jesus Christ to live in that human nature which causes the trouble. And, while Christ was actually taking upon himself the sins of men, God condemned that sinful nature. So that we are able to meet the Law's requirements, so long as we are living no longer by the dictates of our sinful nature, but in obedience to the promptings of the Spirit.

The carnal attitude sees no further than natural things. But the spiritual attitude reaches out after the things of the spirit. The former attitude means, bluntly, death: the latter means life and inward peace. And this is only to be expected, for the carnal attitude is inevitably opposed to the purpose of God, and neither can nor will follow his laws for living. Men who hold this attitude cannot possibly please God.

But you are not carnal but spiritual if the Spirit of God finds a home within you. You cannot, indeed, be a Christian at all unless you have something of his Spirit in you. Now if Christ does live within you his presence means that your sinful nature is dead, but your spirit becomes alive because of the righteousness he brings with him. I said that our nature is "dead" in the presence of Christ, and so it is, because of its sin. Nevertheless once the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead lives within you he will, by that same Spirit, bring to your whole being new strength and vitality.

So then, my brothers, you can see that we have no particular reason to feel grateful to our sensual nature, or to live life on the level of the instincts. Indeed that way of living leads to certain spiritual death. But if on the other hand you cut the nerve of your instinctive actions by obeying the Spirit, you are on the way to real living.

All who follow the leading of God's Spirit are God's own sons. Nor are you meant to relapse into the old slavish attitude of fear—you have been adopted into the very family circle of God and you can say with a full heart, "Father, my Father". The Spirit himself endorses our inward conviction that we really are the children of God. Think what that means. If we are his children we share his treasures, and all that Christ claims as his will belong to all of us as well! Yes, if we share in his suffering we shall certainly share in his glory." Copyright© 1962 edition, published by HarperCollins.



The Book of Romans Lesson 10 4Q 2017

Children of the Promise

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SABBATH

What do you think of when you hear the title? Who are the children of the promise?

What promise?

Was it this?

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” Gen 3:15 NIV84

If this was the promise then to whom was it promised? –a promise to Satan that he would not win and to all humanity that a Savior would win!

Was it this?

In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” Gen 22:18 NKJV

If this was the promise then to whom is the blessing promised? –to all humanity! So who are the children of the promise? All those who accept and participate in the promise!



Read Memory Text: “Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.”
Rom 9:18

What does this mean?

Is it similar to what many Muslims believe—fatalism—oh well it is God’s will, some He saves, some He kills, who are we to question?

Is it like Calvin—God predetermines some for salvation and some for destruction and who are we to question?

No, it is just the opposite in fact! Paul is arguing to racists and bigots who don’t want non-Jews to be saved, who believe only biological descendants of Abraham have been blessed by God that God wants to save everyone. So Paul is saying, who are you to argue with God—He can save any He chooses. Read Romans 9:6-8:

It is not as though God’s word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.
⁷ Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children. On the contrary, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” ⁸ In other words, it is not the natural children who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring.

God, after Adam and Eve sinned, immediately began His plan to save the human race and eliminate sin from His universe. The promise of the Messiah, of God’s healing grace, was for all the children of Adam and Eve. God never made the promise of salvation exclusive to a certain ethnic group.

In Romans 9:13 Paul quotes Malachi “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated”, what does this mean?

Does God from His heart not love everyone? Did God not actually love Esau?

Is it talking about the feelings and attitude of God, or the function of love?

Can you love someone in your heart, but have that person close themselves off to you so that you are obstructed from showing them love, hindered in your ability to let your love flow into them, to actively love them?

Love is functional—thus Jacob received God’s love and was changed by God’s love and God was able to *love* Jacob, but while God had love in His heart for Esau, Esau did not trust God, open his heart to God and thus did not receive and experience God’s love. Thus God was not able to love Esau functionally—and I am sure God hated that. How many parents would hate it if your child would not allow you to love them?



SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “God needed a missionary...” What was to be taught by Israel? The truth about God’s character of love, His methods, principles and design for life.

What happened that Israel failed to teach this and what did they teach instead?

They worshipped pagan gods—and what core features separate pagan gods from the true God? Would it be any of the following—as taught (not in actuality because we know in actuality pagan gods are not real so none of these would be true, so we are talking about what is taught about them versus the true God)?

- Power—are both the true God & pagan gods presented to have power?
- Creatorship—are both the true God and pagan gods said to be able to create?
- Life—are both said to have the ability to bring life?
- Just—are both said to bring justice?
- Protect—are both said to protect their followers?
- Bless—are both said to bless their followers?
- Heal—are both said to have the power to heal sickness?
- Punish sin—are both said to punish the disobedient?
- Fight evil—are both said to fight against evil?
- Die for followers—are both said to die while fighting evil?

Do you remember who Baal was? The son of El, creator god, who controlled weather, brought harvest, fought the great serpent Leviathan, fought Mot the god of death and died to rise again to bring us life.

What then is the core identifying feature that pagan gods hold that the true God does not—the point that separates them?

Pagan gods have imposed laws, rules, that require the pagan god to punish those who disobey and thus pagan gods require sacrifice and offerings be offered TO them in order to propitiate their wrath and secure their blessing!

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem were the Jews actively practicing open idolatry like that had in the past—Baal, Moloch, Ashtoreth and Dagon?

No! From all external appearances what were the Jews doing? Were they not keeping the script? But where they worshipping the true God or still practicing paganism?

Here is a historic quote from one of the founders of the SDA church, do you agree?

While God has desired to teach men that from His own love comes the Gift which reconciles them to Himself, the archenemy of mankind has endeavored to represent God



as one who delights in their destruction. Thus the sacrifices and the ordinances designed of Heaven to reveal divine love have been perverted to serve as means whereby sinners have vainly hoped to propitiate, with gifts and good works, the wrath of an offended God. {PK 685.2}

Was this the problem that prevented the Jews from evangelizing the world?

Were the Jews, who carried out the Levitical law from the viewpoint of propitiating God worshipping the true God or were they practicing paganism?

What did Jesus tell the religious leaders to their face?

“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire.” John 8:44

What about Christianity today? Could Christianity be caught up in a similar form of idolatry—externally observing the proper rituals and behaviors, but holding to the imposed law construct with such a distorted view of God they are actually practicing paganism?

What is the essence of paganism? Worshipping wrathful, punishing God, who must be propitiated or appeased by an offering—including a human sacrifice.

How many Christians believe that God requires the blood of a sinless human sacrifice to propitiate His wrath so that He won't kill us for our sins?

Quotations from various sources cited in *The God-Shaped Heart*:

Roman Catholic theology:

What did Christ's suffering and death actually accomplish that allowed the Father to provide the human race with salvation? . . . Scripture teaches only that Christ became a “**propitiation**,” a “sin offering,” or a “sacrifice” for sins. . . . Essentially, this means that Christ, because he was guiltless, sin-free and in favor with God, **could offer himself up as a means of persuading God to relent of his angry wrath** against the sins of mankind. . . . Anger against sin shows the personal side of God, for sin is a personal offense against him. **God is personally offended by sin and thus he needs to be personally appeased** in order to offer a personal forgiveness. In keeping with his divine principles, his personal nature, and the magnitude of the sins of man, **the only thing that God would allow to appease him was the suffering and death of the sinless representative of mankind, namely, Christ.**¹

Evangelical theology:



We affirm that the atonement of Christ by which, in his obedience, he offered a perfect sacrifice, **propitiating the Father by paying for our sins** and satisfying divine justice on our behalf according to God's eternal plan, is an essential element of the Gospel.²

Pentecostal theology:

The word "propitiation" properly signifies the **turning away of wrath by a sacrifice**. Thus it signifies **appeasement**. . . . According to Leon Morris: "The consistent Bible view is that the sin of man has incurred the wrath of God. That wrath is averted only by Christ's atoning offering. From this standpoint his **saving work is properly called propitiation**."³

Seventh-day Adventist theology:

Leon Morris writes that if God's 'wrath is regarded as a very real factor so that the sinner is exposed to its severity, then **the removal of the wrath will be an important part of our understanding of salvation**.' Of course, 'if we diminish the part played by divine wrath we shall not find it necessary to think seriously of **propitiation**.' Thus Morris comments in another connection, 'if people are to be forgiven, then the fact of that wrath must be taken into consideration. It does not fade away by being given some other name or regarded as an impersonal process.' **In other words, Gods' wrath must be propitiated or turned away from the sinner. That was one aim of Christ's self-sacrifice on the cross.**⁴

This is paganism—modern day Baal worship, for which God prophesied through Malachi that before the great and terrible day of the Lord, the prophet Elijah must come again...

Here is another historic quote from one of the founders of the SDA church:

Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, **in nature, [design law]** or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God. {FLB 59.8}

How is it that religious people come to worship a punishing god who requires sacrifice like this?

The root is they first believe the lie about God's law—that it functions like human law, imposed rules requiring imposed punishment. Once they believe that lie, then they cannot avoid drawing the pagan conclusions about God.



That is why we must come back to worship our Creator whose laws are design laws upon which reality is built to operate! This is the final message to the world—God is not like Satan has made Him out to be, but is our loving Father, Creator, and Healer!

And the Christian church, including the SDA church, is in many ways in the same position as the Jews 2000 years ago—believing in the Creator God, actively seeking to do His will, praying for the Advent of the Messiah—yet having the lie about God’s law so deeply imbedded few ever question it that instead of evangelizing the world with God’s true character of love, all the world wonders after the beastly view of God that comes from believing His law functions like human law—imposed rules that make God out to be the punisher.

MONDAY

Elected—what does the idea of election in the context of Bible salvation mean to you?

Here is one commentator’s take, from the book *Conflict and Courage*:

Esau and Jacob had alike been instructed in the knowledge of God, and **both were free to walk in His commandments and to receive His favor; but they had not both *chosen* to do this.** The two brothers had **walked in different ways, and their paths would continue to diverge** more and more widely. {CC 71.3}

There was no arbitrary choice on the part of God by which Esau was shut out from the blessings of salvation. The gifts of His grace through Christ are free to all. There is no election but one’s own by which any may perish. . . . Every soul is elected who will work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. He is elected who will put on the armor and fight the good fight of faith. He is elected who will watch unto prayer, who will search the Scriptures, and flee from temptation. He is elected who will have faith continually, and who will be obedient to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. **The provisions of redemption are free to all; the *results* of redemption will be enjoyed by those who have complied with the conditions.** {CC 71.4}

Do you agree or disagree? Do you see the design law components in this? God provides remedy, the solution, the cure; we must choose to partake, to participate. Why? It is the only way for our hearts, minds, characters to be changed while still retaining our unique individuality.

Read third paragraph, “In the end...” Salvation is absolutely freely available and offered to all—is that the same as our election? The lesson seems to suggest it—that all have been elected—I don’t quite see it this way. It seems to me salvation is offered to all but only those who *elect* to partake of it are elected. In other words, not all are elected, just those who exercise their power of choice and elect to accept and partake. Thus the elector of our salvation is ourselves, only possible because God has chosen to provide what is necessary for our salvation. Thoughts?



From the book *Christian Education* I read the following, what do you think about election from this passage—does it add to how we make our election sure?

He is a Christian who aims to reach the highest attainments for the purpose of doing others good. Knowledge harmoniously blended with a Christlike character will make a person truly a light to the world. God works with human efforts. **All those who give all diligence to make their calling and election sure,** will feel that a superficial knowledge will not fit them for positions of usefulness. Education balanced by a solid religious experience, fits the child of God to do his appointed work steadily, firmly, understandingly. **If one is learning of Jesus,** the greatest educator the world ever knew, he will not only have a symmetrical Christian character, **but a mind trained to effectual labor. Minds that are quick to discern will go deep beneath the surface.** {CE 51.1}

Has your Christian experience been to strengthen your mind, to improve your ability to think discern, understand God and His methods, to be what Jesus said to His disciples, not a slave, but an understanding friend? Jn 15:15

TUESDAY

Read memory text, ““For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. ⁹ “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Can you give example of how God’s ways are higher than our ways?

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Mt 5:43-45

What do you hear? Do you hear God’s design law, the principles of love? Notice what example Jesus gave after He said to love our enemies—sun and rain, which are physical examples of giving without discrimination—the law of love in action.

What kinds of laws to humans make? Imposed—but God’s laws are higher; they are the protocols reality is built upon.

Yet, many Christians teach God’s law functions no different than ours—which is the infection of thought contaminating the world.

What about justice—what is God’s justice? Based on design law, healing, delivering, restoring!



What is human justice—based on imposed law? Inflicting punishment.

Which version of justice is the common view taught in Christianity? Again, we see how the lie has infected the church.

Other examples?

How do we understand the passage about hardening Pharaoh's heart?

Bible Description #1 - God hardening Pharaoh's heart

- But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt, he will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out my divisions, my people the Israelites. Ex 7:3,4
- But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said to Moses. Ex 9:12

Bible Description #2 – Pharaoh's heart became hard

- Yet Pharaoh's heart became hard and he would not listen to them, just as the Lord had said. Ex 7:13
- Then the Lord said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is unyielding; he refuses to let the people go. Ex 7:14
- But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their secret arts, and Pharaoh's heart became hard; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said. Ex 7:22

Bible Description #3 – Pharaoh hardened his own heart

- But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said. Exodus 8:15
- But this time also Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go. Ex 8:32
- When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts. So Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the Lord had said through Moses. Ex 9:34,35

We gain insight from another story in Scripture, what transpired after the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant in battle. They took the ark into the temple of their god Dagon.

Initially, Dagon was found on his face in front of the ark – and what did the Philistines do? They ignored the evidence and put Dagon back on his pedestal in front of the ark.

The next day Dagon is found on his face in front of the ark but this time his hands and head were broken off. What did the people do? They again ignored the evidence and made the spot where the broken hands and head of Dagon were found a holy place.



Then the people developed tumors which they could not ignore so they called a counsel to try and decide what to do, notice the discussion:

- The Philistines asked, “What guilt offering should we send to him?” They replied, “Five gold tumors and five gold rats, according to the number of the Philistine rulers, because the same plague has struck both you and your rulers. Make models of the tumors and of the rats that are destroying the country, and pay honor to Israel’s god. Perhaps he will lift his hand from you and your gods and your land. **Why do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh did?** When he treated them harshly, did they not send the Israelites out so they could go on their way? 1Sam 6:4-6

The wise men asked, “Why do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh did?” What were the Philistines doing? What did God do? How did this result in hardening of hearts? What is similar to what happened in Egypt?

God provided evidence exposing the impotence of the Egyptian and Philistine gods. Each of the 10 plagues that fell on Egypt demonstrated the powerlessness of the gods of Egypt. Dagon prostrated in front of the ark and then having his hands and head broken off demonstrated his powerlessness.

God was acting in both these countries to demonstrate He is the only true God, that the gods they worshiped were not God. God was responsible for presenting the evidence, but then God left Pharaoh and the Philistines free to decide how they would respond to the evidence. Would they repent and humble themselves before the Lord or would they reject the truth and *thereby* harden their heart?

God’s role in Egypt was to present the truth to which Pharaoh had to decide how he would respond. If no truth had been presented to Pharaoh his heart would not have hardened against God as it did, but when truth is presented and we reject it the rejection of truth results in hardening of the heart.

So why did God present truth to Pharaoh when He, in His foreknowledge, knew Pharaoh would reject it and experience a hardened heart? Even though Pharaoh was going to reject the truth, God knew it is only by the presentation of truth that sinners can be set free (John 8:32). God would not deny Pharaoh the opportunity to be freed from sin. God would not deny Pharaoh the opportunity to be saved. Therefore God presented truth to Pharaoh in order to reach his heart and save him—but Pharaoh rejected it and hardened himself.

Do we see the beautiful harmony to all the Scripture that we get when we apply design law instead of imposed law?

read last paragraph, “The crucial point...” This is well said, and why we advocate never arriving at *the* truth, but being a lover of truth who is willing to grow, advance and move forward in understanding as more truth is revealed.



The lesson talks about becoming people of God—who are the people of God today?

Would this describe them? “Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.” Rev 12:17

So who is this group that Satan hates? What does it mean to obey God’s commandments?

Did the Jews 2000 years ago, who crucified Christ, want Him off by sunset to keep the Sabbath?

So is keeping the commandments the same as keeping the Sabbath?

No! This refers to those who have the law written on their hearts, such that they love God and others more than self. They live in harmony with God’s law of love, they live truth, love and practice freedom. This is true Sabbath keeping.

What about the testimony of Jesus?

This group not only has had their hearts renewed so they live in harmony with God’s design laws of truth, love and freedom but they also give the same testimony about God that Jesus gave. Jesus said: “If you seen me you’ve seen the Father” If we are not presenting God in the exact same light as Jesus presented Him, then we are not giving the testimony of Jesus!

Those who teach the Sabbath as an arbitrary test, or that God will punish if not given the blood offering of a sinless being—are not members of this group end time people of God.

THURSDAY

Read top dark section, “What shall we say then...” What was the mistake of Israel? They refused to believe the truth about God and actually trust Him!

- Did the Jews become atheists?
- Did the Jews reject Scripture?
- Did the Jews reject the Sabbath?
- Did the Jews reject church attendance?

What about today? Are we making the same mistake? Is it not the same as them, that we have rejected the truth about God and His character and designs of love?

From *The Remedy* Hebrews 4:1-8:



¹ Therefore, since the Remedy is still available, and the promise of complete healing and perfect rest still stands, let us be careful that none of us be found to have rejected it.² For we also have had the good news of God's healing truth presented to us just as they did; but the message of truth had no value to them because they did not believe it nor did they trust the one who gave it.³ But we, who have trusted God on the basis of the truth Christ provided, experience healing and enter that rest, and our minds are at peace. As God has said, "So I granted them their persistent choice and said, 'Since they refuse the truth—the Remedy I freely offer—they will never be able to enter my rest and get well.'" It was not because God's perfect rest was not available—for it had been ready since his work of creation was complete—⁴ as the Scriptures say elsewhere regarding the seventh day: "And on the seventh day, God rested his case. He had finished all his work of providing the evidence needed to refute the lies of Satan."⁵ And yet in another passage he says, "If they refuse the truth, if they reject the evidence I have provided, their minds will never find rest and they will not get well."

⁶ The opportunity to find God's healing and rest still remains, even though those who formerly had the good news of God's healing truth presented to them did not get well or find rest because they refused to believe the truth and trust God.⁷ Therefore God again and again presents his healing Remedy, and he set a certain day which he called "today," when much later he spoke through David in the same Scripture as before: "Today, if you hear his voice offering healing and restoration, do not reject the true Remedy and darken your minds."

⁸ For if Joshua had already given them healing of character and rest for their minds, God would not have spoken later about another day of rest still to come.⁹ There remains then a Sabbath-rest—a rest in the evidence and truth of the character of God—which heals and transforms the people of God;¹⁰ for anyone who rests in the achievements of Christ rests from working to save themselves, just as God rested from his work.¹¹ Let us therefore make every effort to rest in the truth about God as revealed by Christ, so that no one will fall by following the example of distrust and refusal to accept the truth.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions

¹ Robert Sungenis, *Not By Faith Alone* (Santa Barbara, CA: Queenship, 1997), 107–8, emphasis mine. Sungenis is the founder and president of Catholic Apologetics International Publishing.

² D. Neff, "A Call to Evangelical Unity," *Christianity Today* (June 14, 1999), emphasis mine

³ Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (Los Angeles: LIFE Bible College, 1983), 188, emphasis mine.

⁴ Knight, George, *The Cross of Christ*, (Review and Herald Publishing, Hagerstown MD 2008) p. 64.



The Book of Romans Lesson 11 4Q 2017

The Elect

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SABBATH

Read memory text: “I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.” Rom 11:1

What does this mean?

Read first two paragraphs: “This week’s lesson...” I think this is a very good summary—excellent!

Is anyone excluded from heaven because of nationality, race, and ethnic group?

Is anyone included in salvation *because* of nationality, race, and ethnic group?

Do you agree that God has not rejected any group of people from salvation?

Does that mean that there is a group of people are included in salvation just because of some ethnic or genetic factor?



If God has not rejected any persons from salvation because of race or genetics, does that mean He has not been rejected them for some mission?

Can God call a person or a group to a mission, and then, based on their refusal to fulfill His calling, reject them for that mission and call another?

Did God call King Saul to be the first king of Israel? Did God not only reject King Saul but his entire family for that mission and choose another?

Does that mean that Saul's children were rejected from salvation?

What about the Jews as a people?

Were they called, by God, for mission? What mission? To evangelize the world with the truth about God to prepare the world to accept Jesus as their Savior.

Did they fulfill that mission?

Are they rejected from salvation? No!

Are they rejected, as a nation, as a exclusive group from being God's agency on earth to reveal the truth about God's kingdom? Yes!

According to the Bible, does the ethnic group, biological descendants of Israel, as a nation, have an end-time corporate role to play in God's plan?

Most Christian denominations say yes—the SDA church says no!

What is the underlying difference between these two views and which do you believe is most consistent with Scripture and God's character and design laws.

First, what is the basis of salvation? Jesus Christ!

Is salvation different for Jews than non-Jews?

Do Jews have a different avenue for salvation than the rest of the world?

What about mission, does God force people to fulfill mission against their will?

So why do so many Christians think that biological Jews have some special role in God's end time plan?



Because they have accepted two false premises: 1) that being a Jew today is determined by genetics and 2) that the promises of God in the Old Testament times to genetic Israel were without any conditions on their part.

Consider salvation—Did God promise to Adam and Eve and all their descendants to provide a Savior? Does that mean all people will be saved? Why not? Because while God promised a Savior to provide salvation freely to all, the promise of salvation is upon the condition of willing acceptance, trust, and participation in God's plan. Therefore, not everyone will be saved, despite God's promise to provide a Savior.

Likewise, for Israel, God made promises that were conditional on their participation and cooperation. And just like with salvation, Israel when it refused to participate and rejected Jesus, for them as a nation, the promises are not realized.

So, the first premise, that a Jew today is determined by genetics—the Bible proves this false:

Rom 2:28 A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. ²⁹ No, **a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code.** Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God...

^{3:9} What shall we conclude then? Are we [biological Jews] any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that **Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.** ¹⁰ As it is written: "There is **no one** righteous, not even one; ¹¹ there is **no one** who understands, **no one** who seeks God..."

There is no difference, ²³ for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus...

²⁸ For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. ²⁹ **Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too,** ³⁰ since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. ³¹ Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." ¹² For there is **no difference between Jew and Gentile**—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him... Rom 10:11,12

"Abraham believed God, and because of his faith God accepted him as righteous." ¹⁰ When did this take place? Was it before or after Abraham was circumcised? It was before, not after. He was circumcised later, and his circumcision was a sign to show that because of his faith God had accepted him as righteous before he had been circumcised. **And so Abraham is the spiritual father of all who believe in God and are accepted as righteous by him, even**



though they are not circumcised. ¹²He is also the father of those who are circumcised, that is, of those who, in addition to being circumcised, **also live the same life of faith that our father Abraham lived before he was circumcised.** Rom 4:9-12

Who, according to Scripture, are considered descendants of Abraham—Jews or Israel? Those who have faith like Abraham and whose hearts have been changed—in other words, born again Christians!

So the first premise that those who believe genetic descendants of Israel have some special access, role, place in salvation is proved false.

The second premise is that the promises God made in OT times to Israel will be fulfilled to genetic Israel regardless of their response, in other words, the promises were without any conditions.

Several problems with that premise—first it would suggest God didn't see the future and didn't know that the Israelites would reject Him.

Second, it would preclude God from replacing biological children with spiritual children, those who are like Abraham in character to fulfill His promises through them.

Third, it denies Scripture:

If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, ⁸and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. ⁹And **if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted,** ¹⁰**and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.** Jer 18:7-10

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. ³⁸Look, **your house is left to you desolate.** Mt 23:37,38

From one of the founders of the SDA church in the book *Prophets and Kings*:

In proclaiming the truths of the everlasting gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, **God's church on earth today is fulfilling the ancient prophecy, "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit."** Isaiah 27:6. **The followers of Jesus, in co-operation with heavenly intelligences, are rapidly occupying the waste places of the earth;** and, as the result of their labors, an abundant fruitage of precious souls is developing. Today, as never before, the dissemination of Bible truth by means of a consecrated church is bringing to the sons of men the benefits foreshadowed centuries ago **in the promise to Abraham and to all Israel,--to God's church on earth in every age,--"I will bless thee, . . . and thou shalt be a blessing."** Genesis 12:2. {PK 703.1}



This promise of blessing should have met fulfillment in large measure during the centuries following the return of the Israelites from the lands of their captivity. It was God's design that the whole earth be prepared for the first advent of Christ, even as today the way is preparing for His second coming. At the end of the years of humiliating exile, God graciously gave to His people Israel, through Zechariah, the assurance: "I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain." And of His people He said, "Behold, . . . I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness." Zechariah 8:3, 7, 8. {PK 703.2}

These promises were conditional on obedience. The sins that had characterized the Israelites prior to the captivity, were not to be repeated. "Execute true judgment," the Lord exhorted those who were engaged in rebuilding; "and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother: and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother." "Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates." Zechariah 7:9, 10; 8:16. {PK 704.1}

Once we replace the false premises with the truth we realize that the Jews are in the same boat as the Gentiles—sinners saved by grace through faith in Jesus. And thus we want to reach every human being on the planet with the same message of truth, love, freedom found in Jesus Christ.

There is no place in the Christian world for discrimination based on race, nationality, ethnic group and I will throw in—gender.

Do you agree?

Then why in the SDA church, do we have one division of the world church, and only one division, the NAD, with conferences segregated by race?

Can you make a Bible case for segregation of Christians by race? No! Absolutely not! Then why has the SDA church done this?

Because the SDA church was founded in North America in 1863 and wanted to evangelize all people regardless of race, and the US was in the middle of the Civil War, which had slavery as a core issue. There was huge prejudice in the hearts and minds of whites in America—particularly the southern states. What would have happened if the church had tried to integrate the churches then? What would have happened if a black preacher tried to preach in a white church? Would such practices, in that environment, have advanced the gospel? No! So the church, due to the hard hearts of people in the culture, made segregated conferences NOT to separate people, but because people were already separated by race and the church needed two avenues one for the whites and one for the blacks, in order to reach ALL people with the gospel.

Does this make sense?



Now you understand exactly what the Apostles were doing in the New Testament times in regard to women's roles in the church—they were meeting people where they were. Humans in that culture had bias and bigotry in their hearts, women were not viewed as equal in moral worth, mental ability or strength of character and the Apostles were setting guidelines to enhance the advancement of the gospel, not articulating God's ideal for women in the church.

Today, should we continue to promote separate conferences based on race? Should we continue to discriminate against women in church leadership?

It is all determined by the condition of hearts: The more Christlike, the more love, the more restoration to righteousness the more equality and unity

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal 3:26-29

But the harder the heart, the more selfish, fearful and controlling, then the more bias, prejudice, and bigotry and thus the need for the segregation and discrimination based on race and gender.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Legalism can come in many forms..." The lesson is right when it says "Legalism can come in many forms."

The most common form of legalism is the penal/legal theology, that God was **legally** required to send Jesus to pay our **legal** debt, that we then claim as our **legal** payment and we get **legal** adjustment in our heavenly record book, so when our names come up in the judgment we get **legal** pardon.

This is legalism—it is not the plan of salvation—the plan of salvation is the plan to restore you to God's original design for human beings—to restore God's image in you!

Read Romans 10:1-4:

Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.² For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.³ Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.⁴ Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. NIV84



Read third paragraph, “Even if one includes in the definition...” What does it mean Christ is the end of the law?

It simply means that Christ completely restored God’s design back into the human species, restored the law of love as the perfect operating system.

Here is Romans 10:1-4 from *The Remedy*:

Brothers and sisters, my heart's great desire and constant request to God is that the Israelites—the genetic descendants of Abraham—will accept the truth and be healed.²I can assure you from my own experience that they are zealous to serve God, but their zeal is based on the wrong concept of God, as they don't really know him.³And because they do not know him—his goodness, mercy, forgiveness, kindness, love, and his free gift of healing and restoration—they have sought to please him by working to create their own cure, and thus have refused God's free Remedy.⁴In Christ, God’s design (law) is complete, so that there may be perfection of character and healing of mind and heart for all who trust him.

MONDAY

Read Romans 11:1-7, and the lesson asks “What common teaching does this passage deny clearly and irrevocably?” From *The Remedy*:

I ask then: Did God reject the people whom he chose as his helpers in revealing his plan of saving the world? Absolutely not! I am an Israelite myself—a genetic descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin.²God did not reject the people he chose as his helpers in revealing his plan, but he foreknew that only some would trust him. Don't you realize what the Scripture says about Elijah—that he thought he was the only one left in all Israel loyal to God? He said to the Lord:³"Lord, they have killed all your prophets and representatives, and torn down all your altars; I am the only one left loyal to you, and they are trying to kill me!"⁴And what did God tell him? "There are seven thousand who remain loyal to me and have not bowed the knee to Baal."⁵So too, at the present time—even though the officials of Israel have rejected God's healing plan, even though the majority of the people he chose as his helpers to reveal his healing plan have rejected it—there remains a remnant of Abraham's descendants who have accepted the truth about God and his gracious Remedy, and who have been restored to trust.⁶And if they have been restored to trust through God’s grace, then it is no longer by some work or effort to earn favor with God; if it were, then God’s graciousness would not be gracious at all.

⁷What, then, does this mean? That Israel as a nation did not achieve the reunification with God they sought, except for a few individuals. What Israel sought to earn by working to induce God to be gracious, actually caused them to misunderstand God, become self-sufficient and arrogant, and fail in obtaining restoration with God. But those who trusted God, based on the



truth as revealed in Jesus, obtained God's gracious gift of healing and restoration. The others, instead of being healed and restored, were hardened,"

What is the message? Did God reject Jewish people from being saved? No! Did the Jewish nation reject the calling and purpose God had for them? Yes! Did many reject God's method of salvation and substitute their own? And what is the result of that? Hardening of heart—why? If you reject the only true remedy of a terminal condition and take a false remedy what happens?

What about Christianity today—are Christians vulnerable to the same problem, claiming to accept salvation as provided by Jesus, but instead substituting their own? Yes!

The lesson asks us to read Romans 11:7-10, from the NIV84:

What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, ⁸ as it is written:

“God gave them a spirit of stupor,
eyes so that they could not see
and ears so that they could not hear,
to this very day.”

⁹ And David says:

“May their table become a snare and a trap,
a stumbling block and a retribution for them.
¹⁰ May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see,
and their backs be bent forever.”

The lesson asks: “Does God blind people's eyes to prevent them from seeing light that would lead them to salvation?”

What do these passages mean?

Do you understand them through imposed law, i.e. God making it happen, or through design law, God's laws are the parameters upon which reality operate and thus if you make certain choices then predictable outcomes occur?

From *The Remedy*:

⁷What, then, does this mean? That Israel as a nation did not achieve the reunification with God they sought, except for a few individuals. What Israel sought to earn by working to induce God to be gracious, actually caused them to misunderstand God, become self-sufficient and arrogant, and fail in obtaining restoration with God. But those who trusted God, based on the truth as revealed in Jesus, obtained God's gracious gift of healing and restoration. The others,



instead of being healed and restored, were hardened,⁸ as it is written: "When they rejected truth, God gave them over to a dull mind: eyes trained to no longer recognize truth and ears tuned to no longer hear truth; and this goes on to this very day."

⁹And David says: "May what they rely on for strength and sustenance be revealed as a snare and a trap, the actual cause of their stumbling and the source of their pain."

¹⁰"May the result of their rejection of truth damage their minds so they can no longer comprehend; may their characters be so twisted by persistent rebellion that they will not reform."

So why is so much of Scripture worded like God is doing it?

When your child is small do you set rules for them to brush their teeth, or not play in the street? Why?

- And what do you tell small children will happen if they fail to obey, i.e. don't brush their teeth or go out into the street?
- Do you threaten some consequence, time out, spanking, something that you will bring to bear upon them?
- Is your punishment the real problem with their disobedience? No!
- The real problem is breaking design laws that result in injury and even destruction to them.
- But, in their immaturity they cannot comprehend the real reason for brushing or not playing in the street, so you as a parent, **stand in as the source of inflicted pain and suffering**. You take onto you and your reputation the burden of being seen as an inflictor of punishment, as the source of the pain—you risk your children being afraid of you. Why do you do this?
- This is exactly what God did in OT times when the OT describes over and over again God threatening or taking responsibility for punishing them for their sins, and that is also what is happening in this passage.
- When we grow up to see God's law in its true light, we are like children who have realized the real reason to brush and not play in the street and we have a new perspective of love and appreciation for our parents who stood in the gap of our ignorance to protect us. This is how it is rendered in *The Remedy*.

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read Romans 11:11-15, from the NIV84:

¹¹ Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. ¹² But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!

¹³ I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my



ministry ¹⁴ in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them.
¹⁵ For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

Then the lesson asks, “What great hope does Paul present in this passage?” How do you understand this? What is the meaning?

What was God’s plan? What was God trying to accomplish? So what is Paul saying?

From *The Remedy*:

¹¹ So, again I ask: Did they stumble and fall so low that they are beyond recovery? Absolutely not! Rather, because of their transgression, the privilege of joining God’s spiritual health-care team has come to the Gentiles—in order to inspire the descendants of Abraham to accept God’s healing and rejoin his team. ¹² But if their failure to fulfill the mission God assigned them means riches and opportunity for the rest of the world, and their lost position means that their mission was given to the Gentiles, how much greater will the richness of love and grace be if they accept the truth and fulfill their mission!

¹³ I am talking to you, Gentiles: I am the apostle to the Gentiles, and I take my responsibility to you seriously. ¹⁴ I hope that by leading you to trust God—and thus to experience the healing, love, peace and joy that reconciliation with God brings—I may somehow arouse my own people with a desire for this same experience, and maybe some of them will respond and be saved. ¹⁵ For even though they rejected the truth that brings trust, reconciliation and life eternal, this healing truth was still revealed to the world. What would have happened if they had accepted the truth? -An unbelievably powerful revelation of God's character, methods and principles seen in action would have transformed the entire world!

The lesson asks us to read Romans 11:16-24, from *The Remedy*:

If the ingredients used to make the loaf are untainted and pure, then the entire loaf will be perfect and healthy. If the roots of the tree are pure and unpolluted, then every branch and all the fruit will be perfect and healthy.

¹⁷ If some of the branches have broken off from the vine, and you—though not natural to the vine—have been grafted in and now share the nourishment from the root, ¹⁸ don't feel that you are somehow superior to the branches that have broken off. If you do, remember this: The root does not draw sustenance from you, but you are nourished by the root. ¹⁹ You might try to argue, "But we must be something special, because the natural branches were broken off to make room for us." ²⁰ Don't be ridiculous. They broke away because they did not trust, and you were grafted in because you did trust. Don't be conceited, but be afraid of conceit or pride, or anything that will undermine your abiding trust in God. ²¹ For if God did not stop the natural branches from distrusting and breaking away, he will not restrict your freedom to break away



either.

²²Consider how kind and gracious, and how true and consistent God is. He is true and consistent to the principles of love and freedom, and forces no one to remain connected to him, but allows those who choose to break away to do so if they insist. He is kind and gracious to you, allowing you to abide in his goodness. But if you choose to break away, you too will be permitted to sever your connection with him.²³ And if those who have broken away have a change of heart and again trust God, they will be reconnected to him, for God is able to heal them if they let him.²⁴ After all, if you—who were not originally attached to the vine—were successfully grafted in, isn't it a lot easier to reattach branches that were once part of the parent plant?

What is the message Paul is trying to share? What do you hear? Is this a legal process, or is it design law, how life is built, being connected to the source of life, having that original source of life flow into you and heal and transform you?

WEDNESDAY

Read Romans 11:25-27, from NIV84:

I do not want you to be ignorant of this **mystery**, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

“The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. ²⁷ And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”

What does this mean?

Read first paragraph, “Christians have been discussing...” Is Paul referring to saving genetic Jews or to something else?

From the SDA Bible commentary on this verse:

mustērion, in classical Greek meaning “a hidden thing,” “a secret,”... Among the pagans *mustērion*, usually in the plural *mustēria*, was used for secrets or secret doctrines, to be made known only to those who had been specially initiated. It was the technical term for their secret rites and celebrations, and also for the mystic implements and ornaments they used in their ceremonies...

In the NT, *mustērion* refers to something that God wills to make known to those who are willing to receive His revelation, rather than to something that He desires to keep secret. Throughout Paul's writings the word carries the meaning of something which, though



incapable of being fully understood by unassisted human reason, has now been made known by divine revelation (see ch. 16:25, 26; etc.)...

Paul regarded it as his mission to make known the **mystery** “which was kept secret since the world began” (Rom. 16:25; cf. 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 3:3, 4). **God’s eternal purpose to redeem man** in Christ has now been declared in Christianity. Thus Paul describes the whole Christian revelation as a mystery (Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 2:7–10; Eph. 1:9; 6:19; Col. 1:26; 2:2; 1 Tim. 3:9). He applies the term to the incarnation of Christ (1 Tim. 3:16), to the union of Christ and His church as typified by marriage (Eph. 5:32), to the transformation of the saints at the second coming (1 Cor. 15:51), to the opposition of Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:7), and **especially to the admission of the Gentiles to the kingdom of Christ** (Rom. 16:25, 26; Eph. 3:1–6; Col. 1:26, 27).

The mystery that Paul is now declaring is the purpose of God to save both Jews and Gentiles in His kingdom...¹

Read last paragraph, “There is a mighty...” Is this describing national identity or individual salvation?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Paul’s love...” Many of us have experienced this pain, from all over the world we get stories of people who have tried to share this picture of God’s character of love being told by their church family that they are not welcome.

How do we respond? What is a healthy way to understand such rejection?

From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks....

Read third paragraph, “No doubt...” What do you say if while witnesses about Jesus to a Jew the Jewish person says, “I have one question for you...Is Martin Luther your brother?” I was listening to Christian radio when a man said this was the exact question a Jewish professor asked him when he tried to share Jesus as Savior with him.

What would you say to that professor?

Before you answer, from "Luther, Martin", *JewishEncyclopedia.com*; cf. *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia Publishing House and Fortress Press, 1955–86) 47:267.

"What shall we Christians do with this rejected and condemned people, the Jews"

¹ Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1980). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 6, pp. 610–611). Review and Herald Publishing Association.



- "First, to set fire to their synagogues or schools ... This is to be done in honor of our Lord and of Christendom, so that God might see that we are Christians ..."
- "Second, I advise that their houses also be razed and destroyed."
- "Third, I advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which such idolatry, lies, cursing, and blasphemy are taught, be taken from them."
- "Fourth, I advise that their rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of loss of life and limb ..."
- "Fifth, I advise that safe-conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Jews. For they have no business in the countryside ..."
- "Sixth, I advise that usury be prohibited to them, and that all cash and treasure of silver and gold be taken from them ..."
- "Seventh, I recommend putting a flail, an ax, a hoe, a spade, a distaff, or a spindle into the hands of young, strong Jews and Jewesses and letting them earn their bread in the sweat of their brow ... But if we are afraid that they might harm us or our wives, children, servants, cattle, etc., ... then let us emulate the common sense of other nations such as France, Spain, Bohemia, etc., ... then eject them forever from the country ..."

So, what do you say if a Jew asks you as a Christian if Martin Luther was your brother?

Do you say, "A very sick and twisted brother in need of much healing and transformation?"

Do you say, "Martin Luther is not my Savior, the Jewish teacher Jesus Christ is!"?

Do you say, "Martin Luther failed to represent Jesus, Jesus is the standard, Martin Luther was a sinner in need of much heart change before he could rightly represent Jesus."

Do you realize, that the person who wrote these things is also the one who came up with Penal Substitution Theology? Can you hear in Luther's words regarding the Jews an authoritarian, imperial mindset that uses coercion and rejects the law of liberty? Can you see why such a mind would create a penal/legal salvation model? Yet, it is all infected with the lie that God's law functions like our laws and ultimately promotes a false picture of God, who would celebrate the horrors Luther encouraged Christians to perpetrate upon the Jews.

When we substitute the law of love for imposed human law we exchange worshipping the Creator God for an imperial dictator and then we become like that beastly god? Just look at what Christians have done who believe in that type of a god.

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions



The Book of Romans Lesson 12 4Q 2017

Overcoming Evil with Good

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

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

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

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

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

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

SABBATH

What is evil? How do you describe or define it?

Common definitions include:

- depravity
- immorality
- the opposite of that which is good
- malevolence

I have heard it reported that in every society of the world, ever culture, evil is defined as exploiting or hurting others.

Do you agree?

If exploiting or hurting another person is evil—then from where does this idea that exploiting another is evil come? If there is no higher power, if we evolved from lower life forms, if it is a virtue and desirable to survive by killing those who would compete with us for food, water, shelter, reproductive outlets—then why does every culture in the world recognize that to exploit or harm others is evil?



Because the evolutionary origin of life theory is a lie—and survival of the fittest is an infection to God’s design which is driven by fear and selfishness—which is the root of evil.

So, how do we overcome evil with good?

Where must the warfare with evil start? In our own hearts and minds.

Do you agree that every human, including you and me, are infected with desires and drives that are evil—fear and selfishness.

How do we overcome evil with good in our own lives?

Read memory text: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Rom 12:2 NIV84)

Let’s break the memory verse down:

- Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world
 - What is the pattern of this world?
 - Survival of the fittest? Me first?
 - Power, greed, exploitation?
 - What law system is the pattern of this world?
 - Would this admonition, to not be like the world, include for us to not teach that God’s law and government function like the governments of the world—imposed law with imposed punishments?
 - What happens if we continue to pattern ourselves like the world?
 - Can our minds be renewed if we teach that God’s methods are like the methods of the world? Why or why not?
 - Romans 1—exchanging the truth of God for a lie causes the mind to become depraved, futile and darkened—this is what has happened wherever the truth about God has been replaced by a lie—including the penal substitution lie!
- Be transformed by the renewing of your mind
 - How is our mind renewed?
 - By beholding we are changed (law of worship—design law)
 - Fix our eyes on Christ the author and finisher of our faith
 - Can our minds be renewed by our own strength, ability, knowledge and effort separate from Jesus and the Holy Spirit?
 - Can we be renewed if we claim we trust Jesus but then don’t apply his directions to our lives?
 - Can our minds be renewed if we believe God functions like a human dictator?
- Then able to test and approve of God’s will



- Are we to test and approve of God's will?
- Is it not blasphemous to question God? No! Abraham, Moses—God wants us to question and understand so we can differentiate the true God from the false gods
- What does it mean to approve of God's will?
- It mean "to be fully persuaded in our own minds" Rom 14:5 of the rightness, goodness, reliability, worthiness of God and His designs and principles for running His universe—so that we can differentiate where God is working from where the counterfeit is working
- What happens to us when we approve? We are changed in that process.
- The mature are those who have developed by practice the ability to discern the right from the wrong (Heb 5:14)
- Why must we have a mind capable of approving of God's will?
- Rom 3:4 "God must be true, even though every human being is a liar. As the scripture says, "You must be shown to be right when you speak; you must win your case when you are being tried." GNT
- One of Satan's traps for Christians is to get them to pursue a righteous goal—but by using Satan's methods. We must approve of God's will—i.e. approve that truth, love, freedom are God's methods and it is His will to leave people free to choose so that we never coerce.

Can you have your mind renewed if you refuse to reason and think? Can you have your mind renewed if you accept what others have told you without understanding for yourself?

So, with renewed minds that know and trust God, how do we overcome evil with good?

Here is a quote from one of the founders of the SDA church, what do you think of this?

All sin is selfishness. Satan's first sin was a manifestation of selfishness. He sought to grasp power, to exalt self. **A species of insanity led him to seek to supersede God.** And the temptation that led Adam to sin was Satan's declaration that it was possible for man to attain to something more than he already enjoyed, possible for him to be as God Himself. **The sowing of seeds of selfishness in the human heart** was the first result of the entrance of sin into the world. God desires every one to understand **the evil of selfishness**, and to co operate with Him in guarding the human family against its terrible, deceptive powers. **The design of the gospel is to confront this evil by means of remedial missionary work, and to destroy its destructive power by establishing enterprises of benevolence.** {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 3}

How is evil—selfishness, the fear drive to protect self at the expense of others overcome? By love! Why does love overcome selfishness?

Do people want to destroy that which they experience as doing them good? Or, do people want to protect it and promote its health and wellbeing?



How is this different from selfishness if it is for our own good?

Because when we love, when required, we will sacrifice ourselves for the good of another, but when we simply value the benefits of the other, then we will sacrifice them for ourselves.

In romantic relationships this can often be difficult to discern—a person can value their partner for all the partner does for them, not for the sake of the individual partner themselves—thus a person can do many things for the good of the partner, always designed to keep the partner serving them well. These relationships can look like love, but they are not.

The analogy I use with my patients to expose this is a cowboy and his horse:

- The cowboy values his horse
- He provides it the best food
- Buys the best saddle and shoes
- After a long ride gets the horse a rub down
- Will violently protect his horse if someone tries to take it from him
- He does all this because he loves the horse, or loves all the benefits the horse provides?
- Does the cowboy really care where the horse wants to go?
- Will the cowboy sacrifice himself for the horse?
- Or, when the horse gets sick, broken leg, will put it down and get another?
- Many relationships function like this—this is not love

This type of functioning will not eradicate evil, but will perpetuate it. Why? Because the motive in the heart of the cowboy is serving self! Many people do this in how they relate to others.

So, truth overcomes lies, love overcomes selfishness.

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, “For starters, faith is *not* a substitute for obedience..” What does this mean?

Why is faith not a substitute for obedience?

What does it mean the moral precepts are still in force?

What law lens do you hear this through? If through a human law construct—the lie—it means God’s rules have not been changed and God will still enforce His rules and breaking them will result in criminal guilt punishable by God, unless you take legal action and get the penalty paid by Jesus.

This is all pagan—it is not Christian.



The true view is what Jesus was trying to teach in Matthew 5, when He said not one jot or tittle will pass from the law—from *The Remedy*:

"And don't think that I have come to destroy what the Old Testament—Torah and Prophets—taught about God and his methods; I have not come to destroy but to fulfill them.¹⁸ Here is the simple truth: Heaven and earth would disappear if even the slightest change were made to God's design protocol for life—what you call his Law. I am not here to destroy the Law, but to accomplish everything it requires.

God's law cannot be changed and have life, as God built it, continue to exist. All life in God's universe is built to operate on certain design laws—changing those design laws would destroy God's creation!

The fundamental physical constants of the universe are exquisitely balanced, as though on a knife's edge, to sustain life. Things like the force of gravity, the strong nuclear force, the weak nuclear force, the electromagnetic force, the ratio of the mass of the proton and the electron, and many other factors have just the right value needed to make life possible. If any of these critical numbers were changed even slightly, the universe could not sustain any form of life. For example, **if the strength of gravity were smaller or larger than its current value by only one part in 10^{60} (1 followed by 60 zeroes), the universe would be uninhabitable.** (Pearcy, N., *Finding Truth*, p 25)

God's moral laws are also design laws, protocols upon which life is designed to function, deviation from them also destroy life:

- Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary **it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven**; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. {DA 19.2}
- But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. **In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe**. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, **the law of life**. {DA 21.2}



- The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man. **The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. The laws that govern the heart's action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds.** Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action. For all the objects of His creation the condition is the same--**a life sustained by receiving the life of God, a life exercised in harmony with the Creator's will. To transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place one's self out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin.** {Ed 99.2}

How do you understand law? Can we free our minds, our hearts, our institutions, our churches, our Bible Study Guides from the infection—the lie, that God’s law functions like human law?

Can we overcome evil if we continue to promote the lie of the evil one as godly?

How do we overcome evil? By coming back to the truth about God, which dispels lies and wins to trust, in trust we open the heart and receive the indwelling Spirit who provides new desires, motives, longings, then we choose to apply to our lives the truths of God’s designs, His laws, His methods. We choose to say no to selfishness, fear-based decision making and instead start thinking: What is the loving choice, what is the righteous action, what is in harmony with God’s design and methods. We get rid of things that reinforce the world’s methods in our hearts and minds and fill our hearts and minds with Godly resources.

So, why is faith not a substitute for obedience? It would be like being sick with a serious illness and having faith in your doctor and in the medicine he prescribes—you trust he only wants to help and you believe the medicine will work, but you don’t follow his instructions and don’t take the medicine. Will your faith get you well? If you follow the instructions and take the medicine, have you produced the remedy, have you saved yourself by your works?

At the end of the paragraph the lesson states, “we are not cast away but have a High Priest who intercedes in our behalf.”

What does this mean?

With whom is our High Priest interceding?

What law lens do you hear these words through?

If we have the human law lens, then what does intercession mean? That Jesus is our legal advocate pleading His legal payment to the Father to protect us from the heavenly judge—this is paganism in Christian garb.



It is not Biblical and it is a lie.

Design law—God intercedes in three places:

- Gen 3, intercedes in our hearts to break up the unity sinful humans would have with Satan and fallen angels. “I will put enmity between thee and the woman...”
- He intercedes with the principalities and powers of darkness, protective hedge (Elisha, Job etc.)
- He interceded in the natural course of what sin would do to humanity, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” 2Cor 5:21

Then what do we do with statements like this one, because those who prefer the human imposed law view and falsely believe Jesus must plead to his Father for us, will throw statements like this at you:

In the sacrificial offering on every altar was seen a Redeemer. With the cloud of incense arose from every contrite heart the prayer that God would accept their offerings as showing faith in the coming Saviour. **Our Saviour has come and shed his blood as a sacrifice, and now he pleads that blood before his Father in the sanctuary in heaven. It is now, as anciently, only through the merits of that blood that the transgressor of God's law can find pardon.** It is by exercising repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. {RH, March 2, 1886 par. 11}

How would you answer those who would use a statement like this to advocate that Jesus does plead to the Father for us—that without Jesus presenting His blood to the Father the Father would strike out and kill us? That Jesus’ blood is the legal payment which enables the Father to pardon us?

First, if the Holy Spirit leads a person to promote a message, will that message disagree with Jesus and what Jesus taught?

So, what did Jesus teach?

In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf.
²⁷No, the Father himself loves you... John 16:26,27

Do we believe Jesus? Are there more texts to support what Jesus said here?

- Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. Jn 14:9
- I and the Father are one.” John 10:30
- For God so loved the world...John 3:16

Does Jesus need to plead with the Father? Does the Father need some convincing in order to save us?



Who needs to be convinced? We do!

Jesus said:

“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. **He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears**, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will bring glory to me **by taking from what is mine and making it known to you**. Jn 16:12-14

What is being described?

To whom is the Holy Spirit listening? If the Holy Spirit is not speaking on His own, then for whom is He speaking? Jesus!

Then, if Jesus is in heaven before God pleading—to whom is He pleading? To you and me! The Holy Spirit takes the pleas of Christ and brings them to your heart and mind—Jesus, via the Holy Spirit, knocks on the door to your heart, pleading to you for you to let Him in to heal and restore you to righteousness.

Biblical evidence?

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. 2 The Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?”

3 Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. 4 The angel said to those who were standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes.”

Then he said to Joshua, “See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you.”

5 Then I said, “Put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood by. Zech 3:1-5

What does this mean? Notice, Satan accuses—to whom is Satan accusing?

Does God listen to what Satan says? Does God get confused by Satan’s arguments and need Jesus there to present the truth in order to get it right? Does God say to Jesus, “Wow thank you Son, I almost believed what Satan was saying, if you hadn’t been here to present the truth I wouldn’t have been able to know it?”

Who does get confused by Satan’s arguments, allegations, lies? Who listens to the devil and gets discouraged, guilt ridden, overcome with shame such that they think they are beyond salvation,



beyond healing, too sinful, too awful for God to love and for God to save? Human beings! We are the ones to whom Satan makes allegations—then to whom is Christ pleading the power of His blood, the power of His grace, the power of His goodness, the power of the gospel? To you and to me!

So, one of the founders of the SDA church:

Through the plan of salvation, **Jesus is breaking Satan's hold upon the human family and rescuing souls from his power.** All the hatred and malignity of the archrebel is stirred as he beholds the evidence of Christ's supremacy, and with fiendish power and cunning he works to wrest from Him the remnant of the children of men who have accepted His salvation. {LHU 234.2}

He leads men into skepticism, causing them to lose confidence in God and to separate from His love; he tempts them to break His law, and then he claims them as his captives and contests the right of Christ to take them from him. He knows that those who seek God earnestly for pardon and grace will obtain it; **therefore he presents their sins before them to discourage them.** He is constantly seeking occasion against those who are trying to obey God. Even their best and most acceptable services he seeks to make appear corrupt. **By countless devices, the most subtle and the most cruel, he endeavors to secure their condemnation.** [by whom? Whom does Satan seek to get us condemned? Is it not in our own minds, that we conclude we are beyond salvation, too sinful to be loved?] Man cannot meet these charges himself. In his sin-stained garments, confessing his guilt, he stands before God. **But Jesus our Advocate presents an effectual plea in behalf of all who by repentance and faith have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. He pleads their cause and vanquishes their accuser by the mighty arguments of Calvary.** [To whom is Jesus pleading? Who needs to have the allegations of Satan refuted? Who needs to believe that God loves them and Jesus' righteousness is sufficient for them? Does God need to be persuaded that Jesus' righteousness is sufficient to save a sinner? Who doubts? It is you and me that need to hear Jesus' plea!] His perfect obedience to God's law, even unto the death of the cross, has given Him all power in heaven and in earth, and He claims of His Father mercy and reconciliation for guilty man. [notice now to whom Jesus speaks] **To the accuser of His people He declares: "'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.' These are the purchase of My blood, brands plucked from the burning."** Those who rely upon Him in faith receive the comforting assurance: "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." [to whom is Jesus pleading? He rebukes the accuser and pleads for us not to listen to his lies and to trust in Him!] All that have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness will stand before Him as chosen and faithful and true. Satan has no power to pluck them out of the hand of Christ. . . . **We cannot answer the charges of Satan against us. Christ alone can make an effectual plea in our behalf. He is able to silence the accuser with arguments founded not upon our merits, but on His own** (Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 470-472). [To whom does Christ's plea need to effect? you and me!]

While Jesus, our Intercessor, pleads for us in heaven, the Holy Spirit works in us, to will



and to do of His good pleasure... {2MR 37.1}

Jesus pleads before the Father, carrying out the Father's purpose to save sinners, the Holy Spirit listens to Christ and works in you and me communicating the love, grace and pleas of Christ to you and me to win us back to trust, so we will open the door to our hearts and let Him save us from fear and selfishness!

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, "Yet it's easy..." What is the difference between the letter of the law and actually living in harmony with the law? Any examples of keeping the letter of the law in such a way that violates the actual law of God?

- Refusing to help someone in need on Sabbath because one is keeping the Sabbath law not to work
- Disfellowshipping a woman from church membership for divorcing a physically abusive husband because he did not commit sexual adultery
- A letter was in the Review recently in which a reader took issue with a recent article describing various health benefits of drinking milk in the diet—failing to realize that in many places of the world people do not have access to a well balanced vegetarian diet and thus milk is the best option for many. Yet the person who wrote the letter condemned the consumption of milk and promoted a worse physical health just to keep a rule.
- A visitor comes to church wearing jeans and jewelry and is criticized by a church member for coming to God's house in inappropriate dress

other examples?

How about examples of love overcoming rules?

- Pulled over for speeding and given a warning rather than a ticket?
- Forgiving someone who has done you wrong—despite the rule or law requiring punishment
- David taking the showbread to feed his men
- Jesus healing on Sabbath
- *Les Miserable* Jean Valjean, convict who spent 19 years in prison, five for stealing bread for starving family, and 14 more for escape attempts, can't find any place to stay so a Bishop gives him shelter. Jean steals his silverware. The police catch him with it, but the Bishop purports the silverware was given to Jean and presses two silver candlesticks into his hands in addition.

TUESDAY

What is a healthy attitude for Christians to have in relationship to the State?

The lesson describes how in Paul's day the Roman government was in many ways corrupt, abusive, intolerant, and pagan—and then writes; "Yet despite all this, Paul was advocating that Christians be



good citizens. Even under a government like that?"

Read second paragraph, "Yes. And that's because..." While the principle of government is God ordained, does that mean the method of human government is God ordained?

No! In fact, Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." Jesus stated that God's government does not operate like human governments. God's government is different. Human governments are coercive, use imposed rules with imposed punishments. God's government is design law, with life and health only for those who live in harmony with God and His designs.

I read the following from the book *Maranatha* what do you think?

But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, **the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of.** In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons.... Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re-echoed, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." {Mar 79.7}

What do you think of this idea that in heaven the idea that God had laws was something unthought of? Why and what would it mean?

What do you think of Isaac Newton writing down the law of gravity and then telling people in his day: There is a law of gravity—do you think the people might have said, "Really, I never thought of that—a law of gravity—really, wow, never occurred to me. We just live like we do because its so healthy and reasonable."

This only way a statement that the law was unthought of can be true is if the law is design law. Such a statement cannot be true if it is imposed rules—why?

It would be like people playing baseball and saying, "there are rules to baseball—like three strikes and your out instead of two, or four, wow something like that never occurred to us."

If God's law were imposed rules, then it would require that all intelligent beings be informed of the rules, lest they have no idea how to live—what is the speed limit? If it isn't posted we don't know? What is your property tax, if it isn't posted, you don't know.

If we accept, that in heaven the angels never consider God had laws, that is further proof that God's laws are design laws and that the entire penal substitution view is a lie.



WEDNESDAY

Read top dark section, “Owe no man...” What does the second question reveal? “Does it mean that if we love, we have no obligation, then, to obey the law of God?”

What did James mean when he wrote: “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.” James 2:10

Why?

God’s design for life, as we discussed above, is the law of love. One cannot break God’s law in any point without breaking the law of love. Or, saying it another way, all breaks to God’s law are breaks to love.

Therefore, it is not possible to love and break God’s law.

Second paragraph states, “Yet, Paul is not substituting some vague standard of love for the precisely detailed precepts of the law, as some Christians claim. The moral law is still binding, because, again, it is what points out sin—and who is going to deny the reality of sin? However, the law truly can be kept only in the context of love. Remember, some of those who brought Christ to the cross then ran home to keep the law.”

THURSDAY

The lesson in the first paragraph states, “The issue was salvation and how a sinner is deemed righteous and holy before the Lord.”

What is your answer to this question—how is one deemed righteous and holy before the Lord?

As a species the race human was *made* righteous in the person of Jesus Christ.

As individuals, we are made righteous by trust in Jesus and in that trust the Spirit takes the perfection of Christ and renews our hearts, minds and characters to be like His. We actively choose to surrender to Christ, to identify with Christ, to love and long to be one with Christ, to follow and apply as we comprehend the principles of Christ and in such a relationship the Spirit enlightens, empowers and renews so that we become like Christ.

Then, as Paul wrote, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Gal 2:20



The Book of Romans Lesson 13 4Q 2017

Christian Living presented by Tim Jennings

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

Jerusalem, Christians and End-Time Methods
Suicide and the Myth of Lost Salvation
What is Biblical Justice?
Is God Punishing the World with Natural Disasters?

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

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

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

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

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

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

SABBATH

What do you think when you hear—Christian Living?

Do you think primarily of health reform?

Do you think of all the things you **can't** do, which may vary depending on your denominational affiliation—no smoking, no movies, no jewelry, no dresses, no alcohol, no meat, no cheese, no TV?

Do you think of relationship restrictions—Christian living means no women preachers, men run the home and wives submit?

What is Christian living?

Let's look at Ephesians 4:17-32:



¹⁷ So I tell you this plainly, and I insist on it in the Lord: If you are to grow and mature, you must think for yourselves and not live like the Gentiles, who believe all kinds of things that don't make sense.¹⁸ Their minds are darkened and their thinking is confused because they have rejected the truth of God and his methods, and have preferred lies that harden their hearts and separate them from God.¹⁹ [So, would this mean that non-Christian living is to believe superstitions, non-sense, things that don't make sense, to reject the truth about God's character of love and believe things that harden hearts and separate us from God? Even if those doing such things are members of a Christian church?] They have lost all compassion, morality and tenderness, and have immersed themselves in sensuality (practicing every kind of impurity) and are constantly lusting for more. [Do we see this in the Christian homes? Do we see hardness of heart, a desire to use coercion, punishment, violence even by some who call themselves Christians? The rates of pornography use, child molestation, spouse abuse are the same in Christian homes as non-Christian homes—why? Because Christianity has been infected with lies about God, superstitious non-sense promoted as truth that keeps people from actually knowing God and therefore they have a form of godliness but no power. We cannot live Christian lives by knowing Church rules but not knowing God!]

²⁰ You, however, did not come to know Christ by practicing such impure behavior.²¹ Instead, you heard of him and studied the truth of God's methods and character as revealed by Jesus.²² You were taught that the former ways of life—the survival-of-the-fittest ways, the selfish me-first ways—only lead to self-destruction and death, and that health and life consist of putting off such motives and desires.²³ You were taught the importance of being recreated in heart and mind and displacing the principles of selfishness with those of love,²⁴ and experiencing a complete transformation of character such that you are an entirely new being recreated in heart-attitude to be like God—truly righteous and holy. [Does Christian living mean a change of behavior merely or does it require a change of heart? Can a change of heart happen through legal accounting? The penal legal accounting theology is a lie and obstructs genuine heart transformation]

²⁵ Therefore each of you must choose to stop being deceitful in every way, and instead be truthful and honest in all your conduct, for we are members of one body, and such behavior injures both you and the body.²⁶ [Why do people deceive? Fear, it takes trust in God, to stand up and be truthful when you are afraid of what others might think or do to you if you are. It takes a relationship with God, knowing He is love and wants your best interest to be truthful when you have made mistakes, or done wrong.] "In your anger do not sin"—do not let your anger or any strong emotion take control of your minds and determine your choices; don't retain anger in your hearts.²⁷ The devil tempts us through our emotions, so don't give him any opportunity to confuse you or lead you astray.²⁸ The person who has been stealing has been practicing the methods of selfishness, and if they desire to get well, they must have selfishness replaced by love. When selfishness is replaced with love, they will stop stealing, and instead get a job in order to be able to give to others in need. [What is the basis of Christian living? Love for others and how does it function? Where is the source of such love?]



²⁹ Don't speak unwholesome words, for your words react on the mind, and unwholesome words damage and destroy. Instead, speak what is helpful and uplifting, encouraging others and benefiting those who listen.³⁰ [Did you know that when you speak it not only reveals what is in your heart, but it reinforces what you have said so that you can strengthen the idea and come to believe the idea if repeated and said enough? So does Christian living mean to be careful in what we say?] And do not close your minds to seeking more truth and thus grieve the Spirit of truth who set your minds free from Satan's lies and settled you into the truth of God's character and methods for the day of our deliverance.³¹ [Does Christian living mean to be lovers of truth, be open to move forward with new truths, insights, ideas, to change old beliefs if they are not supported by truth?] Purge your hearts from all bitterness, rage and anger, desire for vengeance, conflict and rumor-mongering, along with every other form of malice and ill will.³² [Why must we do this if we are to live like Christ? What happens in our hearts, to our characters if we don't forgive? Can we live like Christ and hold to such negative emotions and attitudes?] Be kind, gentle, compassionate and forgiving with each other as God is forgiving to you; remember that all humanity suffers with the same infection of selfishness, and God provides the same Remedy for all.

What is Christian living? Having hearts changed from fear and selfishness to love, which results in truthfulness, respecting the individuality and freewill of others, seeking to give rather than to get, forgiving others and seeking to bring God's remedy to all.

- Can a person live like this and be homeless?
- Can one live like this and wear jewelry, or wear pants, or go to church on a different day than you?
- Can a person live like this and be a woman—a woman preacher? Yes!
- Can a person live like this and have a glass of wine for dinner periodically? Does this mean we promote drinking alcohol? No! It means you can't live like Christ merely by avoiding alcohol.

Read first paragraph, "We are now in the last..." Is the principle of *sola scriptura* Biblical? I guess it depends on what people mean—so let me define a couple of possible definitions:

1. That Scripture (the Bible) is the only source of information God uses to reveal heavenly truth and the only one we can use? No! This is false.
 - The Bible itself teaches that God uses other avenues of divine revelation besides the Bible:
 - Direct conversation—God spoke to Moses at the bush on Sinai—should Moses have said—well I don't have a Bible to check this with....
 - Angelic revelation—Gabriel spoke to Mary, should she have said, "I'm sorry, please show me a Bible verse?"
 - Prophetic speakers—Jonah went to Nineveh with a message from God, did he quote Scripture? Should they have rejected the message as not being from God because Jonah didn't quote a Bible verse?



- Romans 1:20 says that God's divine nature is seen in what he has made so that men are without excuse—so science and nature reveal things about God
 - The Bible says "Taste and see that the Lord is good" our own life experiences testify to the goodness of God and His methods and the pain and badness of sin.
 - What do all of these methods have in common? Truth! God is the source of all truth, and if it is heavenly truth then it can be relied upon—so the first premise, that Scripture is the only source of heavenly truth is false.
2. The Scripture is the only *written* source of divine revelation and godly truth. —No, this is also false.
- Have you ever read any other material than Scripture in which you found God's truth?
 - The Bible states God gives spiritual gifts, of discernment, wisdom, speaking, teaching, preaching...some of the people whom God has given such gifts have written books which contain truths from God's kingdom—so Scripture is not the only source of godly truth.
3. That the Bible is *superior* to other written sources of information and must supersede other Christian books, church manuals, church traditions, church rules, church laws, creeds, consensus statements. In other words, the Scripture is the ultimate authority from which all other written materials and ideas must harmonize? Yes—this is true.

Why do some try to make the *sola scriptura* idea mean that our doctrines can only come from Scripture and must exclude other sources of information?

Because when Scripture is isolated from its anchors in science/nature and experience—in other words, torn away from how life actually works, then people can make up superstitious, non-sense ideas and claim they are supported by Scripture. But, if you require our understanding of Scripture to harmonize with the laws of nature and real life experiences, then certain interpretations are not possible—particularly all the imposed legal penal ideas of the world that have infected Christianity are expelled and we come back to worship our Creator God.

But, many within the church prefer the ways of the world and thus reject the other threads God uses to reveal Himself and insist that only the Bible can be used to inform us about God and His plan of salvation.

Which view of *sola scriptura* are you most comfortable with? Is anyone uncomfortable harmonizing our understanding of the Bible with nature and experience?

This is what we here at Come and Reason Ministries call the *Integrative Evidenced-Based Approach*! It was after we studied out the Scripture and began promoting this view that we came across these quotations from one of the founders of the SDA church, demonstrating no truth is truly new truth, just rediscovered truth.

The great storehouse of truth is the word of God—the written word, the book of nature, and the book of experience in God's dealing with human life. Here are the treasures from



which Christ's workers are to draw. In the search after truth they are to depend upon God, not upon human intelligences, the great men whose wisdom is foolishness with God. Through His own appointed channels the Lord will impart a knowledge of Himself to every seeker. – {COL 125.2}

Rightly understood, both the **revelations of science and the experiences of life are in harmony with the testimony of Scripture to the constant working of God in nature.** {Ed 130.3}

Jesus followed the divine plan of education. The schools of His time, with their magnifying of things small and their belittling of things great, He did not seek. **His education was gained directly from the Heaven-appointed sources; from useful work, from the study of the Scriptures and of nature, and from the experiences of life--God's lesson books,** full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart.
{Ed 77.2}

Science

"Many are the ways in which God is seeking to make Himself known to us and bring us into communion with Him. Nature speaks to our senses without ceasing. The open heart will be impressed with the love and glory of God as revealed through the works of His hands. The listening ear can hear and understand the communications of God through the things of nature....." {SC 85.1}

Experience

"God speaks to us through His providential workings and through the influence of His Spirit upon the heart. In our circumstances and surroundings, in the changes daily taking place around us, we may find precious lessons if our hearts are but open to discern them....." {SC 87.2}

Scripture

"God speaks to us in His word. Here we have in clearer lines the revelation of His character, of His dealings with men, and the great work of redemption....." {SC 87.3}

So, does Christian living mean that we hold to beliefs we were taught by an organization or person in authority and reject evidence—or that we have minds that think, reason, examine evidence and follow the truth where it leads, despite what the organized system says?

Do we as Christians form beliefs based on experiments, or on the word of Scripture?



Hmmm...are we to form our beliefs on statements from the Bible, or our feelings? How are we to balance our experiences with the Bible and nature? Do we form experiments to test the truth and determine the meaning?

Here is what one of the founders of the SDA church wrote, see if you agree or disagree? Does this guidance lead a person toward superstition and unhealthy beliefs, or away from superstition and unhealthy beliefs? This is from a letter written in 1871 to a specific person struggling with health problems:

As I have before stated, you, my sister, **rely upon experience**. Your experience decides you to pursue a certain course. **But that which many term experience is not experience at all; it is simply habit**, or mere indulgence, blindly and frequently ignorantly followed, with a firm, set determination, and **without intelligent thought or inquiry relative to the laws at work** in the accomplishment of the result. {3T 68.3}

Real experience is a variety of careful experiments made with the mind freed from prejudice and uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits. The results are marked with careful solicitude and an anxious desire to learn, to improve, and to reform on every habit that is not in harmony with physical and moral laws. The idea of others' gainsaying what you have learned by experience seems to you to be folly and even cruelty itself. But there are more errors received and firmly retained from false ideas of experience than from any other cause, for the reason that **what is generally termed experience is not experience at all; because there has never been a fair trial by actual experiment and thorough investigation, with a knowledge of the principle involved in the action.** {3T 69.1}

Your experience was shown to me as not reliable, because [it is] opposed to natural law. It is in conflict with the unchangeable principles of nature. Superstition, my dear sister, arising from a **diseased imagination, arrays you in conflict with science and principle.** Which shall be yielded? Your strong prejudices and very set ideas in regard to what course is best to be pursued relative to yourself have long held you from good. I have understood your case for years, but have felt incompetent to present the matter in so clear a manner **that you could see and comprehend it**, and put to a practical use the light given you. {3T 69.2}

There are many invalids today who will ever remain so because they cannot be convinced that their experience is not reliable. The brain is the capital of the body, the seat of all the nervous forces and of mental action. The nerves proceeding from the brain control the body. **By the brain nerves, mental impressions are conveyed to all the nerves of the body as by telegraph wires; and they control the vital action of every part of the system.** All the organs of motion are governed by the communications they receive from the brain. {3T 69.3}

What did you hear? What is being described? Do you hear the scientific method being described? How many of theology professors are willing to do this?



This is the only path of safety because it is the path of truth, assimilating all the evidences God has given, training the mind to think, reason, comprehend and apply truth, which transforms the being. As Jesus said, “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” John 8:32

The legal view interprets this to mean, you will know the truth that a legal payment has been made and you will be set free from God’s inflicted punishment for your sin. But this is a lie and cheats people out of the real freedom—freedom from lies, freedom from fear, insecurity, misunderstanding, freedom from the enslavement of sin itself and the chains of incapacity that violations of God’s design laws bring.

A person who violates the laws of health will suffer health problems, which reduce autonomy, limit ability, i.e. enslave them. I have had patients who through years of smoking developed COPD and required oxygen, they are less free, enslaved to their condition.

People who lie, cheat, steal—live in fear, fear of being found out, fear of punishment, fear of rejection, they are slaves to their fears and these lead to worry, hypervigilance, and distrust—such people have less freedom and their relationships suffer.

The truth sets us free from sin and all the damaging consequences and enslavement that sin brings!

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “In Romans 14:1-3...” Did the New Testament church give rules—or did they *rule*, i.e. determine and define, for the new converts, what design laws they needed to understand and harmonize with in their religious practice?

From *The God-Shaped Heart* (p 152,153):

The New Testament church understood the distinction between imposed law and design law. When the immature were struggling with whether to require Gentile converts to adhere to the imposed rules of a symbolic system, the church leaders said, “Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood” (Acts 15:20). These instructions are not imposed rules but are the wisdom of design law.

Food polluted by idols:

- An idol cannot change the nutritional quality of the food. Therefore, eating foods offered to idols does not pollute the body. Paul makes this clear in Romans 14.
- The issue they were addressing is the design law of worship—by beholding we become changed. As we discussed in chapter 7, this is called modeling. What we believe has power over us: truth heals and sets free, lies damage and enslave. Don’t allow your minds to become contaminated by giving any credence to idols. Thus, don’t eat food



polluted by the *idea* that it is a bounty given you by a false god.

Sexual immorality:

- God designed relationships to operate on love and trust. When sexual intimacy occurs between husband and wife, as God designed, healthy bonding occurs. The brain actually rewires, and reward circuits are heightened for one's spouse. This is design law—how our biology is actually built to work. Deviating from this design is damaging to the mind, body, and relationships.
- It is a violation of design law, altering brain circuitry, inflaming selfish and fear circuits, thus obstructing healing of mind and character.

Meat from strangled animals or blood:

- It also violates design law—the laws of health.
- Humans were not designed to eat meat, and the blood carries waste products, stress hormones, and various inflammatory factors. Eating raw meat and drinking blood increases disease risk, and when the body is unhealthy the mind is compromised.

The New Testament church rejected the imposed-law rules and focused instead on living in harmony with God's design law for life. When we have accepted the lie that God's law is simply a list of rules, we believe they are subject to change with time and place. Good Christian people fall into the trap of arguing back and forth over trivial points, oblivious to the fact they are all worshiping the same dictator god. We then teach our children ideas of God that drive a wedge between them and God.

Read second paragraph, “Meanwhile...” Have this been your experience? Has this been your practice?

Why do you think some people, instead of leaving others free to have a different opinion, instead try to silence or stop others from sharing their opinion?

Read bottom pink section, “Although we need to keep in mind...” First question, are we to judge and if so what are we to judge?

- Are we to judge the facts, truths, realities—i.e. if something is actually the way it is being presented or not?
 - What standard do we use to make that judgment? How do we tell if something is true or not?
 - “And when they say to you, “Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,” should not a people seek their God? *Should they seek* the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰ To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them.” Isa 8:19,20 NKJV
 - What does this mean?
 - What law? the Torah is the word here, does it mean merely the written word? Or does the written word reveal the living word?
 - And what is the single argument the Torah makes over and over again that



separates the true God from all the false gods? The true God is the Creator—and upon what law does God's creation operate? Design law!

- So, if preachers preach a god who imposes laws which lead to non-sense, legal theologies, and deny the design laws of God, these people have no light in them
- Are we to judge whether something is healthy or not? What standard or parameters do we use?
 - Design laws, laws of health, and outcomes, i.e. experience
- Are we to judge someone's motives? Are we to make a judgment whether someone is acting to promote self or to help others? Are we to make a judgment if someone is a friend or an enemy? What is necessary to accomplish this?
 - Heb 5:14, the mature are those who have developed by practice the ability to discern the right from the wrong—we must practice examining and thinking for ourselves
 - Consider this wisdom, do you agree?
 - If we mistake the wisdom of man for the wisdom of God we are led astray by the foolishness of man's wisdom. Here is the great danger of many in -----. **They have not an experience for themselves. They have not been in the habit of prayerfully considering for themselves, with unprejudiced, unbiased judgment, questions and subjects that are new and that are ever liable to arise. [They have not developed by practice...] They wait to see what others will think.** If these dissent, that is all that is needed to convince them that the subject under consideration is of no account whatever. Although this class is large, it does not change the fact that **they are inexperienced and weak-minded** through long yielding to the enemy, and will always be as sickly as babes, **walking by others' light, living on others' experience, feeling as others feel, and acting as others act.** They act as though they had not an individuality. **Their identity is submerged in others;** they are merely shadows of those whom they think about right. Unless these become sensible of their wavering character and correct it, **they will all fail of everlasting life; they will be unable to cope with the perils of the last days.** They will possess no stamina to resist the devil, for they do not know that it is he. **Someone must be at their side to inform them whether a foe or a friend is approaching.** They are not spiritual, therefore spiritual things are not discerned. They are not wise in those things which relate to the kingdom of God. **Neither young nor old are excusable in trusting to another to have an experience for them.** Said the angel: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." **A noble self-reliance is needed in the Christian experience and warfare.** {2T 129.2}
 - Does your church teach you to think for yourself, to understand for yourself, to develop the ability to discern right from wrong by evidence and experience, or do they indoctrinate you to a creed, a system of beliefs and incite fear that if you change those beliefs you are sinning and will be lost?
- Are we to make judgments about God?
 - Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. ⁷ He said in a



loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.” Rev 14:6.7

- God must be true, even though every human being is a liar. As the scripture says, “You must be shown to be right when you speak; you must win your case when you are being tried.” Rom 3:4 GNT

When do we speak and when do we keep silent?

When did Jesus speak and when did Jesus keep silent?

Jesus kept silent in two places:

- When the audience was not open or willing to hear, i.e. their hearts were closed.
- When the audience was not mature enough or ready to hear what he had to say Jn 16:12

MONDAY

The day’s title is *Before the Judgment Seat*, what do you think of with this title?

Read first paragraph, “We tend to judge...” Why will we be judged by the standard we used to judge others?

If we interpret this through human imposed law lenses then: it is because God knows the secrets of our hearts; we have disobeyed and presumed to take God’s authority to judge; this is sinful and God therefore as the supreme judge imposes our own judgment back on us to punish us for our crime.

If we use the design law reality—we realize what Jesus said:

You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. ³⁶ But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” Mt 12:34-37

How we judge other reveals the actual condition of our own hearts/minds/characters and thus God’s judgment is simply the accurate diagnosis of our own heart condition.

This is design law, we are diagnosed, or judged, to be either healed and like Christ in character, which is evidenced by our grace toward others, or we are diagnosed/judged to be like Satan in character and this is evidenced by our judgmentalism toward others.



Read second paragraph, “The citation from Isaiah...” What law lens do you hear this through? Those who already have accepted the lie that God’s law functions no differently than human law hear this as a judicial proceeding. Is there another way to hear this?

Romans 14:10-12 From *The Remedy*:

Who are you then to judge your brother or sister? Do you think you are somehow better? Why do you belittle and look at others with disdain? Don't you realize that we are all infected with the same sickness and one day all of us will stand before God to see if we have been healed?¹¹ It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'everyone will kneel before me and be examined; every mouth will reveal what is the condition of the heart.'"

¹²So then, each of us will stand before God, and the true condition of our hearts will be revealed.

Which way is more consistent with the Bible and our Creator God, the judicial imposed law, imposed punishment view of judgment, or the accurate diagnosis view?

Any Biblical evidence that God’s judgment is His accurate diagnosis?

- Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone! Hos 4:17
- They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves. Jer 2:5
- He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.” Rev 22:11 NKJV

God’s judgment in the end is simply the accurate diagnosis of every character, every heart—have we trusted God, opened our hearts and been restored to righteousness by the indwelling Spirit, or have we clung to lies, preferred selfishness and hardened our hearts in evil and sin?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “In Romans...” Is the wisdom of this chapter restricted to foods offered to idols and various ceremonial holidays?

The lesson on WEDNESDAY speaks strongly that the weekly Sabbath cannot be included in this passage, read the last paragraph, “To bring the weekly Sabbath...” thoughts?

Can you imagine Paul bringing the weekly Sabbath into this? Yes! Absolutely, why?

Because Paul is speaking about the real issue in salvation—the healing of the heart and mind, the restoration of Christlikeness in the inner man. Can a person be transformed in the inner workings of their hearts against their will?

So, must a person be fully persuaded in their own mind in order to be saved?



Would this mean that a person who accepts Jesus as their Savior, only genuinely does this when they are fully persuaded in their own mind?

Yes! If we include in this passage that a person to accept Jesus must be fully persuaded in their own mind, are we minimizing the importance of accepting Jesus?

So, if we say that every person must be fully persuaded in their own mind about the Sabbath, are we minimizing the importance of the Sabbath? No!

Why, then, does the lesson argue it does?

Because of accepting the false imposed law view of God's law, in that view the Sabbath is just an imposed rule that must be enforced, and if you break God's imposed rules you are legally guilty and God will punish.

They have taken this beautiful chapter, in which Paul elevates the principles of God, truth, love, freedom which must be utilized in order to transform hearts, and pushed them aside and suggest that these principles don't apply to the Sabbath, that the Sabbath is still legally binding, that one cannot include the fourth commandment in Paul's discourse. And thus, instead of transforming hearts with God's healing methods, this approach inflames fear and damages hearts.

Back to **TUESDAY**, read last paragraph, "Have you ever heard someone..." What is the balance here?

Do you agree that if your example leads someone astray then you are culpable?

If I wear a wedding ring, and a person believes that a wedding ring is jewelry and jewelry is sinful and therefore, they conclude if Jennings wears a wedding ring, then Christ is not real and they leave the church and they reject Jesus, am I culpable for their loss?

If you observe the Sabbath and someone believes that your Sabbath observance is legalistic and denies God's grace, therefore they leave the church or won't listen to what you have to say about God, are you culpable?

Where is the balance between living up to the light that God has revealed to you and conforming your behavior to the level where others are?

Would it not be about living in harmony with God's design law? That we can conform our choices to be appealing to local customs and culture, to not offend, alienate, or cause obstacles to the gospel—as long as we do not violate God's design laws, but we don't conform if we are going against God's methods and designs?



THURSDAY

Read Romans 15:1-3:

We, who have had our minds set free from distrust and fear and are therefore strong in our confidence in God and in understanding his methods, have a responsibility to help those still weakened by the infection of distrust and selfishness—and to not simply live to please ourselves.² Each of us should do all in our power to help our neighbor recover from the devastation caused by distrust in God, fear, and selfishness. We should strive to help heal and restore our neighbor.³ Christ himself has shown how to live, for he did not live to please himself, but, as the Scriptures state, "I have accepted the abuse meant for you, in order to protect and heal you." *The Remedy*

Any thoughts on what we could do to accomplish this?

2020 4Q Education: Lesson 7

Worship in Education

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

Read memory text:

Give to the LORD the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! (1 Ch 16:29 NKJV).

What does it mean to give the Lord glory?

What do we mean when we refer to His “name”?

When we pray, “in the name of Jesus” what does this mean? Does it mean:

- using the actual word “Jesus”?
- Must we use Joshua or rather Yeshua?
- Or does the name in the Bible mean character?

Jacob, the deceiver, when he was converted and experienced a heart change had his name changed to Israel—one who with God overcomes.

Do we understand name means character?

Here is one historic quote from the book *The Desire of Ages*:

But to pray in Christ's name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. The Saviour's promise is given on condition. "If ye love Me," He says, "keep My commandments." He saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience. {DA 668.2}

So, the name of God means what? His character and what is your understanding of the character of God? Let's list character traits of God and contrast them with abilities—I will throw out some and you let me know whether this is a character trait or an ability:

- God is omniscient—all knowing
- God is love
- God is truth/truthful
- God is omnipotent—all powerful
- God is Creator (perhaps both as creating is a manifestation of both His ability and character)
- God is patient



- God exists outside time and thus has foreknowledge
- God is forgiving
- God is omnipresent
- God is just
- God is constant—never changing
- God is omnipresent—able to be everywhere at once

What has the conflict between Satan and God been about? What has Satan done to incite rebellion? Has Satan ever truly questioned God's abilities? Or has Satan's attacks always been on God's trustworthiness—God's character, the way God uses His abilities?

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Hence he has sought to **misrepresent the character of God**, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. **The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself,--as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving,--that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men.** Satan hoped to so confuse the minds of those whom he had deceived that they would put God out of their knowledge. **Then he would obliterate the divine image in man and impress his own likeness upon the soul; he would imbue men with his own spirit and make them captives according to his will.** {5T 738.1}

Do we see this in the world today? Can people who reject God and embrace godlessness be growing in godliness, accurately represent Jesus, be empowered by the Spirit to practice God's methods? Or will they grow more like selfish, more fearful, more controlling?

Can people who believe in God but accept a false view of God and thus worship a god who is like Satan in character become more like Jesus, or will they become more like the enemy? The law of worship—by beholding we are changed!

Should we expect that if we jump off buildings we will float? Should we expect that if we reject God that we will become more like Jesus?

Then, what can you expect people who reject Jesus to do when it comes to the methods and principles they practice in how they run their business, in how they deal with conflict, in how they would administer a school, in how they would run a government?

I want you to discern, to be able to differentiate God's methods from Satan's. Now, what is the most effective conman—the one who comes to you and says: "I am here to steal from you, to molest your children, and get you addicted to drugs." Or the one who says, "I am here to make you wealthy, to care for your children, to give you better health—and then steal from you, molest your children and addict you to drugs?"



And then when you find yourself impoverished and unhealthy the person who did this blames the ones with real solutions and remedies—this is true evil.

This is what Satan does—he infects us with sin, steals our joy, happiness, health, injures our families and then blames God or godly people or God’s methods as being the problem.

Do you see this happening with various leaders or groups in society today—claiming they are here to help us while they or their followers are actually injuring and inciting the problems they claim they are there to fix?

What do we learn about God’s character when we look to Jesus?

So, we are to bring an offering and come before the Lord—what does this mean, bring an offering? An offering of what?

- Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to **offer your bodies as living sacrifices**, holy and pleasing to God—**this is your spiritual act of worship**. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1,2 NIV84
- I want your constant love, not your animal sacrifices. I would rather have my people know me than burn offerings to me. Hosea 6:6 GNT

What are we to bring to God as an offering? Ourselves, for renewal, for healing, to be restored to love and trust and then when we do this we do what the rest of the text says, we worship Him in the beauty of holiness.

Does this remind you of any other Bible text that has a call to glorify God by magnifying His name and to worship Him?

The 3 Angels’ messages—At this time in human history a message is to go forward to be in awe of God and give Him glory—meaning reveal His true character of love—because the time in human history has come for people to make a right judgment about God, to worship Him who made the heavens, earth, sea and fountains of water, to worship the Designer and reject this pagan imperial dictator who imposes law and inflicts punishment for sin.

And we are to do this in the beauty of holiness?

WEDNESDAY:

The lesson asks in the middle highlighted section, “*The beauty of holiness?* What might that mean?”

Read third and fourth paragraphs, “For starters, think about how ugly...” I think the lesson is pointing us in the right direction, sin damages, distorts, corrupts, injures, infects, perverts, abuses, exploits,



harms, destroys and kills. Sin is ugly—in fact ALL ugliness is a result of sin, *not all ugliness is sin*, but all ugliness is a result of sin.

For instance, any disease, defect, illness, deformity such as blindness, paralysis, deafness, lesions, mental impairments are a result of sin but these things are not sin. Jesus instructed his disciples that the man born blind wasn't born blind because he or his parents sinned. But blindness wouldn't exist in the world if the world wasn't infected by sin.

Paul tells us in Romans 8 that all nature groans under the weight of sin. So, sinfulness or the condition of sin is a state of being out of harmony with God, God's design and that injures and harms and the greater the distance from God, from His perfection—His holiness—the greater the deformity, injury, damage. In other words, the greater we separate ourselves from God the greater the ugliness—and such ugliness is both physical and characterological.

This is from the book *The Desire of Ages* describing the scene in which Jesus confronts the satanic legion controlling the demoniacs:

From some hiding place among the tombs, **two madmen** rushed upon them as if to tear them in pieces. Hanging about these men were parts of chains which they had broken in escaping from confinement. **Their flesh was torn and bleeding where they had cut themselves with sharp stones. Their eyes glared out from their long and matted hair, the very likeness of humanity seemed to have been blotted out by the demons that possessed them, and they looked more like wild beasts than like men.** DA 337.1

The disciples and their companions fled in terror; but presently they noticed that Jesus was not with them, and they turned to look for Him. He was standing where they had left Him. He who had stilled the tempest, who had before met Satan and conquered him, did not flee before these demons. **When the men, gnashing their teeth, and foaming at the mouth, approached Him,** Jesus raised that hand which had beckoned the waves to rest, and the men could come no nearer. **They stood raging but helpless before Him.** DA 337.2

With authority He bade the unclean spirits come out of them.... a marvelous change had come over the demoniacs. Light had shone into their minds. Their eyes beamed with intelligence. The countenances, so long deformed into the image of Satan, became suddenly mild, the bloodstained hands were quiet, and with glad voices the men praised God for their deliverance. DA 338.2

The encounter with the demoniacs of Gergesa had a lesson for the disciples. **It showed the depths of degradation to which Satan is seeking to drag the whole human race, and the mission of Christ to set men free from his power.** Those wretched beings, dwelling in the place of graves, possessed by demons, in bondage to uncontrolled passions and loathsome lusts, **represent what humanity would become if given up to satanic jurisdiction.** Satan's influence is constantly exerted upon men to distract the senses, **control the mind for evil, and incite to violence and crime.** [Do we see this happening in society today? When you see rioters looting stores, assaulting people on the street, dragging people out of their cars, yelling,



shouting down voices of that disagree with them, when you see liberty attacked, when you see freedom of speech oppressed, when you see big tech censoring and promoting falsehoods do you see the enemy of God at work destroying the image of God in people and inciting more division and conflict?] **He weakens the body, darkens the intellect, and debases the soul.**

Whenever men reject the Saviour's invitation, they are yielding themselves to Satan.

Multitudes in every department in life, in the home, in business, and even in the church, are doing this today. It is because of this that violence and crime have overspread the earth, and moral darkness, like the pall of death, enshrouds the habitations of men. Through his specious temptations Satan leads men to worse and worse evils, till utter depravity and ruin are the result. **The only safeguard against his power is found in the presence of Jesus.** [Do you believe this to be true? Are there groups today who are actively seeking to eliminate Jesus from our society? Do you find Jesus freely preached in communist countries? Why do communist leaders always seek to get rid of Christianity? Because the principles of God are freedom, liberty, truth, openness and Satan's principles are coercion, deceit, domination, control and communism cannot exist where people love God and promote the methods of Jesus. Do you see forces at work in America today that are seeking to lead people down a path that eliminate Jesus and the gospel from our nation?] Before men and angels **Satan has been revealed as man's enemy and destroyer; Christ, as man's friend and deliverer. His Spirit will develop in man all that will ennoble the character and dignify the nature. It will build man up for the glory of God in body and soul and spirit.** "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." 2 Timothy 1:7. He has called us "to the obtaining of the glory"—character—"of our Lord Jesus Christ;" has called us to be "conformed to the image of His Son." 2 Thessalonians 2:14; Romans 8:29. DA 341.1

Do we recognize that true beauty is found only in holiness and holiness is restoration to God's design, living in harmony with God's design laws, which is healthiness.

Ancient Israel was supposed to be separated from the evil and sinfulness of the world—but that didn't happen, they became just as evil and corrupt as the world; yet while doing so they came to believe they were being separate from the world what happened?

They accepted the lie about God's law as imposed rules and this lie led them to act, as all worldly systems function and focus which is upon behavior, deeds rather than character. Thus, Israel separated themselves from the world by:

- Dress
- Religious rituals
- Diet
- Day of worship
- List of doctrines

But because they did not separate from the world in understanding of God's law, or God's character or God's methods, they did not experience difference from the world in character—they remained filled with fear and selfishness and this led them to take all their differences in dress, ritual, diet, worship and doctrines and become:



- bigoted
- prejudicial
- arrogant, narcissistic and prideful
- hard-hearted and conceited
- to exploit those around them and to ignore the plight of the less fortunate even among Israel
- and kill the Creator when He stood among them

Accepting the lie that God's law functions like human law resulted in the Jews becoming just as evil as the pagans around them.

Are we at risk for doing this today?

Read second paragraph, "The place of worship was the tabernacle..." Don't we agree that central to worship is Jesus and the plan of salvation?

Yet, what do we do with the following text?

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?' Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.' Matthew 7:21-23

If we were to find people who fall into this group, the ones Jesus identifies here as evildoers, and we went to them today and asked them if they believed that Jesus and the plan of salvation was central to worship, what would they say?

So is there something more to it than just saying Jesus is central to salvation? Is there something more than saying "I accept Jesus is my Savior"? Is there something more than saying Jesus is our substitute? In other words, can a person claim all of this and still be an enemy of Jesus? How is that possible?

By accepting a false view of the character of Jesus and the Father—if one accepts a false view of them, then one values false character and by beholding we are changed. If one accepts God is arbitrary, severe, exacting, revengeful, that justice requires God to use power to torture and kill then one becomes like that false god and may claim that false god is Jesus and may claim to be a follower of Jesus but in reality is a follower of Satan.

In C.S. Lewis' last book of the Narnia series Lewis describes a Calormene soldier named Emeth and his encounter with Aslan the lion. Emeth was a worshipper of Tash, and as a result was terrified when he came face to face with Aslan. This is that encounter from the book:

I fell at his feet and thought surely this is the hour of death, for the Lion will know that I have served Tash all my days and not him.



But Aslan's response?

Son thou art welcome. But I said, alas Lord I am no son of thine but the servant of Tash. He answered, Child all the service thou hast done to Tash I account as service done to me.

I questioned the Glorious One: Lord, is it then true that thou and Tash are one? The Lion growled and said, It is false. Not because he and I are one, but because we are opposites, I take to me the services which thou hast done to him. For I and he are of such different kinds that no service which is vile can be done to me, and none which is not vile can be done to him. Therefore if any man swear by Tash and keep his oath for the oath's sake, it is by me that he has truly sworn, though he know it not, and it is I who reward him. And if any man do a cruelty in my name, then, though he says the name Aslan, it is Tash whom he serves and by Tash his deed is accepted".

Emeth questions once more:

Lord, I have been seeking Tash all my days.

Beloved, said the Glorious One, unless thy desire had been for me thou shouldst not have sought so long and so truly. For all find what they truly seek.

And what is the root that would cause believers in Jesus to actually become enemies of Jesus? It is believing lies about God's law—if one believes God's law is imposed then one necessarily concludes that justice is inflicting punishment upon rule breakers and this leads to all the penal legal distortions and lies and the hardening of hearts of people. It obstructs people from actually being reconciled to God in their hearts and minds and gives them a false hope in a legal adjustment while they remain controlled by fear and selfishness.

Consider this historic quote:

Any measure that is of such a nature as to **oppress the poor and afflicted**, bring neglect upon the widow and the orphan, is leading us away from the example given us in the life of Christ, and **misrepresenting the principles of God's law**. [What law is this? Is it a list of rules or the principle of love? And is love just an emotion or God's design for life? And what happens if we don't exercise love? What happens if we do? This is the law of exertion so not only are we helping others we are either growing in love or selfishness depending on how we treat others.] Representative men connected with the work and cause of God will bring a **heavy retribution** upon themselves if they mislead the people by their spirit and action, and misrepresent the principles of **the law of Jehovah**. [What does this mean? What law? The law of love, what kind of heavy retribution? An infliction, or the hardening of heart and the inevitable guilt and shame they will experience when they face infinite truth?] If they weave into the work that which springs from their own natural temperament, and mar the cause by disorders of their own natural disposition, **they will cause to appear in the work of God the attributes of the**



fallen foe and his confederate angels, rather than the attributes of Jesus Christ. [What are the attributes of Satan versus the attributes of Christ? Which is a greater act of love to give a fish to a hungry person to teach a person to fish? The idea being to give handouts to those capable of become independent and thereby, through disuse causing them to become less capable, not developing their abilities, losing confidence in themselves, and thus becoming more dependent on whomever is giving them the fish—is this love or is this a great deception of destruction hidden under the mantle of compassion?] The fashion of the work coming forth from every soul that is born of God has been clearly pictured before us. **He who is truly a child of God will experience the transforming power of grace upon mind and heart, and his character will develop after the divine similitude.** [What does this mean? Does this have anything to do with the law of God? Remember God's law is the law of love and is the design protocol for life, notice what comes next] The description of the work of Christ will be the description of the work of every one who is born of God, who walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The apostle says of such, "Ye are laborers together with God," **representing the holy law of God** to heaven, to worlds unfallen, and to the fallen world. **Representing the law of God** in its true character arouses the enmity of Satan. [What does it mean to represent the law of God? Would it mean to love like Jesus loves?] **Those who love God with all the heart, will love the law of his kingdom. They will not only profess to be guided by its principles, but they will actually live them out,** even in a world that is no more favorable to the development of Christian principles than were the inhabitants of the world before the flood, of whom it is written that the thoughts and imaginations of their hearts were evil, and only evil continually. **A similar condition of society exists in our world today, and if those who claim to be God's commandment-keeping people do not put in practice the principles of the law which Christ came to our world to vindicate, pronouncing it holy, just, and good, they misrepresent the character and mission of their professed Master. They mislead men in regard to the requirements of the law, and will be stumbling-blocks in the way of sinners.** The Lord of hosts has warned us that we shall **take heed not to misrepresent the law of his government by any unmerciful action on our part toward our fellow-men.** Neither are we to rob God in tithes and in offerings; for the remnant people of God are to be representatives to the world of the character of Christ. Not a thread of selfishness is to be woven into their practices. **The law of God is to be lived out. Thus in the character of God's people a living testimony will be borne that will contradict the fallacy of Satan, who has declared that the law of Jehovah is arbitrary, and holds its subjects under a cruel bondage.** RH August 13, 1895, par. 6

Wow—does this have application for us today? Do we see groups in our society today that either want us to deny God and His methods altogether, or they claim to believe in God but are willing to use human governments to advance their agenda and practice the same methods of the world?

SUNDAY



This takes us right back to Sunday, everyone worships something. This is the looking outside of oneself for a frame of orientation that gives life meaning, direction and purpose, whether the person realizes it or not.

Everyone does it, some may not worship God, but they worship—power, money, other people, idols, concepts, philosophies, nature.

Why does God say we are to have no other gods but Him?

They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves. Jeremiah 2:5

Romans 1 Paul describes how they didn't think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and preferred images made with their own hands and their minds became, depraved, darkened and futile!

It is a law that by beholding we are changed—this is the law of worship, we change biologically and characterologically based on what we admire and worship. As the highest created beings on planet earth there is nothing we can worship that advances us, anything on earth we worship degrades us. Thus, God wanting our highest development tells us to worship Him the infinite One! It is for our good, our development, not His need that God says to worship Him!

But can we do the same pagan false worship without images or idols? Here is one historic quote, do you agree?

Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshipping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? **God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love,** of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. **He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshipping the true God.** {FLB 59.8}

MONDAY

The lesson focuses on our responsibility to teach truth to our children, to teach of God's actions in the past, to teach our children to love, trust and praise God based on reality, on His attributes of character and the manifestations of His goodness in history and reality and then to repeat these lessons over and over in song and other forms of praise.

Why is this important?

- *repetitio est mater studiorum*—repetition is the mother of study/learning



It is the manifestation of the law of exertion, if you want something to get stronger you must exercise it. Thus, the more you do something the better you get at it. Your brain wires in neural pathways and things go from a piece of data one remembers to beliefs, filters, presets upon which one filters new information.

If we accept lies then those form false schemas, beliefs, perspectives that cause us to interpret the world around us in distorted ways.

Truth displaces lies and reshapes our minds and characters.

Why is it necessary to repeat?

- Because in this fallen world we are slow to learn
- Because there is a difference between learning facts and having them become part of our character
- Because there is a difference between learning facts and loving the person those facts inform us about
- Because there are many lies and distortions that seek to infect our minds
- Because we naturally bring up doubts, fears, selfishness and distortions and the seed of truth must be planted and constantly tended in order to bring forth fruit—analogy of a garden

TUESDAY

The lesson focuses our attention on Jesus encounter with the woman at the well and when the question of worship comes up Jesus tells her:

Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth. John 4:21-24

What does this mean?

The Greek word for spirit is *pneuma* and was translated to Latin as *spiritus* which literally means breath and was translated to English as spirit.

But the word actually has multiple meanings:



1. wind/air
2. breath/life energy/vital element/life spark
3. intelligent being/character/personality/attitude/attributes/emotions
4. mythical/superstitious entity that lives without physical body

And sometimes these different meanings occur in the very same passage:

John 3:8 "The wind (pneuma) blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit (pneuma)."

Sometimes this one Greek word means more than one thing in the same use:

Luke 8:55 "Her spirit (breath of life and her unique individuality) returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat." Meaning it wasn't just life that animated her body, but that HER spirit, i.e. her unique self returned when the breath of life returned.

Luke 23:46: Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

What did Jesus commit to the Father, just the breath of life, or His unique self?

Here is an historic view of what this means in this context:

"Our **personal identity** is preserved in the resurrection, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave. The wondrous works of God are a mystery to man. **The spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved.** In the resurrection **every man will have his own character.** God in His own time will call forth the dead, giving again the **breath of life**, and bidding the dry bones live. The same form will come forth, but it will be free from disease and every defect. It lives again bearing the same individuality of features, so that friend will recognize friend. There is no law of God in nature which shows that God gives back the same identical particles of matter which composed the body before death. God shall give the righteous dead a body that will please Him." {6BC 1093.2}

HEB 1:14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

LK 1:46,47 And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior..."

Then sometimes *pneuma* is mythological:



Luke 24:39 “Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost (pneuma) does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”

So, what does it mean that “God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

Wind? Breath of life? Ghostly vapor? Or intelligent, sentient being with individuality?

Let’s consider how we use the word spirit in English:

- When we say that team really has school spirit – what do we mean?
- When we say, a prisoner was tortured until his spirit was broken what do we mean?
- When we say someone is mean spirited what do we mean?
- When we say someone is a free spirit what do we mean?
- When we say someone is high spirited what do we mean?
- Though unable to join us today he is with us in spirit what do we mean?
- Though enemies they settled their differences with a kind spirit, what do we mean?
- The spirit of 1776 is not dead, what do we mean?
- He has the spirit of a rebel, what do we mean?
- How about he has an evil spirit?

Do any of these usages mean a demon or other intelligent entity is involved?

What is a spirit being? Any being that has intelligence, willfulness, personality, character, individuality.

Evil spirits are intelligent beings who are evil, who practice Satan’s methods and reject God’s.

What type of beings can be an evil spirit? Angels, who when fallen are demons.

What about humans, can they be evil spirits? Can a human being have their own evil spirit separate and distinct from a demon? If Satan and all demons were wiped out right now, could humans still have evil spirits—evil minds, hearts, attitudes and characters, selves?

Consider this quote from *The Desire of Ages*:

Judas had naturally a strong love for money; but he had not always been corrupt enough to do such a deed as this. He had fostered **the evil spirit of avarice** until it had become the ruling motive of his life. DA 716

So we have as synonyms demons and fallen angels which can also be referred to as evil spirits. But a rebellious human who is warring against God could also be called an evil spirit or it could be said he has an evil spirit.

So, what does it mean God is spirit and wants worshippers who worship Him in spirit and truth?



God is intelligent, with individuality (not a force of nature), who is rational, reasonable, purposeful and who operates upon love and is the source of all truth.

God wants worshippers who are intelligent, who exercise their individuality to love truth and grow in truth, thus they operate in harmony with God's design law and are purposeful in pursuing God and God's kingdom. They actually know and appreciate Him for who He is—these are the worshippers God seeks. Not the superstitious dark-minded worshippers who worship a false version of God that keeps them from growing and developing.

How can you tell whether your worship is of the true God, versus a false god or false spirit?

Here is the contrast:

- The Spirit of God is love; evil spirits are selfish
- The Spirit of God is truth; evil spirits lie
- The Spirit of God gives freedom; evil spirits coerce and enslave
- The Spirit of God is heals; evil spirits destroy
- The Spirit of God is giving; evil spirits take
- The Spirit of God removes fear; evil spirits incite fear
- The Spirit of God brings stability; evil spirits cause instability
- The Spirit of God is patient; evil spirits are impulsive
- The Spirit of God is kind; evil spirits are cruel
- The Spirit of God forgives; evil spirits are resentful, keep score, and require appeasement
- The Spirit of God sacrifices self for others; evil spirits sacrifices others for self

THURSDAY

Read fourth paragraph, "Many are the great intellectual ideas..."

The lesson asks, "What are some of the current popular beliefs that clash with Scripture...?"

- Godless origins
- We can save the earth through environmental initiatives
- Survival of the fittest is adaptive and helpful to advance the species
- Humans are less valuable than animals or the planet
- Equality means everyone deserves equal everything—but some aspect of outcomes, or equality is not about equal moral worth, but equal ability thus we demand all people be given equal roles

FRIDAY

Read and discuss first paragraph, "The heart is deceitful..."



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A special resource, recently made available by [Pineknoll](http://Pineknoll.org), is their new book, *Conversations about God* by Graham Maxwell, with Louis Venden and edited by Jon Paulien.

In 1984, Graham Maxwell conducted a lecture series at the Loma Linda University Church entitled, *Conversations about God*. After each presentation he would have a Q&A period with Louis Venden. These were all recorded, and recently Pineknoll has transcribed and edited these presentations and discussions and produced a beautiful book and are giving these away at no cost.

If you watch online, please go to **Pineknoll.org** and request your free copy and they will ship it to you at no cost, **anywhere in the world!**

If you are in **Australia** be sure to check out the Come and Reason Australia Facebook page where there is unique content and local events.



Stewardship Motives of the Heart Lesson 1 1Q 2018

The Influence of Materialism presented Dr. Tim Jennings

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

Jerusalem, Christians and End-Time Methods
Suicide and the Myth of Lost Salvation
What is Biblical Justice?
Is God Punishing the World with Natural Disasters?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Correction/Clarification:

From an online listener we received the following email:

In the discussion of lesson 11 [4th Q 2017] it was stated that the reason for the existence of Black Conferences in the North American Division dates back to 1863 when the Church was organized in a social environment that prohibited Blacks and Whites worshipping together or a Black pastor preaching to Whites. However it was not until 1945 (82 years later) that Black Conferences were organized. The reason was not racial prejudice and segregation in society, but in the SDA Church itself. The first Black pastor ordained in the Church was Charles M. Kinny in 1889. At the ceremony many Whites left the auditorium in disgust to protest the ordination of a Black man.

First thank you for this clarification—I didn't do my research on history and made the assumption the conference setup happened at the time of the church organization. I am very appreciative of this information because I always want to update my understanding with the



most accurate evidence.

So, it wasn't until 1945 that the separate conferences, based on race, were founded—why? Even though we had the dates of when this happened wrong, are we wrong about the reasons?

What were race relations like in America in the 1940's? Would it have advanced the gospel or caused more tension to try and integrate the churches in the southern states during the 40's, 50's and 60's?

So, we still conclude this was an adaptation by the church, based on the heart attitudes of people in society, not because the Bible promotes segregation by race.

SABBATH

What do you think of the Study Guide title and subtitle?

Very insightful—do you usually think of Stewardship as a heart issue?

It is really about integrity, honesty, fidelity, reliability, trustworthiness—isn't that what stewardship is about?

If you were looking for a steward for your properties, or perhaps your children, what would be the qualities or qualifications you would look for?

What do you think God is looking for in His stewards?

What prevents people from being good stewards?

- Could it be failure to recognize they are stewards?
- Do you think differently if you are managing your car, money, resources, than when you are managing your employers? What is the difference?
- Are there things you will spend your money on that you won't spend your employers on?
- Are there things you will spend your employers money on that you won't spend your money on?
- What does this reveal? That you are aware of different values, goals, plans between you and your employer.
- Should we have mindsets that think about God—His values, plans and goals?
- What should we think of as being ours and being God's?
- To what are we to be a steward of in God's cause?
 - Money?
 - Property?
 - Talents?



- Time?
- Energy?
- Ourselves?

Can you think of any parables of Jesus that relate to Stewardship? The parable of the talents—why do you think the one who invested their talents received more while the one who buried his talent had it taken away?

Was this imposed rules or design law at work?

What happens if you have a natural talent for art, or music, or math, or languages, or whatever, and you apply yourself, practicing, educating, challenging and using your ability—what happens? Do you expand and strengthen your ability? Do new abilities you previously didn't have occur?

What if you don't use it? You lose it—what kind of law is this? Design law, the law of exertion.

If we are to be good stewards must we apply ourselves to develop the abilities, talents, and gifts God has given us?

And for what purpose, why do we develop these abilities, to do what with them?

To fulfill God's purposes, which is what? Love for God and others, which is also healing, restoring, saving, benefiting, to not only those who we are loving, but to those who are doing living in love.

Here is an historic quote from a work called *The Southern Worker*:

The World's Redeemer clearly defines what our duty is. To the lawyer who asked Him how he should obtain eternal life, He said: "What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?" Then Jesus related the parable of the good Samaritan, and clearly showed that he is our neighbor who most needs our charity and help. We are to practice the commandments of God, and stand true to the relation which God has designed shall exist between man and his fellow man. It was never God's purpose that society should be separated into classes, that there should be an alienation between the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the learned and the unlearned. But the practice of separating society into distinct circles is becoming more and more decided. **God designed that those to whom He entrusted talents of means, ability, and gifts of grace, should be good stewards of His beneficence, and not seek to reap all the advantages for themselves.** God does not estimate man by the amount of wealth, talent, or education that he may have. **He values man in proportion as he becomes a good steward of His mercy and love.** {SW 37.1}



Have you considered mercy and love a commodity over which you are to be a steward?

1John 4:19: “We love because he first loved us.” It is His love that we first receive, are renewed by and it is this love we share.

Why is it important to share the love of God we receive?

The law of love, or giving, the more you give the more you will receive. Why?

Consider the garden hose on your house and the fire hydrant on the street, if you turn both on full, which gives away more water? Which receives more water to it?

What if you turn off the taps in your home and don’t let any water run for a year, would you drink the water in the taps when you first turn them on? Why not? It is likely stagnant!

We are not the source of pure love—God is. We are to receive that love and let it flow through us to other, in so doing our capacity for love increases and we become more and more like Christ. However, if we try to hoard love, if we refuse to open our hearts to love others, then no matter how pure the love we received into our hearts was, our hearts will stagnate with selfishness.

This is design law—we must love others in order to grow in love.

So as we explore this quarter’s lessons let’s keep in mind that as God’s stewards we are to develop our abilities for the purpose of love, of being God’s agents, witnesses, hands on earth.

But we can only fulfill God’s purposes effectively and successfully if 1) we actually know God and 2) we daily surrender to Him and are empowered by His Spirit.

The title for this week’s lesson is Materialism—the lesson states in the first paragraph, “but the lure of materialism, the inordinate desire for wealth and for what we think wealth can bring, is powerful.”

So let’s start with this definition of Materialism—which is basically greed, the love of stuff, money, property, houses, cars, and the pursuit of what money can provide.

Is money evil?

Is the love of money evil? Why? What is the root to the love of money? Fear and selfishness—if one loves money they love it because of what they perceive it does for them—makes them feel valuable, worthwhile, powerful, secure, fulfilled, achieved, enabled. In other words, the love of money is all about promoting the survival and protection of self.

Does this mean then, that one has to be penniless to be saved?



Does one have to be, not penniless, but not wealthy to be saved? No! Abraham, Job, Joseph of Arimathea, Solomon, David, wealthy—and saved.

Why did Jesus tell the rich young ruler that in order for him to be saved he had to sell all he had and give it to the poor?

From where did the rich young ruler derive his spiritual security, his sense of being righteous, his spiritual strength? From his wealth, which made him feel like he, in himself, was good as he was. Is there a problem in deriving spiritual security from wealth? What?

If you need wealth to ensure you are right with God, what will that motive cause you to do with your wealth? Increase the likelihood of sharing and giving, or hoarding? So, love of wealth, including the love of wealth because you believe that means you are right with God, doesn't result in an actual change of heart. He leads to the same place the rich young ruler lived, wealthy, but still not at peace—because he was still dominated by fear and selfishness as his heart had not been changed.

Is there an OT story that sheds light on this?

Have you ever wondered why David was instructed not to take a census of Israel?

If you were the ruler of a nation that had a military, wouldn't it be sensible to know the size of your nation, for many reasons, to know:

- the number of people to call upon in times of war
- how many boots and uniforms to order
- how much food to prepare
- how much money to budget for salaries
- how many horses to house for the chariots
- how many spears and swords and sheaths to order

Wouldn't a good steward need to know these things in order to use the resources of the nation wisely and not waste resources?

Then why was David instructed not to take a census?

From where did Israel's strength come? Was it from self, from their own might, their own power? What would counting up the military do? 50,000 bowman, 100,000 spearmen, 40,000 chariots, etc.?

Would it tempt David, and the people, to rely on self and not on God, to be filled with pride?

We don't have personal armies today we have savings accounts, stock portfolios, mutual funds, properties—could we be tempted to put our futures and our securities into wealth instead of God?



Why did 70,000 die?

Who was their strength? Who held back the waters at the Red Sea? Why did the Egyptians die in the Red Sea? Because God let go what He restrained.

Why did many in Israel die of serpent bites in the desert? Where did the snakes come from? Where were they before that? So God was holding back the serpents that naturally live in the environment, like He did the waters of the Red Sea. Then what happened that God stopped holding back? They rebelled and chose to go their own way.

From where did Israel's success and strength come? From God, but what was the pursuit of the census about motivationally? About self-reliance and pride. So, God gave David a choice:

- 3 years of famine—the Lord turns the weather over to them—they can't bring rain
- 3 months of being destroyed by enemies—the Lord turns their safety over to them—they can't stop their enemies
- 3 days of the sword of the Lord, pestilence in the land—the Lord turns their health over to them, they can't stop diseases

This was not the infliction of some judicial punishment, but a powerful therapeutic intervention, to remind them that disconnected from God and breaking His designs there is only death.

Did this intervention work? Did they, after that, stop relying on self and afterward only rely on God? What does this reveal? Can God get what He wants, trust and love, by using power and force?

Then why did He do it?

Why do parents discipline children who are unruly? But does there come a time when the parent has to let the child go their own way?

What would have happened to the entire nation if God didn't intervene in this way? Even with the interventions from God, here, at Sinai, at Carmel, with Elisha, the 70 year captivity—even with all these interventions to teach them their strength came only in reliance upon, trust in, and obedience to God—what happened? 10 tribes were gone by the time Jesus came—only two tribes remained. Do you think God intervened and disciplined too much?

The last paragraph states, "But money is one mask that Satan hides behind in order to secure our allegiance."

Does Satan hide behind other masks? What?

- power
- false science
- people



- religion
- proclamations of seeking to do good
- the dead/departed
- miraculous signs and wonders

How good are you at recognizing where Satan is moving versus where God is moving? Are you confident you can discern, see, identify Satan's activities and not get caught up in them?

In preparation for today's lesson, I came across this in a book entitled *Christian Education*:

There are two classes of educators in the world. **One class are those whom God makes channels of light, and the other class are those whom Satan uses as his agents**, who are wise to do evil. **One class contemplates the character of God, and increases in the knowledge of Jesus, whom God hath sent into the world.** This class becomes wholly given up to those things which bring heavenly enlightenment, heavenly wisdom, to the uplifting of the soul. Every capability of their nature is submitted to God, and their thoughts are brought into captivity to Christ. **[This is the type of teacher I desire to be]** The other class is in league with the prince of darkness, who is ever on the alert that he may find an opportunity to teach others the knowledge of evil. If place is made for him, he will not be slow to press his way into heart and mind... {CE 70.2}

It is true that in the writings of pagans and infidels there are found thoughts of an elevated character, which are attractive to the mind. But there is a reason for this. Was not Satan the light-bearer, the sharer of God's glory in heaven, and next to Jesus in power and majesty?... {CE 72.1}

Everything in nature comes from God; yet Satan can inspire his agents with thoughts that appear elevating and noble. Did he not come to Christ with quotations of Scripture when he designed to overthrow him with his specious temptations? **This is the way in which he comes to man, as an angel of light disguising his temptations under an appearance of goodness, and making men believe him to be the friend rather than the enemy of humanity.** It is in this way that he has deceived and seduced the race,—beguiling them with **subtle temptations, bewildering them with specious deceptions.** **[What do you think this author describes as the subtle temptation, the specious deceptions of Satan?]** {CE 73.1}

Satan has ascribed to God all the evils to which flesh is heir. He has represented him as a God who delights in the sufferings of his creatures, who is revengeful and implacable. **[Which in Christian doctrine would be what? The evils of human flesh—how sinners operate, imposed rules, with imposed punishments, to inflict suffering, to pay for sins and without mercy—in other words the penal substitutionary theory of atonement]** **It was Satan who originated the doctrine of eternal torment as a punishment for sin, because in this way he could lead men into infidelity and rebellion, distract souls, and dethrone the human**



reason. {CE 73.2} [How does the doctrine of eternal torment dethrone human reason? –God is love, love can only exist in an atmosphere of freedom, it cannot be coerced—yet God will torment people in hell for all eternity. Further, how is it fair, for a person to be born in sin, who never had the opportunity to know Christ, maybe died violently at 15 from a warring tribe, to be sent to torment for all eternity? Such a teaching causes people to say things like, “Well God’s ways are not may ways, I just take that on faith.” Which means they don’t think about it, i.e. have shut down reason. When we believe things that are contradictory and refuse to pursue truth we damage the faculty of reason!—the doctrine of eternal torment does this.]

Heaven, looking down, and seeing the delusions into which men were led, **knew that a divine Instructor must come to earth.** Men in ignorance and moral darkness must have light, spiritual light; for the world knew not God, and he must be revealed to their understanding. **Truth looked down from heaven and saw not the reflection of her image; for dense clouds of moral darkness and gloom enveloped the world, and the Lord Jesus alone was able to roll back the clouds; for he was the light of the world.** By his presence he could dissipate the gloomy shadow that Satan had cast between man and God. Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. **Through the accumulated misrepresentations of the enemy, many were so deceived that they worshiped a false god, clothed with the attributes of the satanic character.** {CE 73.3} [Do we find this same problem today? Yes, and what is the final message to go to the world to prepare the world for Christ’s return? The truth about God’s character of love. What obstructs that message? The subtle lies of Satan in regard to God’s law, such that people teach God functions like Satan, imposes rules and then punishes people for breaking those rules. We are called to take a message to the world to worship the Designer, Him who made the heavens, earth, sea and come back into harmony with Him!]

The Teacher from heaven, no less a personage than the Son of God, came to earth to reveal the character of the Father to men, that they might worship him in spirit and in truth. **Christ revealed to men the fact that the strictest adherence to ceremony and form would not save them; for the kingdom of God was spiritual in its nature.** Christ came to the world to sow it **with truth...** [Where is the field into which truth is sewn? So what did Christ come to do? Change the hearts, minds, characters of humans, displace the lies and methods of Satan and restore the truth and methods of God into the hearts/minds of human beings] **He presented to men that which was exactly contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to the character of God,** and sought to impress upon men the paternal love of the Father, who "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." [John 3:16.] {CE 74.1}

Christ declares the mission he had in coming to the earth. He says in his last public prayer, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I **have declared unto them thy name,** and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." [John 17:25, 26.] When Moses asked the Lord to show him his glory, the Lord said, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee." [Exodus 33:19.] "And the Lord passed by before him, and



proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty. . . . And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped." [Exodus 34:6-8.] **When we are able to comprehend the character of God as did Moses, we too shall make haste to bow in adoration and praise.** Jesus contemplated nothing less than "that the love wherewith Thou hast love me" [John 17:26.] should be in the hearts of his children, that they might impart the knowledge of God to others. {CE 75.1}

O what an assurance is this, **that the love of God may abide in the hearts of all who believe in him!** O what salvation is provided; for he is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him. In wonder we exclaim, **How can these things be? But Jesus will be satisfied with nothing less than this.** Those who are partakers of his sufferings here, of his humiliation, enduring for his name's sake, **are to have the love of God bestowed upon them as it was upon the Son. One who knows, has said, "The Father himself loveth you."** [John 16:27.] One who has had an experimental knowledge of the length, and breadth, and height, and depth of that love, has declared unto us this amazing fact. This love is ours through faith in the Son of God, therefore a connection with Christ means everything to us. **We are to be one with him as he is one with the Father,** and then we are beloved by the infinite God as members of the body of Christ, as branches of the living Vine. We are to be attached to the parent stock, and to receive nourishment from the Vine. **Christ is our glorified Head, and the divine love flowing from the heart of God, rests in Christ, and is communicated to those who have been united to him. This divine love entering the soul inspires it with gratitude, frees it from its spiritual feebleness, from pride, vanity, and selfishness, and from all that would deform the Christian character.** {CE 75.2} Review and Herald, Nov. 17, 1891.

Do you agree with this?

Are we being good stewards of the truth and love God has bestowed upon us?

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read 1John 2:16,17:

For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. NKJV

What does this mean?

What is the root motive or principle in the world? Selfishness, which is motivated primarily by what? Fear...where did this fear and selfishness come from?



How did fear and selfishness get into humanity?

Have you struggled with fear and selfishness? Did you choose to have these motivations and feelings?

Adam and Eve were created in God's image with the ability to have children in their image. They were created with the ability to choose and change themselves based on their choices, thus when they chose to break trust they changed themselves and infected themselves with fear and selfishness, and all of us are born with biology infected in this way.

1 John is telling us that this infection has three primary avenues, sensualism, materialism and egotism. This means some people are born genetically more vulnerable to temptations of the senses, addictions, sexual temptations, others more toward arrogance, pride, ego, and others more toward greed, wealth, accumulation of stuff—but all three have at their root, selfishness.

Why will the methods of the world pass away?

Because they are out of harmony with how life is built to operate and cannot continue to exist—it would be like saying the grass that is not watered will wither and die.

Do not fret because of evil men
or be envious of those who do wrong;
² for like the grass they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away. Ps 37:1,2

Read last paragraph, “When Christ came to the...” Why were systems of religion losing their hold on people's minds?

Because they taught fable and falsehood—what about today? Are religions losing hold on people's minds? Why? Because they teach fable and falsehoods—any examples?

- God's kingdom is like human kingdoms
- God's justice looks like human justice
- God's law functions like human law
- Salvation is a legal process
- Jesus died to pay a legal penalty
- God will use His power to inflict suffering and death upon the unrepentant
- God will torture people in hell for eternity
- Sin doesn't harm people God does for sin
- The Bible must be read literally
- One must be baptized in certain water, in certain places, with certain words, by certain people with certain certificates of authority, in a certain way in order to be saved
- others?



What do such beliefs result in? In the belief in a god who cannot be trusted, a theology of arbitrariness that contradicts laws of nature and real life experiences, and thus causes people to reject religion and God.

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read DT 8:10-14:

When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. ¹¹ Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. ¹² Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. NIV

What is the message?

Is there any application to us today? What is the application to us today?

Israel was composed of real people, who had real histories, but they also acted out the plan of salvation.

- They were slaves in Egypt
 - We are slaves to sin
- Moses was born amongst them and the sinful ruler sought to kill him as a child
 - Jesus was born amongst us and the sinful ruler sought to kill him as a child
- Moses conversed with God directly and then went forth to confront the sinful power that enslaved the people
 - Jesus conversed with God directly and then went forth to confront the sinful power that enslaves humanity in sin
- Moses led the people through the waters of the red sea to a new life of freedom from the powers that enslaved
 - Jesus leads us through the waters of baptism to a new life of freedom from fear and selfishness which enslaves us
- The people were blessed with material possessions, houses, wealth as they followed God's instructions
 - We are blessed with spiritual possessions the wealth of wisdom, peace, joy, love, maturity, discernment, self-control as we trust God and apply His methods to our lives.
- They were warned if they forgot God's instructions they would lose their blessings and even be enslaved again—Babylonian captivity
 - We are warned if we forget to trust God and stop living in harmony with His design



protocols for life then we will lose our blessings and become enslaved to fear and selfishness all over again

So, if we move away from trusting God, to trusting in stuff, money, possessions, what happens to our hearts and characters? Do we have less fear or more?

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read Mt 6:22-24:

“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light.
²³ But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! NIV

What does this mean?

Is it talking about the physical eyes? No, it is talking about the spiritual eye, the conscience, the honest heart seeking to be enlightened by the truth, even if the truth is unpleasant at first.

What would it mean if the eyes are bad? It would mean a seared conscience and a heart that doesn't want to see the truth, so will warp the evidence to avoid what it truly means.

When we do wrong our consciences convict of guilt, guilt is unpleasant so people want it to go away. There are only two ways to resolve guilt—God's way, which is repentances (real heart motive change) and restoration when possible.

But one can also avoid guilt by denial and distortion, self-deception.

Have you heard “he's bending or twisting the truth?” Truth cannot be bent or twisted, people can only bend their minds around the truth, but when they do they damage their ability to understand and perceive truth, thus their minds become darkened.

So, this passage from *The Remedy*:

²² "Your eyes are windows into your mind. If your eyes are open wide and you are honest with the evidence, your mind will be filled with light and truth.²³ But if you view things through jaded eyes, tainted with selfishness, then you will distort the evidence and your mind will be darkened; then, even the light that enters will be warped into greater self-deception, and the darkness will be great!

The lesson also talks about the methods of modern marketing to use sensualism, sexuality to promote



materialism. Any thoughts about this practice?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “God said....” What does it tell you that Lucifer said “I will be like the Most High” and then did what He did?

That he deceived himself in regard to God’s true character—if he really wanted to be like God what would he have done? He would have humbled himself for the benefit of others, not sought to promote himself—remember Philippians 2.

Read last paragraph, “Paul instructs Timothy...” Lovers of money is one manifestation of selfishness—are there others that are less noticeable?

What about those who love to be most modestly dressed—never wear make up, never use products on their hair—because they pride themselves in their modesty, would never wear jewelry and look down upon those who do.

What about those who are like this:

The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ Luke 18:11,12

He’s giving his tithe, he’s not in love with money—is this guy righteous?

Why not?

Can self be the center in ways that are Christian accepted?

What is the most destructive forms of evil—the Satanist cult worshipper, or the Christian who professes Christ, but remains selfish in heart?

The book *People of the Lie* by M. Scott Peck, examines the question of human evil and exposes the evil that masquerades as righteousness among us.

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, “Materialism is a form...” This is insightful—many people don’t realize how their self, their sense of self, gets caught up in what they possess.



The Bible states to guard the heart, why?

What is circumcision of the heart?

What are the affections?

Are material things the only thing that people tie their sense of self to in unhealthy ways?

What else?

- people—codependency
- jobs/careers/position
- nationality
- membership in groups like church organization
- lifestyle—vegetarian
- sickness—“I’m bipolar” rather than “I have bipolar disorder”

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions



Stewardship Motives of the Heart Lesson 2 1Q 2018

I See, I Want, I Take presented by Dr. Tim Jennings

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

Jerusalem, Christians and End-Time Methods
Suicide and the Myth of Lost Salvation
What is Biblical Justice?
Is God Punishing the World with Natural Disasters?

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

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

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

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

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

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

SUNDAY

Read first and fourth paragraphs, "A popular television..." What level moral development is this? This is level two, the marketplace exchange; let's make a deal with God. If we do this, then God does that.

Why is this not the right way to think? What is the problem with this type of thinking?

First—what is the motive? It is self-centered, all about what self can get for their good deed.

Second—what happens in the heart and mind when people give, but don't get back what they were expecting? Doubt, anger, further distortions about God.

But, in light of Bible promises isn't this the right way to think? Aren't we supposed to believe the Bible when it says:



Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. ¹¹ I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,” says the Lord Almighty. ¹² “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the Lord Almighty. Mal 3:10-12

Doesn't this say explicitly that if we pay our tithe God will give us more blessings? So what is wrong with believing the prosperity gospel?

The bottom green section asks “What examples can you find of those who are faithful to God but are not rich in the worldly possessions, and those who are not faithful to God but who are rich in worldly possessions?”

- Jesus—was He rich in worldly possessions?
- The Apostles?
- Job was rich but lost it all and then got more back, was job right with God only when wealthy and healthy?
- King Herod—wealthy, but unrighteous
- Caesar—wealthy but unrighteous

Is there a contradiction in the Bible between the passage in Malachi and the examples of some righteous people being poor and some unrighteous people being rich?

How do you harmonize these two ideas?

- What kind of law does God's kingdom operate upon? Design law,
- What is the primary principle or design protocol in God's government? Love
- How does love function—by giving
- And the more you give the more you will receive—why?
- Because it is how life is built to operate in God's design

Thus Malachi is describing God's design, God's intention, when we operate upon love. So, is it true that if you give in love you receive a great blessing of love in return, from God always, but from others often? Sometimes we might also get material returns on giving, but the promise isn't primarily material blessing.

But how does sin operate in the world? It is selfish—it seeks to take. And what do the selfish (unrighteous) generally do to the unselfish (righteous)? Abuse and mistreat them.

Is the world currently operating only upon God's principles, or is there an antagonistic principle fighting against God's design?

So, do we see righteous suffer in this world? Is it because God or God's law fails, or because an



enemy is at work?

What is it the enemy wants to achieve? Does he not want to undermine trust in God and get people to accept his evil methods instead of God's?

How do we conceive of the Malachi passage if we think through imposed law lenses? We think of level two, rules, deals, we do something and then God uses His power to make the reward happen.

What happens in the minds of people if they think this way when they see the righteous suffer? Do they have more trust in God or less?

So, again we see how Satan attacks God and His character by infecting our minds with imposed law constructs.

What about the sovereignty of God? Isn't He sovereign? This leads to the classic questions:

- If God is all-powerful and all good then why is there suffering and evil?
- A God that allows suffering to continue is either:
 - a) not all-powerful and is thus unable to prevent the suffering;
 - b) not loving because this God has the power to prevent suffering but is unwilling to do so; and/or
 - c) not all-knowing and only becomes aware of the suffering after it has already occurred and it's too late to prevent it.

What answers do you give to such questions?

Is God sovereign? Is God good or a mixture of good and evil? Is God all-powerful and all knowing? Then why does suffering happen?

Because of how God's law, design protocols, actually functions.

The difficulty most have had in answering these questions is that they almost always answer from the perspective that God's law functions like human law, imposed rules. Thus, it is a simple matter that if God is good then God should use His power to impose His will to make all things good. When God doesn't, then for many they conclude either there isn't a God, or He isn't good.

Others go the direction of shutting down thinking and believing and practicing the methods of the beast—God's ways aren't my ways I just accept that God was loving by....

The problem is the false premise regarding God's law. When we realize how love actually functions—love cannot be coerced, commanded, programmed like a computer; that love requires genuine freedom of the sentient being; that love must be freely given. Then we understand God is always sovereign, but administers His sovereignty through, and in harmony with, His character of love and His design laws



of love and freedom.

One other point on the idea that the more you give the more you receive. Only within the operational context of God's design laws. And one of those laws is the law of rest-oration.

This law states that for finite beings after expending a resource the individual must rest in harmony with God and God's design in order to receive more of the resource to expend.

If you give energy in helping others, you must rest and rejuvenate lest you burn out. Even Jesus, when living on earth, took time away from the needy masses to rest and recover.

One of Satan's tricks if he can't get people to simply rebel against God and live selfishly, is to get the good hearted people to never say no, never take time for healthy rest, recreation, recovery and thus burn themselves out into exhaustion.

Finite beings must first receive life, love, truth, energy, from God before it can be shared, and then as one shares one becomes fatigued and needs to rest in their relationship with God and recover and in so doing gradually becomes stronger with greater capacity and endurance, but always still with finite limits.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "We don't need..." What is "not seen" that you look upon?

- God—how and where do you look to see God?
 - Nature Rom 1:20—what do you see in nature? What law at work? Do you see God's design? Do you see an antagonistic force?
 - The Bible
 - Do some read the very same Bible but find a different god than you find?
 - People—can we see God in people? How? In the change that comes when someone accepts Jesus—they go from untrustworthy, fear-based, to other-centered reliable people who are kind, patient, merciful, compassionate, forgiving, honest. When we see such change do we see God?
- Jesus—how and where to you look upon Jesus?
 - The Bible?
 - What about in acts of selflessness in the world today—do we see Jesus there?
 - Can a person accomplish genuine acts of selfless love without Jesus? Or, are all acts of genuine selfless love evidence of Jesus working through the Holy Spirit in the person—even if the person doesn't claim to be a follower of Jesus?
 - Other Christian writings, talks?
 - Music—can we see God and Jesus in music?
 - Art—can we see God and music in art?



- The promised future without sin—where do you look to see this?
 - The Bible?
 - What does the promised future look like?
 - Does it inspire us toward better living now?

What do you think of Helen Keller's statement: "The most pathetic person in the world is someone who has sight, but has no vision."

What does it mean?

Jesus said in Mt 13:13-17:

"The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. ¹² Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. ¹³ [Was Jesus making an arbitrary decision, I have decided that I will give more to those who have the most and take away from those the little they do have? Or is Jesus stating a design law—the law of both worship and exertion?] This is why I speak to them in parables:

"Though seeing, they do not see;
though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

¹⁴ In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

" 'You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.
¹⁵ For this people's heart has become calloused;
they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.
Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts
and turn, and I would heal them.'

¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. ¹⁷ For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

What does this mean?

What type of law is Jesus describing here?

Is God restrictive with whom He shares truth? In other words, does God select some to receive truth and others not?



What was the parable associated with Jesus words above? The parable of the sower—and

- What does the soil represent? The hearts of people
- What does the seed represent—the truth
- Was the sower restrictive with where the seeds of truth were cast?
- Why did the seed grow in some hearts but not others?
- What made the difference? The quality of the soil, which means? The nature of hearts and minds. Some people don't want the truth, resisted it, reject it, didn't value it, didn't want to understand it and thus though seeing they do not see.

My wife gave me a T-shirt once that read:

“I can explain it to you: I can't understand it for you.”

People have to actually want truth in order for the truth to be understood, embraced, and applied.

Why would people not want truth? Because it would:

- Overturn some cherished idea or belief they currently value, which would result in something initially experienced as unpleasant:
 - loss of pride or ego if they were on public record and had to recant or retract a position
 - loss of relationship if they had to break off an engagement
 - loss of income if they had to quit a job
 - loss of power if they had to resign a position
 - loss of perceived security if they had to surrender a false belief
 - change in diet or lifestyle (quit smoking, give up marijuana, stop drinking sodas, start exercising, change sleep patterns)

The lesson states, “Blurred spiritual eyesight puts eternal salvation in jeopardy.” Any texts come to mind?

Christ speaking to the church at Laodicea states:

I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. ¹⁸ I counsel you to **buy from me gold** refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and **salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.** Rev 3:15-18

What does this mean?

What does it mean to be lukewarm?



What causes lukewarmness? Is it not a mixture of hot and cold?

So, these people appear or proclaim to be on fire for the Lord, yet their hearts have not been renewed and remain cold with selfishness. They think they are pure and righteous and need nothing, but they are pitiful. This sounds a lot like the penal legal theologies to me, and by their own words they claim that justification is when we are declared to be righteous, even though we are not.

But the Bible says we are to buy from Christ the gold refined in the fire, the white clothes and the eye salve. Does it say we are to buy a declaration?

How do we buy from Christ? Isn't salvation and the righteousness of Christ a free gift?

Yes it is; then how do we buy it? Not by money, not by work, but by barter, by trade. We trade our sinfulness for His righteousness, our terminal condition for His perfection, our death for His life, our blindness for His discernment.

- We cannot receive the righteousness of Christ as long as we hold to our selfishness.
- We cannot receive spiritual eyesight as long as we stay focused on self and refuse truth
- We cannot experience life as long as we cling to the law of sin and death—i.e. the survival of the fittest, me first, way of living.

We buy these things from Christ by surrendering in trust to Him acknowledging that we have no righteousness and we exchange our corruption for His purity. thoughts?

TUESDAY

The title of the lesson for Tuesday is The Steps of Covetousness. Is coveting bad?

1Corinthians 12:31 in multiple versions reads: "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way."

Is coveting a bad thing, or does it depend on what one covets and the motive for the coveting—in other words if the motive is selfish, coveting what another has it is sinful. But if the motive is godly, coveting gifts from God in order to fulfill God's purpose of revealing Him and helping others then righteous?

Covet means to have a strong desire for something—so the commandment is stating that when you have a strong desire to possess something that is not yours, or not within God's design to be yours, this is diagnostic of selfishness in the heart.

Thus it is healthy to covet, or desire, anything that you don't currently possess that God has designed to be yours—like a new heart and right spirit, a spirit of confidence and peace, a mind of wisdom and



discernment, a deeper love relationship with Jesus, eternal life etc. But it is sinful (because it reveals selfishness in the heart) to covet or desire anything that is not within God's design to be yours—like anyone else's position, abilities, possessions—like the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Frist paragraph at the top states, "Like all sins, covetousness begins in the heart."

Now, I believe the authors were rightly trying to point out that all sin starts in the heart and then results in actions. Quite correct and very important to realize this, because realizing this we understand that sin is not a legal problem, and therefore legal solutions won't work. Sin is a heart condition problem and only God's plan to heal the hearts of people can resolve the sin problem.

So I really appreciate the authors pointing this out. But, I would have worded it differently because to me "Like all sins, covetousness begins in the heart" sounded silly because covetousness doesn't merely begin in the heart, it begins, lives and ends in the heart. In other words, covetousness is only a heart issue—which if unchecked leads to other sinful/selfish actions or behaviors.

This is the commandment that really helped the Apostle Paul, who wrote: "I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." Rom 7:7

Why?

Because all the other 9 commandments have behavioral aspects to them. But the 10th, is the one which happens only in the heart, not just begins in the heart.

The lesson asks what did Satan do to lure Eve into sin?

Read third paragraph, "If one didn't know better..." Why did Eve take the fruit, was it primarily covetousness or something else?

"Eve believed the words of Satan, and the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors..." E.G. White, Review & Herald 1/9/1886

According to this author, what was the issue? Did the temptation start with the fruit? Or did the temptation start with an attack on God's trustworthiness? And broken love and trust resulted in what? Covetousness, or insecurity and fear, which results in selfishness, seeking to protect or advance oneself.

And in this context, having believed the lies of the serpent, having lost trust in God, having experienced fear, and having the fruit available which she now believed would make her like God, what would be the action? She took the fruit. Was this primarily covetousness? I don't think so. I think this was believing lies, which broke trust and incited fear and this was an act of self-protection,



survival, self-advancement.

The taking of the fruit was merely the acting out of broken love and trust because Eve believed lies about God.

So, I would not state this as “*I see, I want, I take.*” I would state this as, “*I fear, I need, I take.*”

What is the difference between wanting something and needing something?

When we want something, but don’t need it, we retain discernment and the ability to walk away and say no. When we move from want to need, “I need it to feel whole, to be happy, to feel okay, to be liked etc. etc.” then we can’t let go, can’t walk away and seek to take at all costs. We begin to covet and become jealous.

The problem is the distrust in God to provide all anyone needs to be healthy, happy, and whole. And because there is not trust in God then the fear and insecurity take over in the heart and we allow ourselves to feel and believe that something other than Jesus will make us whole. Thus people think they “must have” some thing and will begin to fantasize about it, imagine it and covet it, ultimately plotting to exploit others to get it. They will even come to see other people who have what they think they must have as an enemy who is preventing them from realizing their full potential. An example is given in the lesson of King Ahab and Naboth’s field.

WEDNESDAY

First two sentences say, “For us as fallen beings, greed can be as easy as breathing. And just as natural.”

I think I know what they mean, that our carnal natures are selfish and that without the regenerating power of the Spirit we automatically seek for self and become greedy.

This is very true, selfishness, greed, is natural to the sinful heart. However, how is it NOT like breathing?

Breathing requires, with every breath, the giving back of CO2 to the plants in order to receive oxygen in return. Breathing is, in fact, the physical acting out of the law of love which brings life. Greed is just the opposite, it is taking for self without giving in return, which breaks the law of love and results in death. It would be like tying a plastic bag over your head and hoarding all your CO2 for yourself. This is what greed does.

Read third paragraph, “Notice Judas’ words...” Was this a simple case of greed, i.e. Judas merely wanted 30 silver coins? Or was Judas’ greed more complex? Was Judas seeking a larger payout and the 30 coins were simply another reward he could get along the way?



Do you think Judas believed Jesus was a fraud, a conman and by turning Him over to authorities he was doing a righteous act?

Do you think Judas, having seen all the miracles, including the raising of Lazarus from the dead, believed Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah?

Yes, Judas did, then why did Judas betray Jesus?

Because Judas, while believing Jesus was the Son of God, did not understand the nature of God's character, His methods, nor His law. In other words, Judas didn't understand God's kingdom. Judas viewed God's government as operating like the earthly governments and thought that Jesus needed a little help to finally wield all His power to take the throne. Judas, having accepted the imposed law construct and thinking that the use of force to overthrow evil and punish wrongdoing was correct, thought that by betraying Jesus He would force Jesus to stop the unrighteous action of killing Him. Then Judas could step up to Jesus and say—"your welcome—I had faith in you all along, I knew you only needed a little nudge in the right direction."

Yes, what Judas did was for greed, his own personal self-advancement, but it wasn't simply for 30 silver coins—that's why he threw them back. He didn't want the money; he wanted Jesus to take the throne and rule the world with a rod of iron punishing the evil Herod, Jewish leaders, Roman powers and set up a kingdom that operates no differently that Rome was operating.

How many Christians today are in the very same mindset of Judas?

The message of the gospel from the lips of Jesus Himself is "“My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.” Jn 18:36NIV

Any version of God that has God and Jesus running their universe like human governments, imposed rules, legal actions, infliction of punishment—is a lie and obstructs God from healing hearts and minds. Sadly, many will be just like Judas in the end, ““Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?”” But Jesus says to them, ““I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!”” MT 7:22,23

They will do just as Judas did, cry for the mountains to fall on them. They don't want to live in the presence of Jesus.

THURSDAY

Read Galatians 5:22-25: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to



Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”

Read second paragraph, “These texts...”

- From where does self-control come?
- If it is a fruit of the Spirit why is it not called Spirit control?
- How does surrendering to the Spirit of God result in self-control?
- What does the Spirit do in us?
 - Reveals truth
 - Convicts of deviations from design which destroy (sin)
 - Instills new desires and longings
 - Brings us to decision points
 - Leaves us free to decide to choose the truth or reject
 - When we choose the truth the Spirit provides the power to succeed in the choice
 - In so doing we are changed and transformed by the working of the Spirit while retaining our individuality and thus we develop self-control, just like the mature develop *by practice* the ability to discern right from wrong Heb 5:14
- Why is self-control a requirement for God’s kingdom?
- Can love exist without freedom?
- If the Spirit were actually in control of your choices would you be free or a puppet?
- Will the Spirit ever take control of your choices?

Here is a quote from one of the founders of the SDA church, what do you think?

The Comforter is called "the Spirit of truth." His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. {DA 671.1}

FRIDAY

First sentence states, “The ultimate human goal is to be happy and satisfied.” From where does happiness come?

Happiness is a by-product of something else. Like sawdust is a by-product of woodworking. This means it cannot get happiness by pursuing it directly.



Happiness is a by-product of healthiness in all domains:

- If you are physically unwell are you happy?
- If you are relationally unwell, conflicts with spouse or children, are you happy?
- If you are psychologically unwell, “I’m no good, “I can’t do anything right...” are you happy?
- If you are spiritually unwell weighed down with guilt and shame, are you happy?

While you cannot achieve happiness by seeking happiness, you can make choices to be healthy. You can take an inventory of your life and ask where am I engaged in activities that are unhealthy and start choosing to move toward health. The results will be increasing happiness and satisfaction.

The devil tricks people to substitute pleasure for happiness and thus many people who are longing for happiness instead destroy themselves in pleasure seeking:

- Alcohol and drugs
- Thrill seeking
- Entertainments
- Sex and porn
- Shopping
- Gambling

Behaviors that stimulate the pleasure circuits, but in ways that violate God’s design and thus rather than bringing health with more happiness, such actions bring damage with more misery and typically more engagement in pleasure seeking, a spiral down.

The way out is to recognize the truth and follow the truth where it leads, always back to God and harmony with His designs.



Stewardship Motives of the Heart Lesson 3 1Q 2018

God or Mammon?

Presented by Dr. Tim Jennings

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mental Health Matters

Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

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



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

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

SABBATH

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

What about the purpose of the entire Bible?

What about:

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Isn’t this the point of the parable?

SUNDAY



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

MONDAY

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

TUESDAY

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

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

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

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

What is the payment achieving in this viewpoint?

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

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

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

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

When Adam sinned did:

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. **Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government.** The Lord's principles are not of this order. **His**



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

From another article:

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

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

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

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



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

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

WEDNESDAY

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

Is there a difference?

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

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

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

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



THURSDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions



Stewardship Motives of the Heart Lesson 4 1Q 2018

Escape From the World's Ways — presented by Dr. Tim Jennings

ANNOUNCEMENTS (at end of document):

SABBATH

Read memory text: “Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death... He who trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like foliage.” Prov 11:4,18 NKJV

What is the day of wrath? What is God's wrath?

“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness...” Romans 1:18:

And what did God do? In verses 24, 26, 28: “therefore God gave them...”

This is God's wrath. It is not God acting to inflict harm, but God ceasing His gracious interventions to protect those who refuse His healing and protection.

Are there evidences that this is so?

- Israel when the serpents and scorpions came in to sting
- Israel when they were taken into captivity
- Israel when they rejected Christ
- Jesus on the Cross (Romans 4:25) experienced God's wrath and what did God do? Let Him go!

Why won't riches profit in the day when God let's go His protective hand? Can riches protect against a corrupt character? Can riches protect against agony of heart, misery of soul, conviction of guilt, the pain of shame and regret? Can riches protect against being out of harmony with how life is constructed to operate?

How does righteousness deliver from death?

What is the cause of death? Sin, which is what? Deviation from God's design and at its root is selfishness. How does righteousness deliver from death then?

What is righteousness? Is righteousness something we get legally or something we experience internally?

- Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. Gen 6:9 [note he wasn't declared to be a righteous man—he was a righteous man]
- Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public



- disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. Mt 1:19 [Again Joseph was a righteous man]
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Mt 5:6 [They will be filled, not their record will be adjusted]

Are we naturally righteous?

- All of us have become like one who is unclean, and **all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;** Isa 64:6

From where does our righteousness come?

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might **become the righteousness of God.** 2Cor 5:21

How do we get this righteousness?

“See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright— **but the righteous will live by his faith...** Hab 2:4

What does it mean to live by faith?

“They will be mine,” says the Lord Almighty, “in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him.”¹⁸ **And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.** Mal 3:17,18

Thus we read about Abraham:

“Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” Rom 4:3

Sadly, this is a fairly poor translation, which is one of the places that those who already have a legal belief system translate the Bible to promote the false legal view. A better translation than credited, would be recognized to be, or acknowledged as righteous—why? Because Abraham’s natural heart, which distrusts God, had been set right, back to trust in God, as evidenced by Abraham’s actions.

Thus, in the lexicon the worded translated as credited we read:

to reckon inward, count up or **weigh the reasons**, to deliberate. **3** by reckoning up all the reasons, to gather or infer. 3a to consider, **take into account**, weigh, meditate on. 3b to suppose, deem, judge. 3c to determine, purpose, decide. *Additional Information:* **This word deals with reality. If I “logizomai” or reckon that my bank book has \$25 in it, it has \$25 in it. Otherwise I am deceiving myself.** This word refers to facts not suppositions.¹

¹ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



Those who hold the penal/legal view deceive themselves because they make the Bible teach something that it doesn't teach, that God declares us to be righteous, even though we are not. This is a lie. We are changed, set right, put right, in our heart attitude with God and God recognizes this real resetting in us as being right, i.e. righteous.

Summary—righteousness is simply being right, i.e. being in harmony with God and God's design for life, which is a character of love that practices truth and liberty. We are born infected with fear and selfishness and thus are not in our selves spiritually healthy, i.e. righteous or the way God designed for us to be. Jesus came and overcame the infection of fear and selfishness while revealing truth to win us to trust. When we trust God, we open our hearts to him, we experience a change in internal motivation and desire, and more than this, we freely choose to do that which He has led us to understand He wants us to do. Why do we do it? Because we love Him and trust Him and know without question that He wants what is best for us.

So why does righteousness deliver from death? Because righteousness is the restoration to God's design for life and literally moves a person from living outside God's laws for life into harmony with God and His laws for life.

Thus the Bible says:

“He who pursues righteousness and love finds life...” Prov 21:21

Read first paragraph, “Although Satan failed with Jesus...” What do they mean “he has succeeded with everyone else?”

Have the rest of humanity started life out, i.e. born into the world, in the same condition Jesus was born into the world?

Was Jesus born a sinner or sinless?

Are we born sinless or sinners?

Is being a sinner about the deeds we do or about the condition of heart that leads to the deeds?

Are we born selfish or selfless? What about Jesus?

So Satan succeeded with Adam and Eve, but the rest of us are born “in sin conceived in iniquity” (Ps 51:5) as a result of Adam and Eve's choice, not as a result of our own choice. We never had the option of not being a sinner.



Jesus, however, was born unique, with a fallen mother, but with the HS as His Father, thus He was able to experience temptation like all of us, but without the internal propensity and natural desire for selfishness like all of us have. Thus, He was in a different position than either Adam in Eden or you and I.

In other words, Satan did have to succeed with Adam and Eve, and he failed with Jesus because in order to win with Jesus he would have to get Jesus to choose to sin.

But Satan doesn't have to get us to choose to sin, Satan has to trick us into not choosing to trust Jesus and allowing God to heal us.

Thus, because many in Christianity have this wrong, they focus the attention on salvation on the do's and don'ts the sins, behavior, and not instead on focusing the attention on Jesus, the truth, choosing God, choosing God's methods, choosing to trust, to love, to engage that which is good.

This is a subtle distinction—because when we choose to think about “whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Philippians 4:8) we are simultaneously choosing to not think about evil.

But this focus, out of love, out of a desire for good to think about the good, generates a completely different experience than out of fear of punishment vigilantly scanning your world to identify and avoid anything that might be sinful or evil.

By beholding we are changed—thus if we spend time searching for evil, albeit to avoid it, thinking about it, watching for it, we are changed to become more fearful, insecure, negative. But, when we spend time focusing upon, growing in, searching for the good we not only are avoiding the evil we are becoming more like God!

Thus, the legal theologies have in them another subtle trick, focusing on the sins, the bad deeds, and trying to focus on what we do or don't do so we won't break a rule, ultimately cheats people out of the peace, love and transforming experience they could otherwise have in and with Jesus!

Example—“Don't think about a pink elephant, try to avoiding thinking about a pink elephant” Versus, Actually study and think about anything else and what are you not thinking about?

What is the armor and power of God?

Ephesians 6:10-18 from *The Remedy*:

Finally, stay strong in your **connection and devotion** to the Lord and his mighty power.¹¹ Arm your minds with God's complete **set of armor** so that you can join the ranks of Christ's soldiers and stand successfully in the face of the devil's schemes.¹² For our struggle is not against flesh



and blood, with man-made weapons, but against all individuals, entities and powers that misrepresent God and darken minds, and against Satan—the originator of lies about God—and his cohorts who also misrepresent God in the heavenly realms. [does this bring to mind 2Cor 10:3-5? our weapons have divine power to demolish strongholds...]13 Therefore **arm your minds** with God's full set of armor so that when Satan's grand deception comes and it seems the heavens are about to fall, you are able to stand; [Do you typically think of the armor of God as mental armor, arming your mind to not be infected, degraded, discouraged, corrupted?] and when you have done everything to present the truth and expose Satan's lies—don't falter; stand!14 Stand firm, with the **truth of God wrapped around you like a belt**; [what truth is the truth that we need? Is it primarily the truth about which day is the Sabbath? If we have that truth but we believe God imposed the day arbitrarily and will punish people for not observing it, then are we worshipping the true God or the false version Satan alleges? So the primary truth is always about God and His character and methods] with a **righteous, Christlike character developed within—like a breastplate**; [How do we experience a righteous character? Is it passive, only through trust and God does it all? Or is it cooperative, we trust God who provides new desires, motives, insights, wisdom, truths, but we must choose to accept, apply, internalize and identify with God and His truths and do what is right, healthy, and reasonable in governance of ourselves?]15 and the **peace that comes from accepting the good news about God—like track shoes providing good traction and a solid foundation**. [Have you found increased peace as you have come to experience God as Designer and Creator and rejected the dictator views?] 16 Also, hold fast the **shield of trust, which extinguishes all the burning fear and insecurity brought by the devil's temptations**. [How does trust in God overcome temptation? Are not most temptations related to some fear or insecurity? Does trust reduce fear and insecurity? But can you trust a being whom you believe will hurt you if you don't trust them?] 17 Take with you the **helmet of a healed mind**—a mind protected from the assaults of Satan; [What heals the mind and also protects against the assaults of Satan? A mind that has developed by practice the ability to tell the right from the wrong (Heb 5:14), a mind that loves and discerns truth] and attack the lies about God with the **sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**—the truth. 18 And **talk with God** with an enlightened mind, intelligently, on all occasions, about all of your concerns, requests, plans, and issues. With all of this in mind, be alert and always keep praying for God's people.

In the second paragraph the lesson states, “True happiness and right living come from turning our eyes from the possessions we own and looking to the living Christ, who owns us.”

What does this mean—owns us? Are we property to Jesus? Are we slaves?

What did Jesus say to His disciples?

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.



The Greek here is the word for slaves, which were owned, but Jesus says He doesn't want such a relationship with us. Why?

What happens when we experience ourselves being owned, as property, like a slave? Does such a mindset in us result in our growth into what God wants for us?

Last Thursday's lesson said, "We belong to God, both by creation and by redemption."

Could this be a more helpful way to say it? Could the true idea of the Bible, rather than connoting that we are property owned by a Sovereign, that instead we belong to God in the same way:

- The meow belongs to the cat
- The branch belongs to the vine
- A child belongs to a parent

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

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

Does this give a different understanding that is consistent with reality, God's character, and the principles of love and liberty?

SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, "The only cure fore worldliness..." Devotion to Christ is absolutely essential—no doubt about that. But...does it matter to which Christ one is devoted?

Moses was devoted to God so he would not allow himself to be corrupted by the wealth of Egypt. What about those people today who are so devoted to their God that they not only don't care about the wealth of America, but will die in order to kill those they believe are enemies of God?

Does their devotion to their God matter if they have the wrong concept of God?

What about someone who is devoted to God, and they also have:

- The seventh-day Sabbath
- The writings of God's inspired prophets
- The health message
- Pay a faithful tithe and also offerings
- Study their Bibles regularly
- Are on either a church board or conference committee
- And are devoted in their zeal to keep all 10 commandments



What about such devotion? Consider Saul of Tarsus, did he meet all these criteria, yet he still procured authority from church leaders to kill those who believed differently than he.

Was Saul's devotion enough?

Was Saul's devotion with all those correct doctrines cited above enough?

What was the one thing Saul didn't know? The truth about God's character and methods of love; Saul still worshipped a dictator god, who made up rules and then enforced those rules with punishment. After Damascus road Saul changed and as Paul he wrote that he would gladly give his life so his fellow Jews could be saved.

Paul *became* righteous, became renewed, experienced a change of internal motive such that selfishness was replaced with other-centered love and he was restored to rightness with God!

So the lesson is quite right, we must be devoted to Christ because of "who He is" that is the key, knowing Christ and the Father for who they are.

Sadly, far too many people still don't know them, still think God functions like a dictator...

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "More than six billion..." What does it mean that the Bible is "the Word of the living God?"

Does it mean when we read the Bible:

- We are reading a dictation from God?
- We are reading material personally written by God?
- We are reading pure heavenly language?
- We are to take it as directives just as it reads?
- That every sentence is truth from God?

How do we understand the Bible? Do we believe that it is inspired by God? Yes! But how does inspiration work?

God inspires sinful human beings with ideas, truths, concepts, visions, dreams, facts, historic events for them to record. God oversees the development, retention and inclusion of these records. God enlightens humble minds to comprehend the truths within.

Does this mean the Bible is 100% accurate in every factual detail?

- 2Samuel 6:23 "Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death."
- 2Samuel 21:8 "But the king took the two sons of Rizpah . . . and the five sons of Michal the



daughter of Saul." (Two Hebrew manuscripts, some Septuagint and Syriac manuscripts say "Merab" but most Hebrew and Septuagint manuscripts say Michal.)

- 1 Kings 4:26 "And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen."
- 2 Chronicles 9:25 "And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen."
- 2Kings 24:8 "Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months."
- 2Chron 36:9 "Jehoiachin was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days."

Are there differences from different authors in various accounts of the same events?

Yes, does this suggest unreliability or reliability?

Reliability—why? Because the portions with differences are the exact types of differences different people give when providing honest recall of events. And these differences are irrelevant to the message and purpose of the Bible.

What is the purpose of the Bible? To provide the truth necessary for people to know God, reject Satan and experience salvation.

The Bible is not a book on algebra, computer programming, astrophysics, neurobiology, and while it has proven to be historically reliable, it is not primarily a history book. It is the revelation of God to man of Himself, the origin of humanity, the origin of sin, what sin actually is, the controversy between good and evil, providing evidence to the two methods, the plan of salvation and ultimately the eradication of all pain, suffering, death and restoration to perfection in a universe governed by a God of love.

So, we can have reliability in the Bible? Absolutely!

But does that mean then, if someone reads the Bible regularly they will be saved?

Could someone read the Bible regularly and actually be God's enemy?

I was reading in the book *The Desire of Ages* this week about Jesus' birth, and how the Magi came to find Jesus and the religious leaders were not aware. And how, after the Magi left Herod sent in the soldiers to kill the male children age 2 and below. Then I read this:

This calamity the Jews had brought upon themselves. If they had been walking in faithfulness



and humility before God, He would in a signal manner have made the wrath of the king harmless to them. **But they had separated themselves from God by their sins**, and had rejected the Holy Spirit, which was their only shield. **They had not studied the Scriptures with a desire to conform to the will of God. They had searched for prophecies which could be interpreted to exalt themselves, and to show how God despised all other nations.** It was their proud boast that the Messiah was to come as a king, conquering His enemies, and treading down the heathen in His wrath. **Thus they had excited the hatred of their rulers. Through their misrepresentation of Christ's mission,** Satan had purposed to compass the destruction of the Saviour; but instead of this, it returned upon their own heads. {DA 65.5}

What do you hear being their problem?

- They didn't humble themselves before God
- They retained personal and national pride
- Their selfish pride separated them from God by refusing to follow and align with Him and instead doing their own thing
- They studied Scripture, but not do know God's truth or will; they studied prophecy to prove themselves special and others despised by God
- This attitude excited the hatred of the rulers, misrepresented God, obstructing God's purpose and resulted in their own destruction

Question: Do we as Christians risk doing the very same thing today?

- Proudly interpret Bible prophecy to exalt us and show how God despises others?
- Misrepresent God as arbitrary and coming to rule the nations with a rod of iron?
- Will it result in stirring up hatred to Christianity?

So when we read the Bible what mindset should we have?

Humble willingness to learn, but also a mind that questions things that don't make sense, filtering everything through the truth about God that Jesus revealed.

Read last paragraph, "Love of worldly..." This is well said.

What does it mean "love your neighbor as yourself"?

Is love only an emotion or does love cause action? And what type of action? Beneficent, other-centered, can you love (in action) if you are incapacitated? So, in order to love others you have to maintain self-care, wellness, health. Thus before one can love others one must first:

- Have something worth sharing or giving to others
 - Cannot teach people to read if you yourself cannot read
 - Cannot teach people the truth about God if you don't know God
 - Cannot genuinely love others if you don't have love in your heart



- So, must first be converted in your heart to a genuine love/trust relationship with Jesus Christ—really knowing Him before one can be most effective in God’s cause (notice I said most effective. God in His wisdom can use many things—including speaking through a donkey.)
- Be in a state of health where one is capable of providing to others

TUESDAY

First paragraph states, “We saw yesterday that God communicates to us through His divine Word.” We, in turn, commune with Him through prayer.”

Is the Bible the only avenue through which God communicates to us?

What other avenues?

- Nature, science Rom 1:20
- Life experiences
- Other people
- Dreams
- Visions
- Sometimes the still small voice
- Angels

But, if God communicates to us in a method other than the Bible what is the danger and what is our protection?

The danger is that Satan can come as an angel of light, and thus messages purported to be from God may not be. Therefore, we must harmonize all messages from God with the Scripture.

What is the danger in taking messages from Scripture alone? If we fail to harmonize Scripture with design law (nature) and experience, then we can get all kinds of erroneous beliefs that contradict reality and misrepresent God.

What is prayer?

Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ; we are to draw constantly from Him, partaking of Him, the living Bread that came down from heaven, drawing from a fountain ever fresh, ever giving forth its abundant treasures. If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. **Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally.** Often there will come to us a sweet joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. Often our hearts will burn within us as He draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. When this is in truth the experience of the Christian, there is seen



in his life a simplicity, a humility, meekness, and lowliness of heart, that show to all with whom he associates that he has been with Jesus and learned of Him. {COL 129.3}

This description of prayer is activates brain regions of higher cortex, real interaction with another being. And that is what neuroscience states happens with spontaneous prayer:

- Spontaneous prayer resulted in activation of same brain regions as when talking to another person (theory of mind)
 - Regions associated with anticipation, consideration of another's response, attitudes, feelings, reaction (right & left cortex)
- When reciting memorized prayers or repetitive mantras the same brain regions lit up as when reciting nursery rhymes –
 - regions of recall, rote learning and repetition – but not higher cortical function – no prefrontal cortex
- When making a list for Santa the Prefrontal cortex didn't activate as in spontaneous prayer
- Brain doesn't activate in the same way when interacting with computer or inanimate objects
 - Brain doesn't expect reciprocity or think about the wants/desires/need of the computer, no empathy, connection, relational interaction

Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience, DOI: 10.1093/scan/nsn050

Read second paragraph, "If, as we have seen..." No doubt prayer is important—but what are the secrets to effective prayer?

- First and foremost, to whom is one praying—not just the name a person uses when calling to their God, but who they believe their God to be, what attributes and characteristics they understand him to possess
 - Can a person pray to beings other than the true God?
 - Can people pray to beings other than the truth God but believe they are praying to the true God?
- Second, our heart attitudes when we pray "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." James 5:16

What makes a person righteous? Having a heart transformed to be like Christ!

Jesus said, "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it." Jn 14:13,14

What does it mean to ask in the name of Jesus?

Does it mean to end your prayer with "In Jesus name?"

In the Bible what does the name signify? Character, Jacob the *deceiver* became Israel, *one who*



overcomes with God.

So, to pray in the name of Jesus means to pray with the character of Jesus, and what would that be?

To pray to reveal the truth, to glorify the Father, to uplift God's principles, to fulfill God's purposes in harmony with God's methods. This is the same as the prayer of a righteous person!

From the book *The Desire of Ages*:

But to pray in Christ's name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. The Saviour's promise is given on condition. "If ye love Me," He says, "keep My commandments." **He saves men, not in sin, but from sin;** and those who love Him will show their love by obedience. {DA 668.2}

Do you agree that to pray in the name of Jesus means that we pray in an attitude of accepting His character, seeking to manifest His spirit and work His works?

Do you agree God wants to save us from sin, not in sin?

What is the difference?

Is this different than saving us from the punishment of sin?

Read last paragraph, "If there is no faith..."

What is faith attached to prayer? Isn't it simply we pray to a God that we genuinely trust to know better than us, to provide more than we can conceive and we genuinely want His intervention and will to overrule our own desires to effect the outcome that He knows is best? We trust Him with the outcome!

Presumption is the attitude of praying for such and such while calling on the name "Jesus" believing because we used the right formula God will do it.

Do you see the difference?

WEDNESDAY

Read second and third paragraphs, "Solomon had great..." What is obedience in the Biblical sense? Is it blindly, thoughtlessly doing what one is told?

Can a person be obedient to God if they question what God says?

Is it about questioning or is it about the attitude of the heart for the questions?



Does God like it when our questions are from a desire to truly comprehend, understand, to be able to intelligently cooperate?

Further, if we have obstacles in our character, beliefs, experiences, say fears or insecurities, could they be worked out of our hearts by questioning, evening arguing with God?

Remember Moses when God first called him to go back to Egypt? Didn't he argue against God's plan? Why? Because Moses had fears, insecurities, doubts that were worked through in the discourse with God. If we instruct people not to have such dialogue with God, we may obstruct them from working through elements in their hearts that need resolving.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The great controversy..." Can you easily differentiate activities, programs, practices, statements, doctrines, teachings that are on either side of the controversy?

What method do you use to differentiate what is on which side of the controversy?

Could we make a list that might help people determine whether something is in harmony with God and His kingdom or in harmony with Satan's kingdom?

Anything that violates God's design laws and puts God in the light of an arbitrary dictator, a being from whom we need protection is a lie.

If we use this standard, do we see how much of accepted doctrine is distorted and needs revising?

The middle section says, "When we let the Holy Spirit take possession of us, what things will God do to ensure we have spiritual victory?"

How does the Spirit of God work? What tools or methods does the Holy Spirit use?

Truth presented in love leaving others free, read fourth paragraph, "It is through..." When we surrender to the Holy Spirit, what is the ultimate outcome? Self-control—how does this happen? We are healed to be beings who have the capacity to exercise authority in governance of self to live in harmony with God and His design laws.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS (at end of document):

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

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

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

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

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

In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church
Mental Health Matters - Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

The Developing Brain Thursday, February 8, 2018

Environment, experience, and choice alter human DNA and impact brain structure and function. Learn how traumatic experience, diet, addictive substances, television, healthy nurturing and even belief in God alter our, genes, brain structure and brain function. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

Neurobiology of Depression and Drug Free Treatments Thursday, March 8, 2018

Depression is a complex disorder with alterations in both brain and body, loss of brain volume with altered brain circuits and even change in genetic expression? Discover how you can minimize your risk of depression and make changes in your daily routines that can protect your brain. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

Addictions and the Adolescent Brain Thursday, April 12, 2018

Adolescence is a time of marked vulnerability to addictions. Explore the brain's reward pathway, healthy activities which activate this pathway and how addictions hijack normal reward circuitry and damage the brain. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

The Mind- God's Design & What Went Wrong Thursday, May 10, 2018

The human mind was designed with separate and distinct faculties to operate in a beautiful harmony. Something has damaged that balance and caused pain, suffering and illness. Discover God's design for the mind, what went wrong and how to restore balance to your mind. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

The Aging Brain Thursday, August 13, 2018

What happens to the brain as we age? This presentation will examine the evidence-based lifestyle and non-pharmacological interventions which will protect your brain and diminish your risk of dementia. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings. Copies of Dr. Jennings brand new book, The Aging Brain, will be available.

Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew! Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings



2018 Q1 Lesson 5- Stewards After Eden

Presented by Russell Atkins

SABBATH

On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts” (1 Thessalonians 2:4, NIV).

What was Adam’s command for stewardship *before* the fall? What was his task or job? What were he and Eve entrusted with? Why was man[kind] created, in the first place? Was God bored with the company of Angels, and need some other friends? What was the state of the rest of Creation at the time of Earth’s formation?

²⁶ Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and **subdue** it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” Gen. 1: 26-28.

What needed subduing? Wasn’t the Earth created perfect?

¹⁵ Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” Gen. 2:15-17.

“Every good thing of earth was placed here by the bountiful hand of God as an expression of His love to man. The poor are His, and the cause of religion is His. The gold and the silver are the Lord’s; and He could rain them from heaven if He chose. **But instead of this He has made man His steward, entrusting him with means, not to be hoarded, but to be used in benefiting others. He thus makes man the medium through which to distribute His blessings on earth. God planned the system of beneficence, in order that man might become like his Creator, benevolent and unselfish in character, and finally be a partaker with Christ of the eternal, glorious reward.**” {CS 15.2} Emphasis mine.

What law is she describing?

From the Lesson:

“What is stewardship? Certain Bible characters reveal what a steward is by how they lived. Other scriptures define it more clearly. When we become God’s stewards, our focus on the



world and its materialistic values changes to a **focus on the Creator and His mission**. As with Adam and Eve, God entrusts to us responsibilities of divine origin. Since the Fall in Eden, however, the task of stewardship has changed; along with the responsibilities of caring for the material world, we are also entrusted to be good stewards of spiritual truths.” *Emphasis mine*.

SUNDAY

Stewards in the Old Testament

Qualities of a steward: Trustworthiness, Self governance, patience, hospitality, sensibility, temperance, teachable, any others?

Who comes to mind when you hear “stewards in the Old Testament”? Adam, Seth, Noah, Mechizedek, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, every OT prophet, any others?

What were they stewards of? Was this any different than Adam & Eve?

From the lesson:

“Some characteristics of a steward are made clear in the Old Testament. First, the position of a steward was one of great responsibility (Gen. 39:4). Stewards were chosen because of their abilities, and they received respect and trust from their owners for getting the job done. Second, stewards knew that what had been entrusted to them belonged to their owner (Gen. 24:34–38). This is the supreme difference between a steward and an owner. Stewards understand their position. Third, when stewards took for their own use what had been entrusted to them, the relationship of trust between them and the owner was broken, and the stewards were dismissed” (Gen. 3:23, Hos. 6:7).

“Dismissed” or Let Go?

MONDAY

Stewards in the New Testament

Based on the definition of a steward in yesterday’s lesson, name the stewards that come to mind in the New Testament. Jesus of Nazareth, Judas, Steven, Saul/Paul, Peter, John, -- any others?

What was Jesus a steward of? Everything that’s been made was made by and through Him. [see John 1: 3]

How could he be a steward of His own? Does this give us any hints as to the true meaning of the term “steward”? He told some parables about stewards [some faithful, some not so much] – Any insights we can gather from those?



TUESDAY

Stewards of the Mysteries of God

According to Paul [in Colossians 2 & 1 Timothy 3], Jesus of Nazareth is the “mystery of God”. According to Jesus of Nazareth, God is exactly like Jesus [Entire gospel of John].

Is there some circular reasoning here, or something else? How could God being JUST like Jesus be considered a mystery?

Consider some of the “gods” Israel sought after during the “Kings” era. What were their primary attributes?

From the lesson:

“The mysteries of God have been recorded in Scripture, even though understanding them fully is still beyond our comprehension. *That’s why they are mysteries.*”

Did God have Scripture recorded simply as a “mystery”? Unable to be comprehended? Or did He inspire men to record Scripture precisely *to be comprehended*? While an Infinite God will never be fully comprehended by finite beings, does this mean we should suspend our reason/judgement and never try?

WEDNESDAY

Stewards of Spiritual Truth

Nearly 34,000 different sects of Christianity consider themselves “Stewards of Spiritual Truth”. Are they? Can they?

Ephesians 6: 13-17 is a familiar passage referring to girding loins with Truth, Breastplates of Righteousness, Shoes of the Gospel of Peace, Shields of Faith, and Helmets of Salvation. We don’t read the preceding verses very well, and thus we often forget the nature of the warfare.

¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Eph. 6: 11-16.

The lesson suggests we are to be stewards of “redemption”. I couldn’t agree more. How are we to be stewards of redemption?



From the lesson:

“Only in the light that shines from Calvary can nature’s teaching be read aright. Through the story of Bethlehem and the cross let it be shown how good is to conquer evil, and how every blessing that comes to us is a gift of redemption.”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 101.

Redemption is ours only because Jesus paid the ultimate price. Paul clearly states, “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:7, NKJV). Emphasis mine.

I’m not sure how the author/editor gets “Jesus paid the ultimate price” from Paul’s text in Ephesians.

THURSDAY

Our Responsibility as Stewards

This part of the lesson stresses personal responsibilities, the relationship between cause and effect, and [“the difficult question of”] freewill.

If one believes God’s law to be imperial / imposed in nature, then these concepts get very murky, however, if one understands God’s Law to be design law – the protocols upon which all life is built, then they become more clear.

Any thoughts as to how Adam & Eve bore their personal responsibilities before the fall?

Scripture is quite clear on how they behaved afterward –“It was that serpent you made...” It’s God’s fault. “It was that woman that you gave me...” It’s God’s fault.



Stewardship Motives of the Heart Lesson 6 1Q 2018

The Marks of a Steward presented by Tim Jennings

announcements at end of document

SABBATH

Read the memory verse:

Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ²
Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. 1Cor 4:1,2 NKJV

What is a steward?

A person who manages another person's property or is in charge of his business, or household, a caretaker to fulfill the desires of the owner.

Any qualities that a good steward must possess?

Read second paragraph, "A Christian steward..." In the lesson they recount some important traits, which we will explore further, which are:

- Faithfulness
- Loyalty
- A Clear Conscience
- Obedience
- Trustworthiness

Did you notice the glaring omission? UNDERSTANDING!!!! Understanding of God, His character, methods, principles and plans:

I'm no longer calling you servants because servants don't understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I've named you friends because I've let you in on everything I've heard from the Father. *The Message*

Can a person be faithful, loyal, have a clear conscience, obedient and trustworthy and still not understand what the Master wants, or what the Master is doing? And if that is the case could such a steward actually end up working against the Master out of ignorance, but with total devotion?

So, I want to add as an attribute for all truly successful stewards that they know their Master, and understand Him, His methods, designs, and plans in order to intelligently cooperate in fulfilling one's duties.



Now, according to our memory verse, to what are we to be stewards of?

The mysteries of God—can we be loyal, faithful, obedient to the mysteries of God if we don't know what they are and don't understand them?

What are the mysteries of God?

Are my mysteries of God something God wants to keep hidden?

Why are these things mysteries? What has caused the mystery?

Are the mysteries of God the truths about God that God has wanted all intelligences to know but because of sin, because of Satan's lies, because of the limitations of finite minds are truths we don't naturally comprehend?

According to the SDA Bible Commentary:

In the NT, *mustērion* [which is translated mystery] refers to something that God wills to make known to those who are willing to receive His revelation, rather than to something that He desires to keep secret. Throughout Paul's writings the word carries the meaning of something which, though incapable of being fully understood by unassisted human reason, has now been made known by divine revelation (see ch. 16:25, 26; etc.) In Rev. 1:20; 17:5, 7 it has reference to a symbol that requires interpretation for its understanding.

Paul regarded it as his mission to make known the mystery "which was kept secret since the world began" (Rom. 16:25; cf. 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 3:3, 4). God's eternal purpose to redeem man in Christ has now been declared in Christianity. Thus Paul describes the whole Christian revelation as a mystery (Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 2:7–10; Eph. 1:9; 6:19; Col. 1:26; 2:2; 1 Tim. 3:9). He applies the term to the incarnation of Christ (1 Tim. 3:16), to the union of Christ and His church as typified by marriage (Eph. 5:32), to the transformation of the saints at the second coming (1 Cor. 15:51), to the opposition of Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:7), and especially to the admission of the Gentiles to the kingdom of Christ (Rom. 16:25, 26; Eph. 3:1–6; Col. 1:26, 27).¹

So, when you read in the Bible "the mystery of God," are you hearing the truths that God wants you to know?

Revelation states:

But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets." (10:7)

¹ Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1980). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 6, p. 610). Review and Herald Publishing Association.



When happens when the seventh angel does sound his trumpet?

The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.” Rev 11:15

So if the sounding of the seventh trumpet is the second coming of Christ—what is the mystery of God that is accomplished just before that final trumpet sounds?

What is this mystery—this truth that God wants you to know? Could it be?

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Col 1:27

Does God want a people to be filled with His presence, to be restored to genuine Christlikeness before Christ returns?

Can that happen if we hold to lies about God, specifically that God is the source of inflicted pain and suffering?

SUNDAY

Semper Fi which is short for Semper Fidelis, which is Latin and means Always Faithful and is the motto of the US Marine Corps

What does is mean to be faithful?

The lesson states, “Being faithful means staying true to what we know is right, especially in the heat of spiritual battles.”

What are spiritual battles?

Read second paragraph, “Spiritual conflicts...” Being faithful to what one knows is true, and choosing that regardless of pressure, but that begs the question—how do you know what is true?

Can one be faithful to something that they believe is true but isn’t?

Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ Mt 7:22,23



Does it sound like the ones described here had rejected believing in God? Had they decided to become agnostic? Is the text describing non-Christians? Were they being faithful to what they thought was true? Were they faithful to Christ?

So, the question really is two-fold—are we faithful—do we make choices to do that which we currently believe is right—and do we have a solid basis for determining what is right, healthy and true? Do we continually seek to grow in our knowledge of truth and improve both our understanding and practices of life?

And how do we know what is true or right? This is the 7 levels of moral decision-making—people come to different conclusions based on their level of maturity and what assumptions they have when they approach the situation and what standard they use for authority.

If a person has the assumption that God's law is imposed, that God dictates and we obey, then after Adam sinned one reads Genesis 3 as God ordering the subordination of Eve under the authority of Adam. With that assumption in place, based on accepting the lie about God's law, one then reads the rest of Scripture to conclude women should not be in leadership in the church, should remain under the headship of men.

Situation doesn't matter, ability doesn't matter, Christlike character doesn't matter, equipping by the Holy Spirit doesn't matter...no the only thing that matters is gender. For those with such mindsets, a woman called by God, filled with the Holy Spirit, gifted with Spiritual gifts, would still be expected to be subordinate to a man—regardless of the spiritual maturity of the man.

The mature realize in Genesis 3 that God was not dictating a new design for human relationships, but merely diagnosing accurately what would result of Adam and Eve breaking God's design—what happens when love is replaced by selfishness in the heart: The strong dominate the weak and the weak seek the protection of the strong. Thus God's pronouncement—here is how sin has marred my beautiful design for relationships.

Sadly, men continue, in their insecurity to promote dominance over women.

So, let's examine faithful stewards through the seven levels and see who is the truly faithful steward:

1. Reward and punishment
 - a. obeys to avoid punishment and be rewarded
2. Marketplace exchange
 - a. obeys because of the agreed compensation
3. Social conformity
 - a. obeys to be recognized as the best steward by peers
4. Law and order
 - a. obeys not to be prosecuted for a crime
5. Love for other people



- a. obeys because he loves his master
6. Principled based living
 - a. obeys because he loves his master and understands the laws upon which life is based
7. Understanding friend of God
 - a. obeys because he loves his master, understands the laws upon which life is based and what the master is trying to accomplish

Which is the truly faithful steward?

So, with this in mind lets examine some scenarios:

You get a message, purported to come from God telling you to kill another human being—what do you do?

1. Reward and punishment—you kill the other human being without thought in order to avoid punishment
2. Marketplace exchange—you kill the other person to avoid losing your benefits package
3. Social conformity—if your culture accepts that God, in certain situations would have someone killed, then you kill the other person
4. Law and order—you would cite the 10 Commandments, thou shall not murder and you would claim the message is false, not from God and reject it and no longer trust the source of the message
5. Love for others—you would seek a way to avoid killing the other person while still being loyal to God, would likely decide God is love and God wouldn't kill so you would reject the message
6. Principled based living—you understand that killing violates God's design and thus you would reject the message and not kill
7. Understanding friend of God—you know God personally, you understand God is love and His designs, but you also understand that because God is the one asking you to do this, there must be some purpose beyond your understanding. Your heart resists the instruction and you argue with God, but in the end you take your son Isaac to the mount to sacrifice him as God requested. You are relieved in the end to discover God never intended for you to kill your son, but did have another purpose—for you to surrender your heart completely to Him and stop trying to go your own way.

Other examples you could go through on your own:

- David and the showbread
- The story of the old and young prophet in 1Kings 13

Bottom green section asks us to read Rev 2:10, “Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.”



What does it mean to be faithful unto death?

- Were those who drank the Kool-Aid in Jonestown faithful unto death?
- Did anyone see the ABC documentary recently on Waco and David Koresh and the Branch Davidians? Were those who burned to death in Waco faithful unto death? They showed video of the members of the compound, who spoke to the FBI during the siege and they all stated they were there freely, because they believed they were doing God's will.
- What about those who flew the planes into the Trade Towers on 9/11, were they faithful to their god unto death?

Is faithfulness unto death enough to ensure one receives the crown of life?

Does it matter to whom one is faithful?

Interestingly, if you examine the theology of David Koresh it is almost exactly like the theology of ISIS:

- God is supreme and all powerful
- We must resist evil and sin
- Jesus instructed His disciples to carry swords
- Jesus will come back to destroy the enemies of God and punish sin
- When people resist the will of God we must take up arms and fight back
- God will use power to punish His enemies

This is basically the same theology taught by all who hold to penal substitution theology. It was manifested in large scale in Rwanda when Christians murdered each other by the millions in a four-month period.

The people who follow these lies couldn't tell the difference between right and wrong—why? Because they read the Bible literally, allowed someone else to do their thinking for them, and didn't understand design law—God's methods.

It is not possible for God to get love and trust by threatening to kill those who don't love and trust Him—when we understand this reality then we recognize any theology which has God using His power to kill His enemies is false.

MONDAY

Read top dark section, "No one can..." What brings about unwavering loyalty to God?

Can God get loyalty with displays of might and power?

Paul talks about the gospel being the power of God unto salvation—what types of power are there and



what impact will the use of these types of power have upon people?

In other words, let's examine the use of different types of power in the recruitment of followers and which type results in the greatest unshakable loyalty?

Coercive Power

Coercive power is the use of force, might, strength to threaten, intimidate, or punish in order to pressure someone, who is otherwise unwilling, to comply with your will.

Can one get loyalty by the use of threats? In other words, if you get people following you with coercive power do your followers stay true and loyal against all opposition? What will break coercive power and cause such followers to collapse, to give in, to betray you?

- A bigger threat
- A desired inducement
- Believing a lie
- Genuine love for someone or something else
- Hope for freedom

Inducing Power

The power of bribes, payoffs, promotions, money and advancement, praise and adoration. Does this type of power result in reliable, stable, trustworthy, and unshakable followers? What will cause them to collapse and betray you?

- A serious threat
- A better payoff
- A lie
- Genuine love for someone or something else

Deceiving Power

The power of lies—deceit and deception. The power of lies is stronger and more potent than coercion or inducement. Adherents who follow based on lies—if they truly believe those lies—will not be swayed by threats, will not be bought by bribes; consider members of cults, or various terrorist groups.

But, while lies are more powerful and reliable in achieving converts than threats or inducements, will such followers be faithful beyond betrayal? Will those who follow based on lies remain true in the face of all opposition? What will cause the deceived follower to collapse and betray you?



- Another lie that they believe
- The truth—as the truth exposes the lies, if they accept the truth they will be set free! And the truth may be revealed by either facts or experiences of life
- Love for someone or something other than self—some of the mothers in Waco got their children out

The Power of Love

Does this power result in reliable, stable, trustworthy, unshakable outcomes? Will those who follow based on love be loyal against all opposition?

The power of love is stronger than bribes and threats. But there is one power that can, and did, break the power of love—lies. Just remember Eden and the fall of our first parents.

The Power of Love and Truth

But there is one power that cannot be broken and that is the power of love combined with truth. Truth and love combined result in something impenetrable! This is why the Holy Spirit is known as the Spirit of truth and love.

Restraining Power

I would be remiss if I didn't mention one other use of power—restraining power. Restraining power is that force exercised to restrain, restrict, reduce, impede, slow, and/or obstruct injury, pain, suffering, destruction and evil.

Examples of restraining power include a parent restraining a child running toward the street; Center for Disease Control officials implementing quarantine; mental health professionals forcibly hospitalizing and medicating a psychotic patient; and benevolent societies incarcerating those bent on exploiting others.

Restraining power is the power of love at work, and can, when rightly understood, result in loyalty.

So, our loyalty to God must be based on truth and love—and this is the same as saying being so settled into the truth both intellectually (truth) and spiritually (love) that one cannot be moved—which is also known as...the sealing, being sealed by God!

Read first paragraph, “Knowing that God’s name means “jealous”....” Do not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Exodus 34:14

What does jealous mean? Dictionary has these definitions:



adjective

1. feeling resentment against someone because of that person's rivalry, success, or advantages (often followed by of):

He was jealous of his rich brother.

Does this apply to God? –No!

2. feeling resentment because of another's success, advantage, etc. (often followed by of):

He was jealous of his brother's wealth.

Does this apply to God? –No!

3. characterized by or proceeding from suspicious fears or envious resentment:

a jealous rage; jealous intrigues.

Does this apply to God? –No!

4. inclined to or troubled by suspicions or fears of rivalry, unfaithfulness, etc., as in love or aims:

a jealous husband.

Does this apply to God? –No! because this is self-focused, the husband jealous for his privileges from the wife, it is selfish.

5. Bible. intolerant of unfaithfulness or rivalry:

The Lord is a jealous God.

Does this apply to God? –No! God gives us genuine freedom and the entire conflict between good and evil is evidence that He does not use His power to stop people from rejecting Him and going after other God.

6. solicitous or vigilant in maintaining or guarding something:

The American people are jealous of their freedom.

Does this apply to God? –Yes! God is jealous for His creation, for His children, for their health, their welfare, their good, which means He is protective of His designs—laws because only in harmony with them is their life, health, happiness. God is jealous to protect life, love, truth, freedom, righteousness—His creation—and He can only do so by operating in harmony with His own character, i.e. His own designs. God will not break His own design laws, in other words He won't violate liberty by using power to punish sinners—to do so would destroy that which He jealously protects.

When you hear God is a jealous God what do you hear—the resentment, anger, envy elements, or do you hear the vigilant to guard and protect that which He loves?

One way for you to protect yourself in the future from drawing the wrong conclusion from texts that say God is a jealous God, is to replace the “j” with a “z” God is a zealous God. According to Strong's Hebrew Lexicon:

נָאֵר [qana' /kaw·naw/] v. A primitive root; TWOT 2038; GK 7861; 33 occurrences; AV translates as “jealous” 10 times, “envy” nine times, “jealousy” five times, “envious” four times,



“zealous” twice, “very” twice, and “zeal” once.²

Thus, zealous is a legitimate translation and guards against attributing selfish and sinful attributes to God.

Read second paragraph, “Our loyalty is important...” This is well said, bravo! You cannot genuinely be loyal to God by adhering to a checklist of rules!

Read third paragraph, “Where there is loyalty...” Again another well stated paragraph. They recognize exactly that loyalty is what God wants, and it cannot be achieved by threatening to kill those who are not loyal.

Yet, that is exactly what much of Christianity teaches—why? Because the false law has been accepted and it appears to be right and just to teach that God will use His power to punish the wicked. Yet, this teaching results in undermining loyalty to God, damaging human reason, creating mindless thoughtless Christians who will hurt others in the name of their god.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “There are many...” This is so true, when our conscience is not clear it activates stress circuits, we are anxious, fearful, keyed up, not at ease. We seek peace, but if we don’t repent how do we lessen the pressure from our conscience? By denial and distortion, projection and externalization. We begin to lie to ourselves and others, which only causes more fear of being found out, more vigilance to keep track of every lie so we won’t be found out, which continually activates the stress circuits of our brain. Thus we slowly damage the faculties God has given us that are sensitive to the movements of the Spirit of God. We sear our consciences, damage our reason, inflame our bodies, ruin our health, destroy our relationships and in the end die isolated and alone.

Read second paragraph, “Our consciences function...” Gentiles show that the law is written on their hearts, how? What causes this?

For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law,¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) Rom 2:13-15

Notice the Gentiles, “do my nature” what the law requires—what does this mean? What kind of law can people do by nature? What kind of law can people do without actually being informed about the

² Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



law?

Do people naturally perform circumcisions? Were the Gentiles circumcising their children? So, circumcision is not part of God's design law—it was something that was added later for another purpose.

Do people naturally pay taxes? So, the Temple tax was an added law and something the Gentiles didn't do.

Do people natural pay tithe? So the tithe is an imposed law—why do you think God imposed a 10% tithe? Did God need the money? Could the 10% tithe have been a way to prevent corrupt religious leaders from imposing higher levies in the name of their god?

Do you remember how when God gave the instructions on animal sacrifice some people sacrificed hundreds or thousands thinking more blood would please God. Could it be that God instituted a 10% tithe to prevent people from thinking they could receive greater blessings if they gave greater tithe? Notice, God never put a percentage on the love offering—just the obligatory tithe.

So, if imposed laws are not kept by nature, what type of law were these Gentiles keeping? Design law, the laws of love, truth, liberty, worship, exertion etc.

I love this quotation from the book *The Desire of Ages* what do you think?

Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. Even among the **heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness;** before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. **Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly,** those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. **Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God.** {DA 638.2}

This is only possible if we understand God's law as design law. The moment we insert human law constructs this cannot be, because then there is some imposed rule, ritual, action, that a person is required to take before they can be saved. They must legally accept the blood of Jesus as their sin payment, they must be baptized by immersion, they must keep the Sabbath etc. But Paul in Romans denies this.

And so do we—we stand firmly on the truth that God is love and is the Creator of reality and His laws are the laws that life is built upon—including His moral laws!



WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph, “Obedience starts in the mind...” What does it mean “higher authority”?

From where does genuine authority arise?

- Might and power—the most powerful are the authority we should follow?
- Position—pastor, priest, pope, president, God? Does authority arise from position?
- Degree/education—physician, theologian?
- Title—King, Queen, Prophet?
- Species—human, angel, deity?

What about from truth itself? Is the truth authoritative, and because God is the source of all truth then God is authoritative, but not merely because He is powerful, but because He is true?

The King of glory stooped low to take humanity. Rude and forbidding were His earthly surroundings. His glory was veiled, that the majesty of His outward form might not become an object of attraction. He shunned all outward display. Riches, worldly honor, and human greatness can never save a soul from death; **Jesus purposed that no attraction of an earthly nature should call men to His side. Only the beauty of heavenly truth must draw those who would follow Him.** DA 43

THURSDAY

Trustworthiness

There are two types of untrustworthiness:

- The malevolent sociopath who plots evil cannot be trusted
- The immature who means well but doesn’t possess the ability to carry out the duty—cannot be trusted

Peter in the upper room....

Read third paragraph, “Trustworthiness implies...”

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SABBATH MARCH 3, 2018 CLASS will meet at the **Hamilton Community Church at 10:20 a.m.** We will be back at the Courthouse the following week.

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

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

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

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

*In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church: **Mental Health Matters** Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing*

The Developing Brain Thursday, February 8, 2018

Environment, experience, and choice alter human DNA and impact brain structure and function. Learn how traumatic experience, diet, addictive substances, television, healthy nurturing and even belief in God alter our, genes, brain structure and brain function. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

Neurobiology of Depression and Drug Free Treatments Thursday, March 8, 2018

Depression is a complex disorder with alterations in both brain and body, loss of brain volume with altered brain circuits and even change in genetic expression? Discover how you can minimize your risk of depression and make changes in your daily routines that can protect your brain. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

Addictions and the Adolescent Brain Thursday, April 12, 2018

Adolescence is a time of marked vulnerability to addictions. Explore the brain's reward pathway, healthy activities which activate this pathway and how addictions hijack normal reward circuitry and damage the brain. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

The Mind- God's Design & What Went Wrong Thursday, May 10, 2018

The human mind was designed with separate and distinct faculties to operate in a beautiful harmony. Something has damaged that balance and caused pain, suffering and illness. Discover God's design for the mind, what went wrong and how to restore balance to your mind. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

The Aging Brain Thursday, August 13, 2018

What happens to the brain as we age? This presentation will examine the evidence-based lifestyle and non-pharmacological interventions which will protect your brain and diminish your risk of dementia. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings. Copies of Dr. Jennings brand new book, *The Aging Brain*, will be available.

Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew! Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings



Stewardship Motives of the Heart Lesson 7 1Q 2018

Honesty With God presented by Tim Jennings (Announcements at end)

SABBATH

Read memory text: “But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.” Luke 8:15

What does it mean?

In this text, with what are we honest to be about? The word, which is both the truth and Jesus, who is the Word made flesh.

What does it mean to be honest with the word?

Does it mean:

- We must have the correct definitions for Bible imagery, metaphor, and prophecy?
- We must have the correct doctrines?

Doesn't it simply mean that we genuinely seek to comprehend the true meaning and embrace it, choose it and apply it to our lives as soon as we are capable of doing so?

In other words, it isn't about what we actually know, but what attitude we have when approaching the word.

Why is this important?

Is there a connection between truth and cleansing from sin?

Jesus said “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” (Jn 8:32)

What does this mean? From what does the truth free us?

Do the things we believe have any bearing on our salvation?

How and why?

What is salvation? It is healing or restoration into Godlikeness—can we do this in our own strength? No! We receive healing, i.e. restoration, renewal, writing of the law on the heart and mind, via the work of God through the achievements of Christ and the actions of the Holy Spirit.



But, what is the method or gateway God utilizes to bring about this healing in each of us individually? What is the avenue into your heart and my heart?

It is your good judgment, which is the combined faculties of reason and conscience. This avenue is how truth gains entry into our thoughts and we then think through and choose to form our beliefs or not. And our beliefs shape our values, our perspectives, attitudes, brain circuits, and ultimately how we process and understand new facts and truths.

This is why the Bible says “Come let us reason together...” Isa 1:18

Jesus is the Word made flesh, as we partake of the truth Jesus revealed it becomes our thoughts, which form our beliefs, which become filters we use to understand and make sense of our lives, what is happening, from where we find meaning, purpose—all of this shapes who we are and are becoming.

The brain responds and changes based on the thoughts we think, the beliefs we hold, the God we worship. The brain does not form our thoughts, or beliefs. The brain will rewire its circuitry to form patterns of thinking, or constructs of information processing based on our choices through life. These pathways become like filters or lenses that are automated and we will initially see information through the historic methods of processing.

These pathways can and do change as we change our understanding, beliefs, perspectives.

What makes you uniquely you is a combination of your physical self and your habituated methods and patterns of thinking, the beliefs you choose to hold and form, and your memories. The most important elements are the habituated methods of thinking, your beliefs and memories, the physical self is the least important and this is why we can get a new physical self at the second coming, but we don't get a new character at the second coming. The character must be formed here and now.

This is part of the salvation process, taking individuals who are habituated in selfishness, in fear, in exploitation of others, who have beliefs that increase fear and undermine love, who have memories of either being mistreated that cause resentment, anger, desire for retaliation, or memories that cause shame, guilt, loss of value of self, feelings of worthlessness, and through the application of truth and love changing the firing patterns, replacing false beliefs with truths, and reprocessing memories to form healthier and more truthful conclusions and meanings about self and the world around.

In this way we become renewed, healed, transformed to have character like Christ. This is not a work we can do on our own, because

- the truth only originates in God
- the ability to understand that truth is from the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit
- the restless desire for something more is the work of the Holy Spirit
- the pure motives, peace, love, kindness, forgiveness, etc. are gifts of pure character wrought out by Jesus and given to us via the Spirit as the truth wins us to trust in Him and we invite



Him into our lives. The Spirit takes perfection of Christ and we bond with Him, we unite with Him in our inmost being and we become One just as Jesus prayed:

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Jn 17:20-23

With this in mind, let's examine a little more what honesty is.

Read first paragraph, "What is an honest..." Do you think circumstances matter, or are we supposed to be 100% honest at all times?

Have you ever misled someone, not just withheld information, but misled them in order to give them a surprise party? Is this sin?

I remember as a child reading *The Hiding Place*, the famous story of Corrie Ten Boom and hiding the Jews. When the Nazi's came in and asked if they were hiding any Jews—do you remember how it was presenting as not lying because they said the Jews were under the table, when the Jews were hiding in a cellar beneath the floor, under a rug, under the table?

- Were they lying?
- Was the answer given intended to be truthful, to give accurate information in answer to the Nazi soldiers, to actually give them the knowledge they were seeking or was it intended to obfuscate and mislead?

This was a classic level four method of lying by telling a partial truth and as a child I learned that it was okay to deceive as long as one does it with some truthful statement.

Rahab—you know the story, if you were one of those spies hiding in her place and the city guard comes and questions her are praying, "Dear Lord, please be with Rahab right now. We know she doesn't know you as we do, but please lead her to speak truthfully at this moment?"

Hmmm....

What if a person, in a situation like Corrie Ten Boom or Rahab, believes that their lying is wrong, but would rather sacrifice their own life and be eternally lost than assist in killing another person...are they out of harmony with God or in harmony?

Well, if you value the Bible and read Hebrews, one would have to conclude that they are in harmony—that God isn't concerned primarily with the behavior, but with the heart motive for the



behavior.

Now, nowhere do we find God commending Rahab for lying; she is commended for acting in trust, faith, and for putting self in harms way to protect others.

Regarding whether misleading with truthful statements is lying, here is one person's perspective—do you agree?

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." {PP 309.2}

False speaking in any matter, every attempt or purpose to deceive our neighbor, is here included. An *intention* to deceive is what constitutes falsehood. By a glance of the eye, a motion of the hand, an expression of the countenance, a falsehood may be told as effectually as by words. All intentional overstatement, every hint or insinuation calculated to convey an erroneous or exaggerated impression, **even the statement of facts in such a manner as to mislead, is falsehood. This precept forbids every effort to injure our neighbor's reputation by misrepresentation or evil surmising, by slander or tale bearing. Even the intentional suppression of truth, by which injury may result to others, is a violation of the ninth commandment. {PP 309.3}**

What does the commandment actually say, "Thou shall not bear false witness *against* thy neighbor."

And the author above uses the same caveat, the precept forbids every effort to *injure* our neighbor. Thus, again is it primarily about the factual accuracy of the statement or the intention of the statement? Can one make truthful and factual statements that are intended to mislead and injure others? Would such truthful statements be right or wrong?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "One thing most..." When you hear "dishonesty" what do you think? What does this mean to you?

What is your concern about people when you think of dishonesty? Is it merely they were not honest, or do you hear within the concept of dishonesty, exploitation, someone seeking to harm, to take advantage?

So if you had a surprise party thrown for you, and you thought you were going to one event but instead you find yourself at a party for you; do you, once the party is sprung, believe you have been sinned against? Do you experience yourself as wronged, exploited or injured? Why or why not? If not, do you realize that you were deceived, but no sin happened—why? Because no harm was intended nor perpetrated against you.



Did God's prophets ever use methods of deception, i.e. told falsehoods, made up stories, lied?

By the word of the Lord one of the sons of the prophets said to his companion, "Strike me with your weapon"... Then the prophet went and stood by the road waiting for the king. He disguised himself with his headband down over his eyes. **[Note, how was the prophet wounded? By self directing another person to wound him.]**³⁹ As the king passed by, the prophet called out to him, "Your servant went into the thick of the battle, and someone came to me with a captive and said, 'Guard this man. If he is missing, it will be your life for his life, or you must pay a talent of silver.'⁴⁰ While your servant was busy here and there, the man disappeared." "That is your sentence," the king of Israel said. "You have pronounced it yourself."

⁴¹ Then the prophet quickly removed the headband from his eyes, and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. ⁴² He said to the king, "This is what the Lord says: 'You have set free a man I had determined should die. Therefore it is your life for his life, your people for his people.' "⁴³ Sullen and angry, the king of Israel went to his palace in Samaria. 1Kings 20:35-43

Was the prophet honest with the king about what had happened to him? Was this a violation of the Commandment?

The Lord sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. ² The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, ³ but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

⁴ "Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."

⁵ David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die! ⁶ He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."

⁷ Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! 2Sam 12:1-7

Who sent Nathan to David? Was Nathan truthful about the situation he was bringing before David and why he was bringing it? Was this a violation of the Commandment?

Why is neither of these examples of misleading a violation of the Commandment? Because the commandment is about dishonesty that injures another—in these cases the deception was designed to remove the self-deception and bring truth to bear in the hearts of the two kings!



Level four and below people operate upon rules and cannot process on this level. They will argue that what I am saying is subtle deception, for them life is easier with black and white rules. They prefer to be able to simply speak truths regardless of the injury to others resting safe in “What I said was true.”

Now, what about honesty or dishonesty to children?

How about this situation:

A 12-year-old child is asked to either do special music or read a Scripture for church. They do a very poor job, either many wrong notes, or misreads words, slowly sounds them out, getting words wrong. But when they finish the church applauds and the adults on stage say “Good job. Well done.”

- Are they being honest with the child?
- Is there any danger labeling poor performance as good performance?
- Do children of a certain age know whether they played or read well or not?
- What happens in the child’s mind when in their judgment, because the notes were off, because they stumbled and didn’t know some of the words, they conclude that they didn’t do well, but the adults they look up to say “Good job! Well done”?
- Are we being honest?

What about in school when everyone gets a participation award?

Are we being honest in society when we tell people that if you get upset about something it is because someone else was not sensitive enough to your needs and they didn’t create a safe space for you to flourish?

What did Jesus say we should expect from others?

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.” Mt 24:9

Are we honest with young people if we tell them they have a right that people conform their behavior to not upset them?

Where is the line between our responsibility to be kind, honest, caring people never seeking to injure, offend, harm another, and being held hostage to the way someone else may interpret our actions?

Do we help people to mature, or do we create a falsehood, a false understanding of reality when we lead people to believe that their hurt feelings are not their own responsibility, but the fault of an insensitive society?

What did Jesus teach?



But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Mt 5:44,45

If we want to follow Jesus we want to deal honestly with the word, to lead people to the truth of how reality actually works. And notice what example Jesus gives about being like the Father, God causes the sun to rise and the rain to fall on the evil and the good—this is design law, the laws of God are constants and never change.

- We are to understand reality, God's kingdom and realize that when people mistreat us, they are showing sickness in their own heart and mind (from abundance of heart mouth speaks)
- if we love them we don't take it personally, we pray as Jesus did "Father forgive them...."
- We choose, in governance of self to stay in harmony with God, with life, with the only method that heals and restores.
- But, when we go down the "my rights" approach and demand others conform to meet our needs, we move out of harmony with God, and promote the principles of selfishness which always results in division.

Are we being honest in our society today?

The lesson really wants us to focus on the Tithe, so let's turn to that subject, read last paragraph, "No appeal is made..." What is the purpose of tithe?

Isn't the tithe purposed for the gospel ministry?

To whom is tithe to be paid?

Is the tithe only to be paid to institutional churches, or is it to be used wherever God impresses you to place it for the spreading of the gospel?

Well here is one person's view, see if you agree with her view of the tithe and how it is to be used and where it is to go?

"There are ministers' wives... who have been devoted, earnest, whole-souled workers, giving Bible readings and praying with families, helping along by personal efforts just as successfully as their husbands. These women give their whole time, and are told that they receive nothing for their labors because their husbands receive wages. I tell them to go forward and all such decisions will be revised. The Word says, "The labourer is worthy of his hire." Luke 10:7. When any such decision as this is made, I will, in the name of the Lord, protest. **I will feel it my duty to create a fund from my tithe money to pay these women who are accomplishing just as essential work as the ministers are doing, and this tithe I will reserve for work in the same line as that of the ministers, hunting for souls, fishing for**



souls. {DG 106.1}

It has been presented to me for years [by whom?] that my tithe was to be appropriated by myself to aid the white and colored ministers who were neglected and did not receive sufficient [income to] properly to support their families... {2MR 99.3}

I have myself appropriated my tithe to the most needy cases brought to my notice. I have been instructed to do this, and as the money is not withheld from the Lord's treasury, [wait, it wasn't being given to the organized church, yet was not withheld from the Lord's treasury, why?] it is not a matter that should be commented upon, for it will necessitate my making known these matters, which I do not desire to do, because it is not best. {2MR 99.5}

Some cases have been kept before me for years, and I have supplied their needs from the tithe, as God has instructed me to do. And if any person shall say to me, Sister White, will you appropriate my tithe where you know it is most needed, I shall say, Yes, I will; and I have done so... {2MR 100.1}

What is the purpose of the tithe? To whom is it to be paid?

MONDAY

The Life of Faith—what is that? What is faith?

Trust, and upon what is trust based?

What in your life increases your trust, confidence and faith in another person?

Would it be experience with them? What kind of experiences increase your trust in them?

I propose there are four elements necessary for one to experience healthy trust or faith:

1. The other person genuinely loves you more than self, and would sacrifice self for you.
2. The other person has demonstrated mature self-governance, the ability to be reliable and consistent in carrying out what they have said they will do.
3. The other person possesses genuine wisdom or understanding of how reality actually works and operates in harmony with design law

(First three together constitute someone who is genuinely trustworthy—so trustworthiness is the requirement)

4. You come to actually know that other person for yourself and thus experience 1,2 and 3 for yourself. You have been in situations in which you have experienced the other person coming



through for you.

Are there elements that I might have missed?

Consider the problems when only a part of these elements are involved:

- A person who loves you more than self and would sacrifice self for you, but they are 5 or 10 years old? While their motives are trustworthy, they haven't yet matured to self-mastery and cannot be trusted
- A person who loves you more than self, and who does have self-governance, but believes in an imperial god, with imposed rules and rigidly applies those rules. Can you trust them to do what is right in every situation, even though they have right motives?

Do these three elements bear upon our trust or faith in God?

So what do we make of Heb 12:2:

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

What does this mean?

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, "After all, anyone..." Tithe paying can absolutely be an expression of faith, but does that mean tithe pay is always an expression of faith?

Saying it another way, can people pay tithe without faith?

Are there spiritual blessings from paying tithe? What?

- Actively reminds us of the source of all blessings
- Puts us in active partnership with God
- Keeps us humble
- Practices honesty and integrity by returning an honest 10%
- Exercises faith in God by trusting Him when finances are tight
- others?

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, "We do not make tithe holy..." What is the purpose of the tithe? For what task?

The promotion of the gospel?



Revelation 14 says that at the end of time the eternal gospel is to go to the world—what is that gospel message?

What do you think of this description?

The message proclaimed by the angel flying in the midst of heaven is **the everlasting gospel**, the same gospel that was declared in Eden when God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." Here was the first promise of a Saviour that would stand on the field of battle to contest the power of Satan and prevail against him. **Christ came to our world to represent the character of God as it is represented in His holy law; for His law is a transcript of His character. Christ was both the law and the gospel. The angel that proclaims the everlasting gospel proclaims the law of God; for the gospel of salvation brings man to obedience of the law, whereby their characters are formed after the divine similitude...** {1MR 44.2} [What law? Design or imposed? Do we form different characters if we adhere to different laws? Why?]

Satan has been persevering and untiring in his efforts to prosecute the work he began in heaven, to change the law of God. [Can God's law be changed? Why not? It is design law, so what does Satan do? He is the Father of lies and changes how we conceive or understand God's law from design law to imposed law] He has succeeded in making the world believe the theory he presented in heaven before his fall, **that the law of God was faulty, and needed revising.** [What kind of law can be revised?] **A large part of the professed Christian church, by their attitude, if not by their words, show that they have accepted the same error.** [Meaning? That they have accepted the lie that God's law functions like human law] But if in one jot or tittle the law of God has been changed, Satan has gained on earth that which he could not gain in heaven. He has prepared his delusive snare, hoping to take captive the church and the world. But not all will be taken in the snare. **A line of distinction is being drawn between the children of obedience and the children of disobedience, the loyal and true and the disloyal and untrue.** Two great parties are developed, the worshipers of the beast and his image, and the worshipers of the true and living God. {1MR 45.3}

What if we are giving our tithe to organizations that are not taking the gospel to the world?

With that question in mind turn to...

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, "Revival and reformation...." What do we want to accomplish in light of the 3 Angels, revival or to reshape, rebuild, reform the church?



Do you believe the church needs reformation?

What need to happen to complete the reformation started in the 15th Century?

The next paragraph states, “Revival and reformation demand a commitment, and tithing is part of that commitment. If we hold back from God what He asks of us, we cannot expect Him to respond to what we ask of Him.”

What might this inadvertently suggest? Could it suggest the idea that tithing is a deal with God? If we pay our tithe then God will respond to what we ask of Him?

Is tithe paying a prerequisite to praying to God?

Is God unwilling to listen to those who don't pay tithe?

Is God unwilling to respond to those who don't pay tithe?

If we don't pay tithe could it undermine the response we would otherwise receive from God? How?

If we take any action that causes us to live in fear, guilt, insecurity, shame; if we sear our consciences, then are we as receptive to God? Are we as capable of hearing or seeing God's answers? Are we as likely to appreciate and accept God's answers?

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SABBATH MARCH 3, 2018 CLASS will meet at the **Hamilton Community Church at 10:20 a.m.** We will be back at the Courthouse the following week.

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

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

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

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

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

Mental Health Matters

Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

The Developing Brain Thursday, February 8, 2018

Environment, experience, and choice alter human DNA and impact brain structure and function. Learn how traumatic experience, diet, addictive substances, television, healthy nurturing and even belief in God alter our, genes, brain structure and brain function. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

Neurobiology of Depression and Drug Free Treatments Thursday, March 8, 2018

Depression is a complex disorder with alterations in both brain and body, loss of brain volume with altered brain circuits and even change in genetic expression? Discover how you can minimize your risk of depression and make changes in your daily routines that can protect your brain. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

Addictions and the Adolescent Brain Thursday, April 12, 2018

Adolescence is a time of marked vulnerability to addictions. Explore the brain's reward pathway, healthy activities which activate this pathway and how addictions hijack normal reward circuitry and damage the brain. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

The Mind- God's Design & What Went Wrong Thursday, May 10, 2018

The human mind was designed with separate and distinct faculties to operate in a beautiful harmony. Something has damaged that balance and caused pain, suffering and illness. Discover God's design for the mind, what went wrong and how to restore balance to your mind. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

The Aging Brain Thursday, August 13, 2018

What happens to the brain as we age? This presentation will examine the evidence-based lifestyle and non-pharmacological interventions which will protect your brain and diminish your risk of dementia. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings. Copies of Dr. Jennings brand new book, *The Aging Brain*, will be available.

Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew! Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings



Stewardship Motives of the Heart Lesson 8 1Q 2018

The Impact of Tithing

presented by Tim Jennings

Announcements at end

I can't remember a lesson that I did not want to teach, but this lesson I did not enjoy—in fact, it grieved me. It brought me much sadness, and moved me nearly to tears as I read what was contained in this lesson. I would prefer to skip this lesson, but I won't and I pray we can explore it in love and find truth, even if the lesson is as upsetting to some of you as it was to me.

Before we get into the lesson I want to state my position on tithing so that no one will misunderstand our discussion below:

My position on tithing:

- I have paid tithe since childhood
- I believe the tithe is God's money not my money and is to be returned to God
- When I return the tithe I am not giving offering, I am being honest with God, which in turn blesses me by strengthening in my character the trait of honest decision-making
- I believe the tithe is to be used exclusively for the spreading of the gospel

SABBATH

The second paragraph states, "Today, the tithe is for the support of the gospel. When rightly understood it serves as a spiritual measurement of our relationship with God."

The first sentence I absolutely agree with—The Tithe is for the support of the gospel. But I don't get the second sentence. I am not sure I understanding what they mean—a spiritual measure of our relationship with God?

Do we increase the amount of tithe we give as our relationship with God grows?

I have been giving the same percentage of my income in tithe my entire life, but my relationship with God has changed, grown, deepened, developed, expanded over the years, is the 10% an accurate measure when it never changes?

Did Jesus use tithe as a measure of our relationship with Him?

What did Jesus use?

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Jn 13:34,35



What did the Apostle John write?

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 1John 4:7-8

Does Jesus ever, anywhere, use tithe as a measure of our relationship with Him?

In fact, Jesus said the following:

“Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and **the love of God**. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone. Lk 11:42

Here is a group of people paying tithe, should we then conclude then, that they must have a very good spiritual relationship with God because they pay tithe? So, is tithe an accurate measure of our relationship with God?

I want to point out that Jesus, in the passage above, did not eliminate or do away with tithe paying, nor did He suggest it should not be done. What He did do however, is demonstrate the act of tithe paying has no direct bearing on one's relationship with God and cannot be used as a measure of that relationship.

What is the problem of using tithe paying as a measure of our spiritual relationship with God? I could set up the idea that our relationship with God is financial—or a quid pro quo, if we don't pay we don't get to have a relationship, or don't get blessings, or God doesn't give us His special attention. Many subtle distortions can enter when we suggest tithe paying is a measure of our relationship with God.

In fact, the lesson by attempting to link tithe paying as a measure of our relationship with God risks inciting fear into our relationship with God. If a person has not paid a tithe, then, according to the lesson, their relationship with God is poor. Thus, the more tithe we pay the better our relationship. This leads to fear base, and coercive type religion which destroys individuality.

A person can have a relationship with God who has never paid tithe—why? Because they never heard of such a thing, but when they do have a relationship with God, and do know about the tithe, then they eagerly give to God what is God's. Finally, persons can pay tithe faithfully without having a relationship with God.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Jesus commands us...” There is much in this paragraph that is to be commended, we are to be involved in spreading the gospel, which is taking a message to people with a



terminal condition that will result in their not dying, i.e. being saved for all eternity. This is the most important mission for any of us. And we are in a war against evil powers that seek to keep people in ignorance and darkness and even get people to partake of false treatments that rather than healing cause further damage.

Is the tithe to be used to fund any group, any program, any church, any mission, or only those that are taking the genuine healing Remedy from God to the world—the real gospel?

The sentence “We must pray for unity to be faithful in funding the mission...” Is this a subtle suggestion that we must pray that all of us give our tithe to the same organization, or merely that people return tithe to entities that are spreading the true gospel?

There are several sentences I am going to read from the lesson, which I think brings together the central message the lesson is directing us toward:

- SABBATH: “rightly understood [the tithe] serves as a spiritual measurement of our relationship with God.”
- SUNDAY second paragraph: “Tithe is part of the a system that funds God’s church. It is the greatest source of funding and the most equitable method for carrying out His mission.”
- SUNDAY fourth paragraph: “WE cannot afford to be disorganized, careless, or haphazard about funding the mission.”
- TUESDAY from first and second paragraph, “The laborer is worthy of his wages...Supporting such laborers with tithe, then, is foundational and fundamental to God’s work.”
- WEDNESDAY first paragraph, “God has a storehouse...The storehouse represented the location where religious services took place and from where the Levites were supported.”
- WEDNESDAY second paragraph, “In every dispensation, God has had a central storehouse to manage the tithe. Seventh-day Adventists make up a worldwide religion/church in which the storehouse principle is accepted and practiced.
- WEDNESDAY bottom green section, “Think what would happen if people were to send their tithe to wherever they wanted. If they did that what would happen to God’s work?

What is the message the authors are trying to say in this lesson?

- You relationship with God is measured by your tithe paying
- Tithe is used to fund the spreading of the gospel
- People are not to think for themselves and consider for themselves where God would have the tithe sent
- The tithe is to be sent only to the Seventh-day Adventist church

Is this the message the authors are sending or am I misstating it? If so, please do correct me on this, but this is how the lesson comes across to me.

Do we believe as Christians that throughout human history various church organizations stopped promoting a clear gospel message and those who continued to promote the true gospel eventually



created new organizations (known as the Reformation)? Do we believe that the Reformation has been progressive, in other words, truth slowly advancing?

If you could go back in time to Christians over the last 1000 years, would you recommend to those Christians that they take the time to evaluate whether the “gospel” being presented by their organization is the true gospel? And if they find their organization is not presenting the true gospel, what would recommend those Christians do with their tithe?

Should we do anything less today? Should we today actually stop and evaluate what is the gospel message that is to be going to the world, and then inquire, is the organization that is receiving my tithe spreading that gospel message? And if it is not, is it right to direct the tithe to an organization which you believe is spreading the true gospel?

The lesson would suggest we do not have the right nor responsibility to do this. That we are required to pay our tithe to an institution regardless of whether that institution is spreading the true gospel or not.

What would have happened in history if Christians had taken the time to stop, evaluate and then only send tithe to organizations that were spreading the true message about God and His character of love? Perhaps might some of institutions that have spread a false gospel have failed?

Could it be that good-hearted Christians, by blindly sending their tithe to institutions of their childhood loyalty, are funding programs that obstruct the gospel?

Could it be that blind thoughtless returning of the tithe without considering if the true gospel is being preached or not is actually delaying the final work and delaying the second coming of Christ?

If we do give tithe to individuals, or other programs than an institutional church, but that we are convinced are spreading the true gospel are we sinning, or are we doing exactly as God wants us to do?

One of the founders of the SDA church wrote this:

“There are ministers' wives... who have been devoted, earnest, whole-souled workers, giving Bible readings and praying with families, helping along by personal efforts just as successfully as their husbands. These women give their whole time, and are told that they receive nothing for their labors because their husbands receive wages. I tell them to go forward and all such decisions will be revised. The Word says, "The labourer is worthy of his hire." Luke 10:7. When any such decision as this is made, I will, in the name of the Lord, protest. **I will feel it my duty to create a fund from my tithe money to pay these women who are accomplishing just as essential work as the ministers are doing, and this tithe I will reserve for work in the same line as that of the ministers, hunting for souls, fishing for souls.**{DG 106.1}



It has been presented to me for years [by whom?] that my tithe was to be appropriated by myself to aid the white and colored ministers who were neglected and did not receive sufficient [income to] properly to support their families... {2MR 99.3}

I have myself appropriated my tithe to the most needy cases brought to my notice. I have been instructed to do this, and as the money is not withheld from the Lord's treasury, [wait, it wasn't being given to the organized church, yet was not withheld from the Lord's treasury, why?] it is not a matter that should be commented upon, for it will necessitate my making known these matters, which I do not desire to do, because it is not best. {2MR 99.5}

Some cases have been kept before me for years, and I have supplied their needs from the tithe, as God has instructed me to do. And if any person shall say to me, Sister White, will you appropriate my tithe where you know it is most needed, I shall say, Yes, I will; and I have done so... {2MR 100.1}

Did you notice that this person believed that her tithe was to go directly to people who were not funded by the institution, but who were promoting the true gospel message, she was 1) acting at God's direction and 2) the money was going into God's treasury, i.e. storehouse. The lesson authors would argue this is not the case because only the official institution is God's storehouse.

What do you think?

Do we all agree that the tithe should fund the gospel?

In Rev 14 it is entitled the "eternal gospel" the good news that is eternally true; true in eternity past as well as eternity future. This good news existed before humankind, before sin, and before the sacrifice of Christ. This is the good news about God Himself.

What do you believe is the final message of mercy, the final gospel message to lighten the world for Christ's return?

This is what the SDA church was founded to take to the world:

"It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. **His character is to be made known.** Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth... **The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.**" Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

Do we believe this is the gospel?

Has God always been merciful, always been love? Then if this has always been true how is it called



the good news, as if it wasn't known?

Because Satan has lied about God and misrepresented God as something other than love, but how?

Historic Adventism taught the following:

The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God. Upon this battle we are now entering,—**a battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah,** between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition. {GC88 582.2}

What do you understand this to mean? What are the laws of men? What are the precepts of God?

The Revelation 14 text about the eternal gospel calls us to worship Him who made the heavens....
What kind of law does creation operate upon?

Could it be that Satan's lies about God, which corrupt our understanding of God's character and make God out to be something other than love, are that God's law is imposed that function like human law, and thus God becomes the inflictor of pain, suffering and punishment?

Again, historic Adventism thought so:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, **it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. {DA 761.4}

Notice, Satan's argument about God's law—that God's law is the type of law that requires the ruling authority to inflict punishment. If people are teaching theologies that argue that justice requires God to inflict punishment for sin are they preaching the true gospel, or are they are continuing Satan's argument from the beginning? Are organizations that present such a false gospel to the world to receive the tithe?

I was listening to Christian radio in my car yesterday and a man called in and asked how he can witness to Muslims about Jesus. He said he has tried to tell them that they don't have to do all their works to get into heaven, that Jesus paid the price and they only need to accept His payment by faith for their sins and they will be saved. The theologian expert on the radio answered by saying that he believes we need to focus on sin, that all our righteousness is filthy rags, that all our best is so filled with sin it is offensive to God. And that God is personally offended at our sin and cannot tolerate to look at our sin. Therefore, our good works offend God because sin offends God and the only thing that will satisfy the offense our sin has caused God is the perfect blood sacrifice of His Son.



Is this the gospel? No! This is the false gospel, this message is not the truth, it is all based on the lie that God's law functions like our law and that God is the one who is the problem who needs changing by the death of Jesus. The true gospel is:

- God was in the Son reconciling the world to Himself...
- For God so loved the world...
- If God is for us who can be against us...
- If you have seen Jesus you have seen the Father
- God is love, the source of all good, life, and health—God is not the source of pain, suffering and death.
- God's law is design law—the laws upon which life is built thus we worship Him who made the heavens...

Paul in Romans 2:13-15 states:

“For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.”¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, **do by nature things required by the law**, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law,¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts...

What kind of law can people do by nature? Do people by nature get circumcised? Do people by nature get baptized in water? Do people by nature pay tithe? What kind of law do people do by nature? Design law, which is God's law, which are the principles of love, truth and freedom.

So what is the gospel, the eternal gospel? The good news about God Himself, which requires we come back to understand God's law as design law and reject the dictator views of God.

Thus, programs and institutions that teach God as the source of inflicted pain, suffering, torment, torture, death, are not presenting the gospel and the tithe rightly should not fund such distorted views about God.

Let me put it another way, if we keep funding and promoting false views about God, will we ever finish the work of taking the final message of mercy to the world?

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “The blessing in Malachi...” I think the lesson did a good job of pointing out that the blessings of tithing are more than financial, but spiritual as well, that tithing impacts our character development, strengthens our confidence and trust in God, humbles us and reminds us of where all blessings originate. This is a great point.

What do you think about this point in the paragraph, “Also, when we are blessed by God, we are obligated to share those blessings with the less fortunate.”?



How is this true?
How could this be misunderstood?

Read third paragraph, “From tithing a double blessing comes...” Why is it that the more you give the more you receive?

How can you get more by giving away what you have?
Is this the wisdom of the world, or is this foolishness to the world?

The last paragraph states, “Our heavenly Father did not originate the plan of systematic benevolence to enrich Himself, but to be a great blessing to man. He saw that this system of beneficence was just what man needed.”

Do you agree?
Why did humankind need this?
How is it a blessing to humans?

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “Thus, salvation is a gift...” Let’s affirm the truth in this section:

- Salvation is a gift from God and it is not something we created, earned, or worked to merit!
- The tithe is God’s and we earn nothing by returning it to Him

However, there are several problems in this paragraph, what problems do you see?

Undeserving—if we mean by this word that we did not create the remedy, did not work to earn the cure to our sin condition then this is correct. However, if we mean we are so worthless, and of such little value that we don’t deserve God’s love and intervention to save us—then this is false. “For God so loved the world...” “While we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” It is true we don’t deserve salvation as something we earned, but we do deserve salvation as the object of God’s love.

For instance, if your child disobeyed you and drank some poison—what would your child deserve from you? Would they deserve you to punish and kill them, or would they deserve you to intervene and save them? Why would they deserve your intervention, not based on their behavior being so good they earned your saving interventions, but because of who they are to you and your love for them.

So this idea of undeserving is understood either level 1-4, which is behavior-based and through the imposed law lens, or 5-7 through the lens of love and God’s design for life.

What do you think of this sentence “Salvation comes because the merits of Christ’s own perfect sacrifice are credited to our account.”?



- In this view what would be the problem if one didn't accept the credit to their account?
 - Sin would still be recorded in their legal record in heaven
 - In the Judgment God would find sin still in their heavenly ledger
 - God would then weigh up the list of sins and tally up an amount of pain and suffering and then inflict it upon the sinner before killing him or her

Is such a view the true gospel?

Should we use the tithe to fund this type of gospel?

Why is this gospel false?

First, they reference Ephesians 2:8,9, let's read the Scripture and see if what they say is what the Scripture says:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

What does the Scripture say about salvation?

- It comes from God's grace
- We partake of it through our trust in God
- We do not create the saving remedy ourselves nor earn it
- It is a free gift from God
- So we cannot brag that we are better than others

Did you hear anything legal in this? Did you hear anything about accounts and credits?

So why is this view a false gospel?

- It is founded on the false law construct
- It misrepresents God's character and methods
- It incites fear and undermines truth in God
- It creates mental and spiritual barriers to reconciliation with God (doctrines designed to hide and protect us from God)
- It prevents people from opening their hearts to God for actual healing and restoration to godliness

I submit, it is this type of theological construct which has actually delayed the second coming of Christ and prevented the eternal gospel from going to the world and if Christians would begin examining the evidence for themselves and begin using the tithe to fund the true gospel then the world would be lighted and Christ would come.

What is the true gospel?



God is love—God runs His universe upon love, which requires genuine freedom, therefore God never coerces, never uses power to inflict punishment for sin. Why? Because such methods destroy love and incite rebellion. God’s laws are not rules like sinners make, but are design protocols upon which reality is built.

We are all born in sin, conceived in iniquity, born with a condition we did not choose, but which if unremedied will result in death. Thus, we are born with a terminal condition and have no ability to create a cure. Jesus came, “he who knew no sin became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God.” Jesus came to procure the remedy we could not procure. We now, through God’s grace and the victory of Christ, have the option of trusting God and partaking of the cure He provides at no cost to us. When we do this, we are transformed in the inner being, sinfulness—fear and selfishness, deceit, greed, pride etc. are **blotted out of our characters** and we develop the fruits of the Spirit. The records in heaven, in which our names “characters” are registered record the transformation and renewal that actually happens within us when we partake of Jesus. This is salvation, healing, renewing, regenerating the person within.

This only happens for those who trust God, and trust requires that we know God, thus the eternal gospel is always about God. This is the message we are to be taking to the world. This is what our tithes are to fund!

FRIDAY

Read question two—could it be that if Christians held back their funds from organizations that have misrepresented God that Christ would have come sooner?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SABBATH MARCH 3, 2018 CLASS will meet at the **Hamilton Community Church at 10:20 a.m.** We will be back at the Courthouse the following week.

The Remedy APP: Thanks to all of you, our supporters, The Remedy App is now available for free for Android and Apple devices but *The Remedy* is not available on a multi-Bible app. My Bible App by by developer Denys Dolganenko at mybible.zone

SPECIAL Thanks to Karin Covi, who researched and found probably the best Bible App available on the market and contacted them and they have put The Remedy on their platform. This app has hundreds of resources available, can compare different Bible versions on the same screen and it is FREE! The Icon for the My Bible App is below:



NEW TV PROGRAM: Starting in March Come and Reason is launching a new TV Program—The Dr. Tim Jennings Show on WBTB Network.

Watch our website and Facebook page for announcements regarding the upcoming programs.

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

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

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

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

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

Last Thursday February 8, We had our first community lecture event on The Developing Brain at the Hixson United Methodist Church and it was very well attended and received. We had about 20 people from our class and online listeners come out and support us and I want to thank all of you for your support. Our next talk will be on **Neurobiology of Depression and Drug Free Treatments Thursday, March 8, 2018**

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

Mental Health Matters

Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

Neurobiology of Depression and Drug Free Treatments Thursday, March 8, 2018

Depression is a complex disorder with alterations in both brain and body, loss of brain volume with altered brain circuits and even change in genetic expression? Discover how you can minimize your risk of depression and make changes in your daily routines that can protect your brain. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

Addictions and the Adolescent Brain Thursday, April 12, 2018

Adolescence is a time of marked vulnerability to addictions. Explore the brain's reward pathway, healthy activities which



activate this pathway and how addictions hijack normal reward circuitry and damage the brain. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

The Mind- God's Design & What Went Wrong Thursday, May 10, 2018

The human mind was designed with separate and distinct faculties to operate in a beautiful harmony. Something has damaged that balance and caused pain, suffering and illness. Discover God's design for the mind, what went wrong and how to restore balance to your mind. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

The Aging Brain Thursday, August 13, 2018

What happens to the brain as we age? This presentation will examine the evidence-based lifestyle and non-pharmacological interventions which will protect your brain and diminish your risk of dementia. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings. Copies of Dr. Jennings brand new book, *The Aging Brain*, will be available.

Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew! Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings



2018 Q1 Stewardship Lesson 9

Offerings of Gratitude

presented by Lori Atkins

We are studying Lesson 9 in our quarterly about Stewardship and Motives of the Heart, and the title of this week's lesson is "Offerings of Gratitude", and I found a lot to like and be positive about in this lesson! You can see why by looking at the first two paragraphs in Saturday's lesson. Our God is a giving God; this great truth is seen most powerfully in the sacrifice of Jesus. " 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life' " (John 3:16, NKJV). Or in this verse: " 'If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!' " (Luke 11:13, NKJV). God gives and gives; it's His character. Thus, we who seek to reflect that character need to give, as well. It's hard to imagine more of a contradiction in terms than that of "a selfish Christian."

So what is an offering? Is it the same as tithe? Is it only money or financial?

What else can we give as an offering? Just as the blessings that come from the open windows of heaven are not strictly financial, neither are our offerings! We may have means, we may have special talents or skills, we all have different spiritual gifts, we are to offer our bodies as living sacrifices. I believe the blessings we are designed to receive by cheerful giving...as well as the blessings we can be to others... should involve more than just putting a check in the plate each week, then watching a mission spotlight video, and simply hoping the money went to good use.

That same idea is what made me pause when reading the last sentence in the 3rd paragraph:

"On the day that Jesus welcomes the redeemed into heaven, we will see those who accepted His grace, and realize that those acceptances were made possible by our sacrificial offerings."

Presumptuous? a bit selfish? not convinced that will be our first thought?

SUNDAY

Where Your Treasure Is

Matthew 6:19-21 is a familiar text associating the devotion and attachment of our hearts with where and what we store up as treasure. Today, maybe more than at any other time in my lifetime, there is so much focus on piling up earthly treasures. And look at the words used to describe these earthly treasure chests: thieves can steal, moths and vermin can destroy – anyone had a sweater or clothes packed away and a moth literally destroyed it?

Or, what about inflation? If you stuff your money in a mattress or keep it in an account that earns no interest or return, what happens to it...what does inflation do to the value of your money?

Even if you do invest your treasure in securities or instruments that do provide a return, there are folks here old enough to remember the .com crash, the real estate bubble, the most recent recession.



So, what is this pull...this powerful hold that the quest for earthly treasure can have on us?

Obviously, the roots are found in fear, insecurity, maybe a lack of trust or desire to control our outcomes.

Does anyone else wrestle with this or is it just me?

This tension between trust, treasure-hoarding-avoidance, and a desire to hold on loosely – juxtaposed with the need to provide for family, send kids to college, keep up with Jones', fund your retirement, etc.? It is a real dichotomy for me, and part of that comes from seeing it play out up close and personal in my own family.

My father was a dedicated provider, he worked incredibly hard and sacrificed so we had everything we needed and even some of our wants...we experienced a modest, conscientious, tithing, debt-free upbringing. But don't forget, everything is relative...my dad was born in the early 1920's and grew up in the great depression, so today's modest and middle-class I'm sure looked like excess and abundance to him. Now my dad was *convinced* that Jesus was going to come back in his lifetime, so he had no retirement to speak of, no pension, no life insurance...and no urging or advice from the rest of us could shake his belief that God would take care of them no matter what. Well, in their later retirement years, mom and dad sold the only thing they owned of value - their house - and those proceeds were going to have to last them the rest of their lives, and fund all their living expenses and care for what turned out to be another 10+ years...but they continued to operate on a "you can't outgive God" philosophy, even on a fixed income. I took care of their finances, so I witnessed the details of this phenomenon, and what I saw was – despite living many months at a deficit, where more money went out than came in – over 10 years later, my mom passed away with the same amount of money in the bank as the day they sold their house...akin to the woman in Elijah's day whose jug of oil would not run dry. The results were so striking that it caught our financial advisor's attention and gave me the opportunity to tell him their story as a witness.

Of course, we were brought up in an entirely different era...and told to save, contribute as much to my 401k as I could as early as possible, etc. So, there is definitely tension between these two approaches for me – how much is enough, how much is too much...or does the actual amount not matter, and it's more about the heart motive, and the ability to hold on loosely, and the degree to which we trust God with how things turn out. I mean, we have read the end of the book...spoiler alert...we know what is going to happen in this country and on this planet that will make all our earthly treasures worthless.

I think the third paragraph in Sunday's lesson maybe sums it up. Matthew 6:19-21 contains one of the most important concepts on stewardship. Your treasure pulls, tugs, coerces, draws, demands, allures, and desires to control your heart. In the material world your heart follows your treasure; so where your treasure is remains vitally important. The more we focus on earthly gains, the harder it is to think on heavenly matters.



MONDAY

Stewards of the Grace of God

Several times in this quarterly we have talked about our responsibility of being good stewards and what we are stewards of - we are to be “stewards of the gospel” and now “stewards of the grace of God”

Is anyone else struck by the enormity and weightiness of that responsibility?

The lesson points us to a familiar text in Ephesians 2:8

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast”,

then goes down the path that this is a gift we do not deserve...which kind of made me bristle this week just as much as it did when it was mentioned in last week’s lesson. Dr. Jennings talked a bit about this concept of what we “deserve” last week, and I think it is worth re-visiting here.

Undeserving—if we mean by this word that we did not create the remedy that saves us, did not work to earn the cure to our sin condition then this is correct. However, if we mean we are so worthless, and of such little value that we don’t deserve God’s love and intervention to save us—then this is false. “For God so loved the world...” “While we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”

It is true we don’t deserve salvation as something we earned, but we do deserve salvation as the object of God’s love. For instance, if your child disobeyed you and drank some poison—what would your child deserve from you? Would they deserve you to punish and kill them, or would they deserve you to intervene and save them? Why would they deserve your intervention, not based on their behavior being so good that they earned your saving interventions, but because of who they are to you and because of your love for them!

Take a look at the 2nd paragraph in Monday’s lesson:

“Without grace, we would be without hope. Sin’s doleful impact on humanity is too great for humans ever to free themselves from it (or cure themselves). Even obedience to God’s law couldn’t bring life to us...after all, if any law could save us, it would be God’s law.”

Which law do you think is being referenced here and at what moral development level do you think the author is operating?

The Bible says, “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.” (Psalm 19:7) It also says, “He who finds me (love) finds life.”

Ms. White says,

“the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven...” (DOA 19.2)



“I seek not Mine own glory,’ but the glory of Him that sent Me. In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father’s life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.” (DOA 21.2)

“Jesus was “the Word of God”—God’s thought made audible. Not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. Both redeemed and unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. They will see that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. **They will see that the law of life for earth and heaven is the law of self-renouncing love.** That love which “seeketh not her own” has its source in the heart of God and is manifested in Jesus, the meek and lowly One.” (HLv 11.2)

TUESDAY

Our Best Offering

This lesson points us to another familiar story from Luke 7:37 about the woman with the alabaster box of expensive perfume who anointed Jesus’ feet just before his crucifixion.

Here is that story from the Remedy NT Paraphrase:

“One of the Pharisees invited Jesus to his home for dinner, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. A local woman who had been living an immoral life learned that Jesus was at the Pharisee's home and she brought an alabaster jar of perfume. She stood by Jesus' feet weeping, and began washing his feet with tears. Then she dried his feet with her hair, kissed them, and poured the perfume on them. When the Pharisee in whose home they were dining saw this, he thought to himself, "If this man was really from God, he would know what a vile and sinful woman was touching him." Jesus, knowing his thoughts, turned to him and said, "Simon, I want to tell you something." "Please, Doctor, tell me," he replied. "There were two people, and both owed a banker money. One owed him five thousand dollars, the other only fifty; but neither had any money to pay him back, so the banker canceled both debts and absorbed the loss. Which of the two do you think will love him more?" Hesitantly, Simon replied, "I would think the one who had the larger debt canceled." "You are absolutely right," Jesus confirmed. Then Jesus looked toward the woman, but spoke to Simon: "Do you see this woman? Even though I am in your house, you did not provide water to wash my feet; but she has washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You did not welcome me with a kiss, but this woman, from the moment I arrived, hasn't stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with inexpensive olive oil, but she has anointed my feet with the most expensive ointment. Understand how reality works: She has been forgiven much, and having



received this forgiveness, she loves much. But he who accepts only a little forgiveness, loves only a little." Then Jesus reassured her, "You are forgiven; your sinfulness has been removed."

What made this gift her best offering?

Ellen White writes about this event in the Desire of Ages:

"She had sought to avoid observation, and her movements might have passed unnoticed, but the ointment filled the room with its fragrance, and published her act to all present...Mary heard the words of criticism. Her heart trembled within her. She feared that her sister would reproach her for extravagance. The Master, too, might think her improvident. Without apology or excuse she was about to shrink away, when the voice of her Lord was heard, 'Let her alone; why trouble ye her?' He saw that she was embarrassed and distressed. He knew that in this act of service she had expressed her gratitude for the forgiveness of her sins, and He brought relief to her mind...The fragrant gift which Mary had thought to lavish upon the dead body of the Saviour she poured upon His living form...Mary knew not the full significance of her deed of love. She could not answer her accusers. She could not explain why she had chosen that occasion for anointing Jesus. The Holy Spirit had planned for her, and she had obeyed His promptings. Inspiration stoops to give no reason. An unseen presence, it speaks to mind and soul, and moves the heart to action. It is its own justification. "Christ told Mary the meaning of her act, and in this He gave her more than He had received. . . . As the alabaster box was broken, and filled the whole house with its fragrance, so Christ was to die, His body was to be broken; but He was to rise from the tomb, and the fragrance of His life was to fill the earth."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 558–563.

The 4th paragraph in Tuesday's lesson says, "Giving God the best shows that we put Him first in our lives."

Does it really? Is this similar to the concept in last week's lesson that when rightly understood, our tithing "serves as a spiritual measurement of our relationship with God."

What actually shows that we put God first in our lives...what actually IS a spiritual measurement of our relationship with God?

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Jn 13:34,35

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 1 John 4:7-8

"Entire devotion and benevolence, prompted by grateful love, will impart to the smallest offering, the willing sacrifice, a divine fragrance, making the gift of priceless value. But, after willingly yielding to our Redeemer all that we can bestow, be it ever so valuable to us, if we



view our debt of gratitude to God as it really is, all that we may have offered will seem to us very insufficient and meager. But angels take these offerings, which to us seem poor, and present them as a fragrant offering before the throne, and they are accepted.”—Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 397.

WEDNESDAY

The Motives of the Heart

We talked about the story of the poor widow’s offering in a previous lesson, this is the story from Luke 21:1-4. So, compared to others’ donations, the amount of her offering was miniscule - two small copper coins, which thanks to Google appears to amount to somewhere between a couple of pennies and a couple of dollars...but Christ said her offering was more than all the others...why? Her offering was the most generous because it showed the true sacrificial nature of her character and her heart...she gave “all she had to live on”. This is another story that sort of stuns me and gives me pause. Have you ever given all you had to live on? I haven’t...rarely have I given what I couldn’t afford, and I am astonished and humbled by that level of generosity and trust.

Here’s a quote from one of the founders of our church that references this event:

“The act of the widow who cast two mites—all that she had—into the treasury, is placed on record for the encouragement of those who, struggling with poverty, still desire by their gifts to aid the cause of God. Christ called the attention of the disciples to this woman, who had given “all her living.” Mark 12:44. He esteemed her gift of more value than the large offerings of those whose alms did not call for self-denial. From their abundance they had given a small portion. To make her offering, the widow had deprived herself of even the necessities of life, trusting God to supply her needs for the morrow. Of her the Saviour declared, “Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury.” Verse 43. Thus He taught that the value of the gift is estimated not by the amount, but by the proportion that is given and the motive that actuates the giver.” – {AA 342.1}

“However lowly, any work done for God with a full surrender of self is as acceptable to Him as the highest service. No offering is small that is given with true-heartedness and gladness of soul.” – {COL 359.3}

“In the balances of the sanctuary the gifts of the poor, made from love to Christ, are not estimated according to the amount given, but according to the love which prompts the sacrifice. The promises of Jesus will as surely be realized by the liberal poor man, who has but little to offer, but who gives that little freely, as by the wealthy man who gives of his abundance. The poor man makes a sacrifice of his little, which he really feels. He really denies himself of some things that he needs for his own comfort, while the wealthy man gives of his abundance, and feels no want, denies himself nothing that he really needs. Therefore there is a sacredness in the poor man’s offering that is not found in the rich man’s gift, for the rich give of their abundance. God’s providence has arranged the entire plan of systematic benevolence for the benefit of man. His providence never stands still. If God’s servants follow His opening providence, all will be active workers.” – {CCh 277.2}



The 2nd paragraph says, “God alone knows our true motives. Is it possible to have the right actions with the wrong motives?”

What about the wrong actions with the right motives?

To give out of abundance does not require much faith (is that absolutely true?), but to give sacrificially for the good of others can indeed say something very powerful about our hearts.”

How important are our motives in giving?

2 Corinthians 8:8-15 lays out some principles we can apply regarding giving and stewardship. Here are those verses from the Remedy:

“This is not a command, for love cannot be commanded. I want to stretch and expand your love in response to the witness of the Macedonians, for you know the absolute generosity of our Lord Jesus Christ: Even though he was rich in all things, yet for your need he gave up everything and became empty—nothing!—so that you, through what he achieved when he emptied himself, may be restored to eternal riches. Last year you were not only the first to give, but the first to have hearts transformed from selfishness to love, so my advice is simple: Continue applying to your lives God's method of selfless giving, and finish what you started last year—giving what you are able. God knows your hearts, and it is the willingness of heart that matters. Every gift from a willing heart is pleasing to God, no matter the size; so don't be discouraged if you don't have more to give than you do. We are not trying to enrich others while impoverishing you, but trying to put God's design law of love into action and thus bring equilibrium and healthiness to all. Presently you have plenty and can relieve the suffering of those who are in need, but later, when you are in need, their abundance will provide for you. Then none will suffer. As it is written, "Those who had the most did not hoard it, and those who had the least did not go without."

What principles do you hear being described?

The rest of Wednesday's lesson is really positive and well-stated.

“Whatever your motive for giving may be, it is on a continuum that ranges from ego to altruism. The fight on this continuum between selfishness and giving is fought more frequently than any other spiritual fight. Selfishness will chill a heart that was once on fire for God. The problem comes when we let selfishness into our Christian experience. That is, we find ways to justify our selfishness and do it in the name of Christ. The bottom line comes down to one word: love. And love cannot be manifested without self-denial, a willingness to give of oneself, even sacrificially, for the good of others. Unless God's love is reflected in our lives, our giving will not reflect God's love. A selfish heart tends to love only itself. We must ask the Lord to “circumcise our hearts” (Deut. 10:16, NKJV) so that we can learn to love as we have been loved. Love, the basis of all true beneficence, captures the sum of all Christian benevolence.



God's love directed toward us inspires us to love in return, and it is truly the supreme motive for giving.

From the Teacher's Quarterly:

"While it is abundantly clear that God loves cheerful givers, it is equally apparent that cheerful givers love (delight in) God. That loving relationship activates their cheerful generosity. Non-givers and grudging givers somehow have missed that loving relationship; therefore, for them giving has become financially laborious rather than spiritually adventurous. We cannot overestimate the importance of this "love factor," because the gratitude that love engenders forms the boundary between grudging attitudes and exuberant munificence."

The Greek word translated as "cheerful" appears only once in the New Testament in 2 Cor 9:7 - "So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver" (why does he love them? does he not love grudging givers?) - and this is the same word from which we get the English word "hilarious"...what should that tell us about what our attitude should be in giving? What is the problem with giving freewill offerings out of a sense of obligation rather than out of gratitude and love?

THURSDAY

The Experience of Giving

Is there an experience of giving...does something *happen* to us when we give?

The 1st paragraph states,

"If Christ came to reveal to us the character of God, one thing should be clear by now: God loves us, and He wants only the best for us. He asks us to do only what would be for our own benefit, never to our detriment. This would include, too, His call for us to be generous and cheerful givers of what we have been given. The freewill and generous offerings we give are as much a benefit to ourselves, the giver, as they can be to those who receive them. Only those who give this way can know for themselves just how much more blessed it is to give than to receive."

This is excellent!

Ms. White says this about the experience of giving:

"Even the very poor should bring their offerings to God. They are to be sharers of the grace of Christ by denying self to help those whose need is more pressing than their own. The poor man's gift, the fruit of self-denial, comes up before God as fragrant incense. And **every act of self-sacrifice strengthens the spirit of beneficence in the giver's heart**, allying him more closely to the One who was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich." – {AA 341.3}

"The reward of whole-souled liberality is the leading of mind and heart to a closer fellowship with the Spirit." – {CCh 277.4}



This sounds like a real change in us happens through the experience of giving!

“The Lord does not need our offerings. We cannot enrich Him by our gifts. Says the psalmist: “All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.” Yet God permits us to show our appreciation of His mercies by self-sacrificing efforts to extend the same to others. This is the only way in which it is possible for us to manifest our gratitude and love to God. He has provided no other.”—The Review and Herald, December 6, 1887

Giving a generous offering can and should be a very personal, spiritual act. It is a work of faith, an expression of gratitude for what we have been given in Christ. As we give, freely and generously, we are reflecting in our own way the character of Christ. We are learning more about what God is like by experiencing Him in our own acts. Thus, giving like this only builds trust in God and the opportunity to “taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!” (Ps. 34:8, NKJV).

This is one of the key threads of harmonized truth in our integrative evidence based approach! In what ways have you experienced the reality of how faith grows through giving freely and generously out of what you have been given?

I love this quote from Friday’s lesson.

“The spirit of liberality is the spirit of Heaven. The spirit of selfishness is the spirit of Satan. Christ’s self-sacrificing love is revealed upon the cross. He gave all that he had, and then gave himself, that man might be saved. The cross of Christ appeals to the benevolence of every follower of the blessed Saviour. The principle illustrated there is to give, give. This carried out in actual benevolence and good works is the true fruit of the Christian life. The principle of worldlings is to get, get, and thus they expect to secure happiness; but carried out in all its bearings, the fruit is misery and death.”—Ellen G. White, in Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, Oct. 17, 1882.



Stewardship Motives of the Heart Lesson 10 1Q 2018

The Role of Stewardship presented by Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

SUNDAY

This week my 5 y/o granddaughter, Lennox, contracted influenza A—and was terribly sick, crying, hurting all over, feverish... and, all you parents and grandparents know exactly what I mean when I say—I hate the flu—with a real passionate hatred and wish I could destroy that virus—but I have no hatred for Lennox, only love for her.

Viruses are good metaphors for sin—the HIV virus is so difficult to eradicate because it hides inside the immune cells and the body doesn't even see it to kill it.

There are other viruses than physical viruses, the viruses a computer can get, a virus in code, in processing that hijacks the system and alters the normal function and outcome.

Sin is like the second, a virus of thought—and just as there are multiple physical viruses: influenza, HIV, Zika, Hepatitis, Ebola, and there are many different viruses that can infect your computer, so too there are many different types of false ideas, distorted beliefs that can infect our minds.

But just like HIV virus, which hides inside the immune cells and thus avoids detection, the most destructive lies are those that hide inside our churches, our theology, and thus avoid detection.

Recently, I received an email from an online listener who genuinely appreciates our ministry, testified how much our ministry has been a blessing to her, but was concerned because sometimes I sound like I am attacking and being negative and this could offend some and she feels that some of our material cannot be shared for that reason.

She raises a very good point: how do we point out the infection of thought, deeply imbedded within Christianity itself without sounding like we are attacking the church?

She suggested just focusing on the positive—there is much benefit in focusing on the positive—but we are to focus on the truth, and in this world the truth isn't always positive. The Spirit of truth is to convict the world of sin—which means to diagnose accurately the condition of each heart.

We would do patients a disservice if we focused only on their positives—when Lennox went to the doctor her parents would have been quite upset if the doctor would have ignored the fever, crying, vomiting and said, “well let's see, she has beautiful blonde hair, lovely blue eyes, is on the proper height weight scales for her age, has had all her vaccines appropriately...”

When the doctor diagnosed influenza A he was not being negative, likewise when I point out the infection of thought deeply imbedded within Christianity, and therefore frequently appears in the



Study Guide, I am not being negative. I am simply trying to present the truth in the most gracious way I possibly can to bring healing to people and the church.

Read first paragraph, “Jesus is the central...” thoughts?

The lesson sites Mark 10:45, which reads: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

From what do we need to be ransomed?

- Do we need to be ransomed from Satan?
- Do we need to be ransomed from God?
- Do we need to be ransomed from what God will do to us if we are not ransomed?

To whom is the ransom paid? From the Tyndale Bible Dictionary:

To whom was the ransom paid?

This question has perplexed scholars for hundreds of years. Origen (c. 185–254), a theologian of Alexandria, maintained that the ransom was paid to the devil. Origen’s form of the theory was that Christ cheated the devil by escaping through his resurrection.

Although Jesus Christ defeated Satan and liberates believers from Satan’s bondage, Scripture does not indicate that the ransom was paid to him. God was wronged by human sin, yet he showed his great love in providing redemption (Jn 3:16). God declared humans guilty for their sin and imposed the death penalty for human transgression. **[Do you hear the infection? Imposed the death penalty]** Thus Scripture indicated that the ransom was really directed by Christ to the Father. The biblical references to Jesus’ life as a ransom are echoed in the satisfaction views of the atonement.

Anselm of Canterbury in 1098 developed the satisfaction view of the atonement, emphasizing that the honor of God required satisfaction for sin. Later views emphasized the justice of God in requiring payment (ransom) for the just demands of the law and for the removal of the curse of the law, which is death (see Eph 1:7, 14; Col 1:14). Paul emphasized the justice of God, which was met so that he would be just in justifying sinners who believe (Rom 3:23–26). Reformed theology emphasizes the ransom as being paid by Christ’s death to meet the satisfaction of God’s justice in Christ’s atonement. Without using the term “ransom,” the same implications are carried in such condensed expressions as “Christ died for our sins” (1 Cor 15:3).¹

Thoughts? Do any of these views actually present the truth? In my view, they do not. They all come up

¹ Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). In *Tyndale Bible dictionary*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.



short and in fact, most add false ideas that confuse and obstruct the truth.

What is the function of a ransom? A price to free someone from bondage—question: What holds us in bondage?

- Lies—Satan is the father of lies and the lies about God he tells holds us in bondage
- Our sinful condition—carnal nature

What is the price necessary to free us from these?

- Truth that destroys lies and restores trust
 - Hebrews 2:14,15 “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”
 - If we are being freed from something that holds us would that be a ransom price to free us? We are held in the fear of death, by the power of Satan—what is Satan’s power, what is the cause of death?
 - “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” John 17:3
 - So if eternal life is knowing God, what is the result of not knowing God? Death, so what is Satan’s power of death? The lies he tells about God, that we believe that keep us from knowing God!
 - So, first ransom price was truth to destroy lies and restore trust
- A new nature—“ Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹ and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him...” Heb 5:8,9
 - Once made perfect? Wasn’t Jesus always perfect?
 - Jesus was always sinless, but Bible perfection is about perfect character—and this cannot be created, it must be developed by the freewill choices of the sentient being. Christ, AS A HUMAN, chose to develop a perfect character and destroy the infection of fear and selfishness, thus establishing a new humanity:
 - From *The Remedy* Ephesians 2:14-16: “For Christ himself is the Remedy that heals the species and brings peace. He has removed fear and selfishness that cause division, mistrust, prejudice, and hostility.¹⁵ He did this by partaking of our human condition, and—via the exercise of his human brain—he loved perfectly, thereby destroying in his flesh (in the humanity he partook) the selfish survival-of-the-fittest drive along with the lies of Satan. In this way, he destroyed the need for the law (with all its regulations) to expose Satan’s lies and methods. His purpose was to be the template of a new humanity born out of the unification of the two—our selfish, infected condition merged with his sinless state—thereby purging selfishness from the human heart, and transforming, healing, renewing, regenerating and recreating humanity back to God’s original ideal;¹⁶ and in this new being, to reconcile the human race—regardless of ethnic background—into loving unity with God and each other through the revelation of truth at



the cross, by which he destroyed the lies of Satan, reestablished trust, and removed fear, selfishness, and hostility.”

- From one of the founders of the SDA church: “The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

So the Ransom price to free us is the truth to destroy lies and win us to trust and a new perfect nature/character, developed singly by Christ. To whom, then is the Ransom paid? To every sinner who accepts it!

What happens when we replace this beautiful reality with the other views, like the penalty was paid to God or to God's law to satisfy divine justice?

In that view who is being changed by the death of Christ? And what do such concepts do to our ability to trust God? The false legal view leads to doctrines that function to hide us and protect us from God, which implicitly perpetuates the distrust of God. Thus people have a form of godliness with no power!

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “One usually doesn’t think....” If one restricts themselves to only inspired sources, no scholarly commentaries, or pastor’s sermons, what is the Heavenly Sanctuary constructed out of? What is the building material of the Heavenly Sanctuary?

We cannot have a correct understanding of the sanctuary message if we don’t even understand what the sanctuary is.

- “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's HOUSE [sanctuary/temple], built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building [sanctuary/temple] is joined together and rises to become a HOLY TEMPLE in the Lord. And in him YOU too [you all] are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22.
- “As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- YOU also, like LIVING STONES [building blocks of the Temple], are being built into a SPIRITUAL HOUSE [Temple] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet 2:4,5.



An historic view of the SDA teachings on this from EG White, whom they just quoted to emphasize we need a right understanding of this teaching. Here is what she said was a right understanding:

We are God's great building. Every stroke, every stone put into the building is only a part of the whole. Every worker is himself to become just what God designs he should be in building his own life with pure, noble, upright deeds, **that at the end he may be a symmetrical structure, a fair temple, honored by God** and man. God must be in this work. "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." Through you He has worked, and will work to do honor to His name by trusting to you these great responsibilities... The Lord would have you stand forth as Daniel, every phase of your character under His own ministration, that day by day you may **grow into a structure** that will stand forth, **not as a perfect whole in itself**, but connected with the work of other chosen workmen, **as a beautiful temple for the Lord**, a living witness to the value, stability, and nobility of the man who keeps his eye single to the glory of God.

The first tabernacle, built according to God's directions, was indeed blessed of Him. The people thus were preparing themselves to worship in the temple not made with hands--a temple in the heavens. The stones of the Temple built by Solomon were all prepared at the quarry and then brought to the Temple site. They came together without the sound of ax or hammer. The timbers were also fitted in the forest. The furniture was likewise brought to this house all prepared for use. {3MR 231.3}

Even so, the mighty cleaver of truth has **taken out a people from the quarry of the world and is fitting this people, who profess to be the children of God, for a place in His heavenly temple.** We want the cleaver of truth to do its work for us. **We are taken from the quarry of the world. The material must not be a dead substance but living souls, and these souls must be brought out of the quarry of the world, where the hand of God can fit them for the temple in heaven.** We are here as probationers, and we must pass under the hand of God. All rough edges and rough surfaces must be removed and **we must be stones fitted for the building.** We are brought into church capacity with defects of character, but we must not retain them. **We must be fitted and squared for the building. We must be "laborers together with God," for we are "God's husbandry," we are "God's building."** In view of this we must see that our temple is not defiled with sin. We should be lively stones, not dead ones, but live ones that will reflect the image of Christ. We must be worshipers in spirit and in truth. {3MR 231.4}

This world is God's workshop, and every stone that can be used in the heavenly temple must be hewed and polished until it is a tried and precious stone, fitted for its place in the Lord's building. But if we refuse to be trained and disciplined, we shall be as stones that will not be hewed and polished, and that are cast aside at last as useless. — {ML 268.3}

It may be that much work needs to be done ... , **that you are a rough stone, which must be squared and polished before it can fill a place in God's temple.** You need not be surprised if



with hammer and chisel God cuts away the sharp corners of your character until you are prepared to fill the place He has for you. No human being can accomplish this work. Only by God can it be done. And be assured that He will not strike one useless blow. His every blow is struck in love, for your eternal happiness. He knows your infirmities and works to restore, not to destroy. – {ML 268.4}

A character polished after the similitude of a palace ... may shine in the courts of the Lord forever. – {ML 268.5}

Thus, we read in Scripture:

- Him who overcomes I will make a **pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it.** I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and **I will also write on him my new name.** [because he has a new character] Revelation 3:12
- Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and **I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.** Ps 23:6

Will we be imprisoned in a building in heaven for all eternity? No! We never leave it because we are the building blocks of the temple and no matter where we are we are a part of it!

So, with this in mind then, what do we make of Daniel 8:14

And he said to me, “For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.”

Historic View:

The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, **brought to view in Daniel 8:14**; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, **foretold by Malachi, are descriptions of the same event**; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25. {FLB 207.4}

Malachi 3:1-3:

“Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me.
And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple,
Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight.
Behold, He is coming,” Says the Lord of hosts.

“But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He *is* like a refiner’s fire And like launderers’ soap.

He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; **He will purify the sons of Levi,**



And purge them as gold and silver...

So, if Daniel 8:14 and Malachi 3:1-3 describe the same event, what is being cleansed?

God gives Daniel a vision of the future, 2300 years, first 490 are for the Jewish people to finish their mission—prepare for the Messiah's first advent, and then the theatrical enactment in the building on earth would be swept away and replaced by reality.

But, during the remaining years a little horn power would arise and make war against God's people.

Until the Ancient of days came, and **judgment was given to the saints** of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Daniel 7:22 KJV

Why do the saints of God need judgment (another word for discernment) imparted to them? The Daniel text tells us the horn warred against the saints and was defeating them. What kind of warfare was going on?

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2 Cor 10:3-5

What kind of war? Where is it being fought? This is a war between truth and lies, centering on God's character, and being fought in our minds! Amazingly, Paul makes the connection to the cleansing of the Temple even closer and shows how the Temple is connected to this war going on in our minds:

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that **he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.** 2Thes 2:1-4

Paul is describing the exact same events as Daniel 7 in which evil powers war against the saints and oppose God. In the aftermath of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, did this man of lawlessness ride into heaven overthrow God, set himself up in God's temple in heaven, and proclaim himself to be God? No, where did this happen? In the Spirit Temple! In our minds! Therefore, the cleansing of the temple, as described in the Bible, is the cleansing of our minds from the lies about God, which wins us back to trust and results in our cleansing from sin.

Daniel is told in vision that an evil power would arise that would lie, distort, misrepresent God, and defile the Spirit Temple by getting humans to accept, worship, and teach a false picture of God.



According to our understanding of interpreting prophetic time, it would take 2,300 years before enough truth would be recovered for Christ to empower His people on earth with judgment (discernment) to break free from the lies and be cleansed in their minds and characters.

All of this is confirmed for us by the other text describing the same event as Daniel 8:14, Malachi 3:1-3.

So, what happened in 1844? A movement began which opened the way for Christ to enter the Most Holy Place and cleanse His people. And what is the Most Holy Place?

Jesus is our Saviour today. He is pleading for us in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, and He will forgive our sins. It makes all the difference in the world with us spiritually whether we rely upon God without doubt, as upon a sure foundation, or whether we are seeking to find some righteousness in ourselves before we come to Him. . . {3SM 149.5}

He fulfilled one phase of His priesthood by dying on the cross for the fallen race. He is now fulfilling another phase by pleading before the Father the case of the repenting, believing sinner, presenting to God the offerings of His people. -- Manuscript 42, 1901. {7ABC 482.3}

Can we agree that whatever any Christian author writes if the position presented is to be valued, it will not contradict the Bible? Another way to say this is, whatever the author means by the statement cited it must be understood in light of the Bible, interpreted through the Bible and, in order to be valuable, will be in harmony with the Bible. Would you agree?

So let's look at some Biblical texts:

John 16:25,26 Jesus is speaking: "Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. In that day you will ask in my name. **I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you...**"

Notice that Jesus says He will **not** pray to the Father for us because the Father Himself loves us. Therefore, there is no need for Christ to do this.

Romans 8:31-34 "What, then, shall we say in response to this? **If God is for us**, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all -- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is **God who justifies**. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died -- more than that, who was raised to life -- is at the right hand of God and is **also interceding for us**."

2 Cor 5:19 "**God was in the Son** reconciling the world unto himself."



Notice again it was God doing the work through His Son. The idea that one member of the Godhead needs to plead to another member of the Godhead is not stated in the Bible.

Then what about pleading before the Father?

This is Jesus speaking to His disciples. Read carefully what He is telling them:

“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. **He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears**, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will bring glory to me **by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.** Jn 16:12-14

Notice that Christ had much He wanted to tell His followers, but they couldn't understand, so He was going to heaven and sending the Holy Spirit to them. Notice also, the Holy Spirit would not speak on His own, but only what He hears *and* He takes what is Christ's and makes it known to us.

Biblical evidence?

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. 2 The Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?”

3 Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. 4 The angel said to those who were standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes.”

Then he said to Joshua, “See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you.”

5 Then I said, “Put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood by. Zech 3:1-5

What does this mean? Notice, Satan accuses—to whom is Satan accusing?

Does God listen to what Satan says? Does God get confused by Satan's arguments and need Jesus there to present the truth in order to get it right? Does God say to Jesus, “Wow thank you Son, I almost believed what Satan was saying, if you hadn't been here to present the truth I wouldn't have been able to know it?”

Who does get confused by Satan's arguments, allegations, lies? Who listens to the devil and gets discouraged, guilt ridden, overcome with shame such that they think they are beyond salvation, beyond healing, too sinful, too awful for God to love and for God to save? Human beings! We are the ones to whom Satan makes allegations—then to whom is Christ pleading the power of His blood, the power of His grace, the power of His goodness, the power of the gospel? To you and to me!

So, one of the founders of the SDA church:

Through the plan of salvation, **Jesus is breaking Satan's hold upon the human family**



and rescuing souls from his power. All the hatred and malignity of the archrebel is stirred as he beholds the evidence of Christ's supremacy, and with fiendish power and cunning he works to wrest from Him the remnant of the children of men who have accepted His salvation. {LHU 234.2}

He leads men into skepticism, causing them to lose confidence in God and to separate from His love; he tempts them to break His law, and then he claims them as his captives and contests the right of Christ to take them from him. He knows that those who seek God earnestly for pardon and grace will obtain it; **therefore he presents their sins before them to discourage them.** He is constantly seeking occasion against those who are trying to obey God. Even their best and most acceptable services he seeks to make appear corrupt. **By countless devices, the most subtle and the most cruel, he endeavors to secure their condemnation.** [by whom? Whom does Satan seek to get us condemned? Is it not in our own minds, that we conclude we are beyond salvation, too sinful to be loved?] Man cannot meet these charges himself. In his sin-stained garments, confessing his guilt, he stands before God. **But Jesus our Advocate presents an effectual plea in behalf of all who by repentance and faith have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. He pleads their cause and vanquishes their accuser by the mighty arguments of Calvary.** [To whom is Jesus pleading? Who needs to have the allegations of Satan refuted? Who needs to believe that God loves them and Jesus' righteousness is sufficient for them? Does God need to be persuaded that Jesus' righteousness is sufficient to save a sinner? Who doubts? It is you and me that need to hear Jesus' plea!] His perfect obedience to God's law, even unto the death of the cross, has given Him all power in heaven and in earth, and He claims of His Father mercy and reconciliation for guilty man. [notice now to whom Jesus speaks] **To the accuser of His people He declares: "'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.' These are the purchase of My blood, brands plucked from the burning."** Those who rely upon Him in faith receive the comforting assurance: "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." [to whom is Jesus pleading? He rebukes the accuser and pleads for us not to listen to his lies and to trust in Him!] All that have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness will stand before Him as chosen and faithful and true. Satan has no power to pluck them out of the hand of Christ. . . . **We cannot answer the charges of Satan against us. Christ alone can make an effectual plea in our behalf. He is able to silence the accuser with arguments founded not upon our merits, but on His own** (Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 470-472). [To whom does Christ's plea need to effect? you and me!]

While Jesus, our Intercessor, pleads for us in heaven, the Holy Spirit works in us, to will and to do of His good pleasure... {2MR 37.1}

Jesus pleads before the Father, carrying out the Father's will to plead to you. He does this in the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary built of living beings.

From *The Remedy*



Therefore, brothers and sisters, since Jesus died to bring us the truth about God and to eradicate selfishness from humanity, we no longer need to be afraid but can confidently enter the Most Holy Place—God's very presence—²⁰ because Christ's death revealed the truth about God and ripped open the veil of lies told by Satan that blinded our minds, and destroyed the infection of selfishness that separated us from him.²¹ And since we have this great ministering priest who ministers the truth to all,²² let the truth permeate us, cleansing, transforming and changing us as we draw near to God in heart, mind, purpose, method, principle and character,²³ so that we may have ultimate confidence and trust in him who has revealed himself to be completely trustworthy. Heb 10:19-23

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “The sanctuary...” what does this mean?

Read third paragraph, “Our doctrinal... What do you think about this? Our identity as SDAs rooted in our doctrines more than anything else?”

Hmmm...Did the Pharisees who crucified Christ do so because they disagreed on the list of doctrines?

Can a person hold to all these doctrines and still be an enemy of God?

Then, is our identity really determined by which doctrines we adhere to?

Or am I mixing issues here—are the authors speaking of the institution, and I am speaking of the people who constitute the institution?

Are institutions saved? What happens if leaders focus on institutional integrity rather than saving of souls?

Could certain things be covered up and members be eliminated from membership in order to protect the reputation of the institution? Consider the cases of child molestation in various denominations and how it was handled.

Consider this quote from one of the founders of the SDA church:

From the light that has been given me, [light from whom?] we should fear that these men and rulers will take their position against the work and then they will act like the devil; but every advantage should be taken to get acquainted with these men; not in a way to produce anything like prejudice. We must appear to them as trying to help others, working on the line of the Christian help work. As they see the good work we do on these lines, their prejudice will be removed in a large measure, and their hearts will be open for more. Then we should not present the Sabbath, but let us present Christ. What if they should begin to oppose you and say, Oh, that's a Seventh-day Adventist?--Lift Christ up higher



and still higher. It means a great deal to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. {5MR 67.5}

Hmmm... did she suggest we go forward to present unique doctrines and identify SDAs by unique doctrines, or by being like Christ?

What did Jesus say?

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” Jn 13:34,35

Consider this quote from the same founder:

There was kept before them that His people must be a combined, united power in love and efficiency, to become a light amid the moral darkness. By these combined forces [He] specified that they all may be one. Hear it, every one who is a Seventh-day Adventist; hear it: "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. . . . I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me" [John 17:21, 23]. {16MR 204.3}

The Lord Jesus described the difficulties they should meet. Having called their minds to rise to an eminence, He bids them behold the vast confederacy of evil arrayed against God, against Christ, against all who unite with these holy powers. **Christ tells them they were to fight in fellowship with all the children of light; [are all the children of light found only in the SDA institution?]** that satanic agencies would combine their forces to extinguish the light of the life of Christ out of their ranks. **But they were not left to fight the battles in their own human strength.** The angelic host coming as ministers of God would be in that battle. Also there would be the eternal heavenly dignitaries--God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit--arming them with more than mortal energy, and would advance with them to the work, and convince the world of sin. {16MR 204.4}

The great missionary spirit of the church is to be aroused. But the Lord Jesus comes forth yet once again to speak to John, and present the missionary work to be done in our world. **He sees that the message, the last message of warning, is not thoroughly understood. [what is the last message of warning? The truth about God's character of love]** The angel with the everlasting gospel did not awaken the people to move them to action. He came personally to John and announced to him the missionary work to be done. [Revelation 22:10-17, quoted.]--Ms 130, 1901.

When we focus on unique doctrines, and make them a requirement to unite together and work together does this result in unity, or does it result in fragmentation? And who benefits from fragmenting us into



different camps?

So what is the point of doctrines? All doctrines are only valuable as they enlighten us to God, His character, methods, designs, protocols, and help us move into a reality-based living arrangement with God.

If doctrines are stood up on their own, with their own proof texts to prove the academic accuracy of the teaching, disconnected from what it says about God, and disconnected from real experience and design laws, then we end up with 34,000 different Christian groups all arguing their doctrines back and forth.

This is a false approach. We need to require all our doctrines to be tied to the truth about God and His design laws and then objections will fade away.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Only twice...” What is justification by faith? Two views, a legal declaration of something that is not actually true—this is the penal view; or an actual setting right of the heart of the believer with God.

How is the third angels’ message the message of justification by faith?

Thus the three angels messages:

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people.⁷ He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

⁸ A second angel followed and said, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”

⁹ A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand,¹⁰ he, too, will drink of the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb.¹¹ And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name.”¹² This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God’s commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.²

² *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. (1984). (Re 14:6–12). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.



What do these three messages mean? What law lens to you read them through?

Imposed law:

- Be afraid and sing praises because the time has come for God's heavenly tribunal to sit and only those who worship in the right way, on the right day, will be saved.
- The Christians churches that worship in the wrong way, on the wrong day, are all confused and we need to leave their company.
- Those who worship on the wrong day will be marked as being God's enemy and God will use His power to torment them either for eternity or for as long as they deserve before He kills them.

Do you like this view? What kind of god does this view promote? This presentation of the 3 Angels' messages is Satan's view of things. It is NOT the truth!

Design law:

- Be in awe of God and reveal His true character of love in your life for the time in earth's history has come for everyone to make a right judgment about God and His character and methods – call them back to worship and adore Him who made the heavens, earth, sea – call them back to His Design Law of Love
- Because Babylon, that confused system of imposed law, with all its various rituals, rules, and lists of do's and don'ts is a system of confusion in which God's law is misrepresented as imposed, and has resulted in a contradictory system in which Christianity has fractured into 34,000 different groups all with different interpretations and regulations, because they have accepted the lie that God's law is like Rome's, imposed rules and God must punish like a dictator must punish.
- And everyone who accepts this lie about God marks themselves in their forehead by truly believing God is like a dictator and His law is imposed and God is the source of imposed punishment and death, and those who go along with such a perverse system of coercion, based on human law mark themselves in their hands and both groups will be tormented in mind, heart and character when they come into the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb, for having rejected the truth about God, there is no healing for their terminal condition.

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, "The sanctification of soul..."

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SABBATH MARCH 3, 2018 CLASS will meet at the **Hamilton Community Church at 10:20 a.m.** We will be back at the Courthouse the following week.

The Remedy APP: Thanks to all of you, our supporters, The Remedy App is now available for free for Android and Apple devices but *The Remedy* is not available on a multi-Bible app. My Bible App by developer Denys Dolganenko at mybible.zone



SPECIAL Thanks to Karin Covi, who researched and found probably the best Bible App available on the market and contacted them and they have put The Remedy on their platform. This app has hundreds of resources available, can compare different Bible versions on the same screen and it is FREE! The Icon for the My Bible App is below:

NEW TV PROGRAM: Starting in March Come and Reason is launching a new TV Program—The Dr. Tim Jennings Show on WBTN.TV Watch our website and Facebook page for announcements regarding the upcoming programs.

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

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

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In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church
Mental Health Matters Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

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Adolescence is a time of marked vulnerability to addictions. Explore the brain's reward pathway, healthy activities which activate this pathway and how addictions hijack normal reward circuitry and damage the brain. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

The Mind- God's Design & What Went Wrong Thursday, May 10, 2018

The human mind was designed with separate and distinct faculties to operate in a beautiful harmony. Something has damaged that balance and caused pain, suffering and illness. Discover God's design for the mind, what went wrong and how to restore balance to your mind. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

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Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

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Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew! Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings



Stewardship Motives of the Heart Lesson 11 1Q 2018

Debt - A Daily Decision

presented by Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

SABBATH

Read memory text: “Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.”⁸ Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.” Rom 13:7,8

What do you think about the idea of the debt to pay people respect?

What does it mean to show respect?

- Does showing respect mean we surrender our judgment to someone else?
- Does it mean, as adults, we do what some other person tells us, without thought, without agreement?
- Does it mean we show value for the person, admiration, or honor, giving reasonable consideration to them, their views, ideas, perspectives?

What is the problem if we don’t show respect?

What happens when students don’t respect their teachers?

What happens when children don’t respect their parents?

What happens when people don’t respect their government?

What happens when husbands and wives don’t respect each other?

What happened in OT times when people didn’t respect God?

So, what happens when respect is not given?

Can you disagree with someone, even reject their ideas, but still show respect?

Can you think of any examples in the Bible of young people failing to show respect?

How about the youth who mocked Elisha after Elijah’s translation to heaven?

Have you ever wondered why they were mauled by the bears?

This week I was reading in the book *Prophets and Kings* about Elisha and read this in relation to the



story of the youth and the bears:

Even kindness should have its limits. Authority must be maintained by a firm severity, or it will be received by many with mockery and contempt. **The so-called tenderness, the coaxing and indulgence, used toward youth by parents and guardians, is one of the worst evils which can come upon them.** In every family, firmness, decision, positive requirements, are essential. {PK 236.2}

Reverence, in which the youth who mocked Elisha were so lacking, is a grace that should be carefully cherished. **Every child should be taught to show true reverence for God.** Never should His name be spoken lightly or thoughtlessly. Angels, as they speak it, veil their faces. With what reverence should we, who are fallen and sinful, take it upon our lips! {PK 236.3}

Reverence should be shown for God's representatives--for ministers, teachers, and parents, who are called to speak and act in His stead. **In the respect shown them, God is honored.** {PK 237.1}

Do we see the damaging effects in our society by failing to teach young people to respect their parents, teachers, and other leaders?

Does showing reverence to God mean we become thoughtless, mindless beings who respond with "God said it, I believe it, that's all there is to it?" Why or why not?

Do we find examples in Scripture of people who were reverent toward God but who argued with God? Abraham, Moses, Job...

I remember as a child believing reverence meant to be afraid to ask anything, to be afraid to speak, to be afraid to laugh, smile, make noise...Is this the right idea to teach children?

What is? How about how amazing and incredible God is, in power, in majesty by showing children works of creation which put us in our finite space, but then demonstrating this amazing powerful, creator God loves you, each and every one of you and gave His life to save you! Thus, we connect His power with His love—thoughts?

What about the idea that the only debt we should allow to remain is the debt to love one another?

Where does our debt to love come from?

Have you heard of stories where a person saves another person's life, and the person who was saved responds with "I am in your debt"?

From where does our debt of love come?



John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave...”

Do we have a debt of thankfulness, love, of appreciation to God for what He has done for us?

From the book *Amazing Grace*:

We are under a debt of gratitude to God for the revelation of His love in Christ Jesus; and as intelligent human agents, we are to reveal to the world the manner of character that will result from obedience to every specification of the law of God's government. In perfect obedience to His holy will, we are to **manifest adoration, love, cheerfulness, and praise**, and thus honor and glorify God. **It is in this way alone that man may reveal the character of God in Christ to the world**, and make manifest to men that happiness, peace, assurance, and grace come from obedience to the law of God. {Amazing Grace 58.5}

From where does our debt of love come? From God's love and what He has done to save us. And what does it mean to give God glory?

- How is giving God glory related to living in harmony with His law?
 - It is by living in harmony with God's design law of love, liberty, truth, having hearts that live upon the protocols God built reality to operate upon
- How can this be misunderstood and therefore instead of giving God glory people can seek to keep God's law but actually give Satan glory and misrepresent God?
 - By substituting imposed law for design law and then keeping lists of rules and teaching people that breaking rules results in legal trouble with God who will use His power to punish you unless something be done to pay the legal debt. This is the beastly view of God and His government and misrepresents God and delays the second coming of Christ!

How to we pay the debt of love? In what places do we make such debt payments?

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.’³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?’³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?’³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

⁴⁰ “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these



brothers of mine, you did for me.' Mt 25:34-40

Do you agree?

From *Testimonies to the Church* vol 3:

I saw that it is in the providence of God that widows and orphans, the blind, the deaf, the lame, and persons afflicted in a variety of ways, have been placed in close Christian relationship to His church; **it is to prove His people and develop their true character.** Angels of God are watching to see how we treat these persons who need our sympathy, love, and disinterested benevolence. **This is God's test of our character. If we have the true religion of the Bible, we shall feel that a debt of love, kindness, and interest is due to Christ in behalf of His brethren;** and we can do no less than to show our gratitude for His immeasurable love to us while we were sinners unworthy of His grace, by having a deep interest and unselfish love for those who are our brethren, and who are less fortunate than ourselves.-- Testimonies, vol. 3, p. 511

What does this mean? Does this mean that every Christian should run a soup kitchen, or homeless shelter, or Goodwill? Why or why not?

God has given different abilities, talents, gifts to different people because the body of Christ needs different abilities. If all of us did the exact same thing the work would be crippled. Not everyone is suited for teaching, not everyone is suited for counseling, preaching, some are gifted with wealth for the purpose of funding ministries, hospitals, orphanages, other programs.

Does this mean that we should find people in need and hand out money? Why or why not?

Does it mean that we always deliver people from difficulty? Why or why not?

Does it mean that every Christian should have a heart to love others and spread God's love and principles where they are able?

The point is that all those who are genuine Christians are looking to use their abilities to spread God's kingdom, which means His methods and principles of love, truth, freedom. This means to help others grow, and sometimes a person needs to be left in their circumstance to figure it out, to struggle through, to overcome on their own less they never grow. So sometimes instead of delivering we encourage, we share wisdom, pray and cheer, but we don't do the work for them. Just consider a person who is recovering from an injury and needs to do physical therapy, or after a trauma and needs psychotherapy—you cannot do the therapy for them. Likewise, we cannot overcome for another person, thus love seeks to provide resources, opportunities, support to allow people to develop, grow, overcome and ultimately be reconciled to Christ.

So, what does it mean that those who love others have fulfilled the law?



How about if someone loves God, and therefore loves others, is other-centered working for the uplifting of human beings, for promoting God's kingdom of love—but they go to church on a different day than you—are they still fulfilling the law or are they a law-breaker?

Do you remember the story of the Good Samaritan—who in the story was the one right with God, which would mean in harmony with God's law?

- Was it the priest?
- Was it the Levite?
- Was it the Samaritan?

Which of the three kept the Sabbath, paid tithe, ate the right foods, went to Temple, offered sacrifices at the Temple? Did observing these laws make the priest and Levite right with God? In fact, were they law keepers or law-breakers?

What about the Samaritan—law keeper or breaker?

How does this apply to us today?

Read second paragraph, "We should do all that we can to avoid debt..." What do you think about the debts they listed, buying house, car, building a church, getting an education?

Which of these is the most reasonable debt to incur? My view is getting an education is the most reasonable debt—why?

What can happen to your house, car or church if for some reason you cannot repay the debt? They can be taken from you!

But, what happens to your education if you cannot repay the debt? It cannot be taken from you, so in my mind the most reasonable debt to incur is debt to obtain an education, if that is the only means available to get an education.

SUNDAY

The lesson states, "The only reason we borrow money is to spend it." Read third paragraph, "We may borrow..." What are some of the problems we can experience because of financial debt?

- Stress and anxiety?
- Loss of freedom?
- Over work and loss of health?
- Strained living conditions because paying the debt rather than improving one's situation?
- Relationship problems, arguments over money
- Guilt, inability to provide what you believe your family needs because you are paying debt



instead

The lesson asks us to consider what Ps 37:21 says about debt:

The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously;

Does this mean everyone who finds themselves in debt and cannot repay are wicked?

No! It means that there are people who borrow money with no intention of paying it back, fraudulently, which is the same as stealing.

But this is not speaking of those who cannot pay the debt because of misfortune, illness, tragedy, storm destroying crops etc.

In fact, in the Bible, God provided for the release of debts every so many years because He knew sometimes people got into debt, not from negligence, not from greed, but from misfortune and difficult circumstances.

What about today, how should we treat people who have debts they cannot pay?

This is from the book *The Adventist Home*:

If some are found to be in debt and really unable to meet their obligations, they should not be pressed to do that which is beyond their power. They should be given a favorable chance to discharge their indebtedness, and not be placed in a position where they are utterly unable to free themselves from debt. Though such a course might be considered justice, it is not mercy and the love of God. {AH 394.1}

MONDAY

The lesson talks about Esau selling his birthright for a bowl of food. It says, “Controlled by his emotions and feelings, he allowed the pressure of the moment to overpower reasoning, and he traded his birthright for some instant gratification.”

This sentence points out a fundamental problem in decision-making, specifically: feelings or emotions overruling our good judgment in the action of choosing, and we choose what feels good now regardless of its actual healthiness.

James tells us that our feelings or desires lead us into temptation.

If you think back on the 3 decisions you regret the most in life, the three choices you made that if you could go back and redo them you would choose differently—how many of those bad choices came



from careful consideration and choosing to following what reason said was best and how many came from following strong emotions?

Many patients who come to see me struggle with decision-making, and there are two major ditches people fall into:

- pleasure seeking, making a choice that seeks to feel good right now regardless of consequence
- pain avoidance, making a choice that will hurt least right now, regardless of consequence

Are either of these methods healthy?

What is the problem with making decisions like this?

Does this mean we can never make purposeful decisions that are intended to be pleasurable or avoid pain?

No, it doesn't mean that, it means that we don't let the pleasure/pain motivation overrule judgment. That we choose what is healthiest, regardless of the pleasure or pain involved. But when it is healthy, reasonable, appropriate to make choices that are pleasurable, or avoids pain then it is right to do so, not simply because of how it feels, but because it is actually healthy.

Why is it hard sometimes to delay gratification, to say no to a desire?

Does fear ever play a role? Do we get afraid that if don't act now we might miss out on a deal, on getting that which we desire?

How do we combat this fear?

With love and trust—do you trust God with your future, with knowing what is best, with how things will turn out, with protecting you from unforeseen consequences? Do you trust God that if what is desired is not received He has something even better in store?

TUESDAY

The first paragraph states, “Foolish people make no plans to live within their means. They greedily spend wealth at their disposal, even borrowed wealth, feeling that financial wisdom or frugal living is a hardship.”

Is it helpful to give money to people who are capable of earning a living, not on an emergency basis, but on a chronic basis? Why or why not?

According to the National Endowment for Financial Education, 70% of lottery winners end up filing bankruptcy. How is that?



Does it have to do with the amount of money they have or the decision-making habits of those who have won the money?

In other words, if a person has not learned self-discipline, has not learned delayed gratification, has not learned to say no to impulse and choose what is healthy even when it is difficult, would they suddenly change their method of decision-making with a windfall of money?

Could it be that allowing a person to work through their problems is a greater blessing than simply relieving their problems? How?

Where is the balance between providing relief for those who need it, but not enabling unhealthy practices in those who refuse to mature and grow up?

So, some charitable organizations have, instead of just given money away, required applicants to apply for small loans at very low or no interest, but with a business plan on how they will use the money to become financially self-sustaining. In other words, they don't just give to people based on their poverty, but based on their internal motivation to actually overcome their situation.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "It's just common sense..." What about cosigning for another person?

The lesson points to Proverbs 17:18:

A man lacking in judgment strikes hands in pledge and puts up security for his neighbor.

Is it a good idea to cosign for another person's debt? Why or why not?

Read last paragraph, "Debt is a weak..." How can debt undermine our spiritual experience? Can it lead to doubt, to fear, to worry, to anxiety?

THURSDAY

What about savings and investments?

Should we invest in companies that sell tobacco or alcohol?

Should we invest in companies that are open on Sabbath?

Any wisdom on how to invest one's resources?

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions 1, 3



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Stewardship Motives of the Heart Lesson 12 1Q 2018

The Habits of a Steward

SABBATH

Read memory text: “How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.” Ps119:9-11 NKJV

How can a person change their ways?

Can we get people to change their ways by passing laws requiring them to conform to our ways?

- Will passing laws against drug use stop drug use?
- Will passing laws against murder stop murder?

Why will passing laws not stop criminal behavior?

Because passing laws does not change the hearts of people and criminal behavior is a problem with selfishness in hearts.

So, how can people change their ways? What is described in the memory text? By heeding God’s word—which means what? What does it mean to heed something? To listen, comprehend, pay attention, consider, think about, and ultimately agree and choose to do. And in the text the choice is with the whole heart seeking to apply God’s design law.

Now, what happens in a person when they choose to do this? It is an internal transformation of being—the formation of new methods of thinking, processing, understanding—new habits.

How are habits formed?

Read first paragraph, “Your habits reveal...” Are habits only behavioral, like prayer, attending church, what foods we eat?

Or, do we have habits of how we think, habits of how we interpret information, habits of how we emotionally react in various situations?

How do such habits form? What makes a habit? Which determines habit formation—the brain or the mind?

What is the difference between the brain and the mind?



The Brain:

- 100 billion nerve cells
- Over 1 trillion supporting cells
- Each brain cell with up to 10,000 connections to other cells
 - 40,000,000,000,000,000
 - Forty Quadrillion

How much is 40 Quadrillion?

- 1 million seconds ago was 11.5 days ago
- 1 billion is 1000 million and 1 billion seconds ago was 32 years ago
- 1 trillion is 1000 billion and 1 trillion seconds ago was 31,688 years ago
- 1 Quadrillion is 1000 trillion and 1 quadrillion seconds ago was 24 million BC
- So, 40 quadrillion seconds ago would be 1 billion BC

Now these 40 quadrillion interconnections are made up of billions of axons and dendrites.

- Within each of the quadrillions of dendrites are 10 million microtubules
- Each microtubule is made up of billions of tubulin molecules
- Each tubulin molecule is made up of 445 amino acids
- Each amino acid is made up of individual molecules like carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen
- Microtubules do many things:
 - They provide structure, like scaffolding,
 - They are transport pathways for various chemicals,
 - They are the most likely place where your memories are storied through a series of chemical modifications on the tubulin molecules that make up the microtubules.
- The microtubules are the most likely site of quantum processing in which over 100 trillion point operations happen per second in your brain
- The quantum processing allows ideas to be considered by your mind
- Within the microtubules there are electron clouds that exist and it is within these clouds that ideas are considered.
- As you make choices your actual choice determines the ultimate position of the electrons within the molecular structure and collapses the electron cloud forming a belief or memory
- Repeated choosing will cause the neurons to form networks that will automatically process information based on the beliefs, memories, ideas that you have chosen
- This not only changes your perspectives, beliefs, but your brain as well
- This is why every person must be fully persuaded in their own mind
- This is why a person convinced against his will is of the same opinion still
- This is why Satan's power is the power of lies
- This is why the truth sets free
- This is why the legal theories of salvation are lies that trap people into belief systems with no power to transform or heal

So, what makes choices your brain or your mind?

The brain is the platform, the substrate, upon which the mind exists and operates. The brain will process sensory information and provide it to the mind, but the mind interprets the meaning, and thus the mind makes choices.

Hear a loud bang and experience a startle reaction, the startle reaction is not a choice, it is a reflex, reflexes are wired into the brain. After the reflex, the mind evaluates the meaning—was it a car backfiring or a report of a gun?

When your mind makes choices those choices immediately determine which brain pathways will fire, the recurrent and repeated firing of pathways form networks that become automated, i.e. habits.

Many networks, i.e. habits are formed before the age of accountability, formed in childhood from the experiences the child is put through. As adults we *can* evaluate those automated processes and change them, but it takes effort.

So, people can form networks/habits in which they automatically, without a purposeful choice to consider in real time, interpret events consistent with previous beliefs, whether those beliefs are true or not.

So a person who has been abused, if the experience is not processed accurately can form false beliefs—"I'm gross, I'm ugly, I'm worthless, I'm no good" and then when other events happen they automatically interpret life through these automated belief systems. These are thought habits.

We are to bring all our thoughts into captivity to Jesus Christ and Jesus is the source of all truth. This means we are to evaluate our automated thinking processes and replace false beliefs, assumptions, biases, prejudices, ideas, with more accurate and truthful ones.

The more "certain" we are of an idea, a belief, the more difficult it is to experience change, because the more solidified that belief is in our microtubules. It is our choice, our certainty, that causes the conformation change. Thus, to change a belief requires an experience which will cause us to question what we have previously held to be true. In that state of uncertainty, of questioning, we can alter the microtubule conformation by new decisions, the formation of new beliefs.

SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, "God said..." Why does God say this we are to have no other God's before Him?

This is because of the design law of worship, also known as modeling, or by beholding we become changed.



We actually become like what we admire, worship, spend time doing.

As we just discussed, habitual choosing to engage in activities, behaviors, watching, reading etc. will form beliefs, ideas, which will shape our individuality and alter our character as well as our brains.

Only by worshipping the infinite one who is love and goodness do we advance. Worship any other thing and we degrade ourselves.

Thus the instruction to have no other gods before the true God is not for God's need, but for our need, for our good.

MONDAY

The lesson title: "Habit: Look for the Return of Jesus" and the lesson points out that "Abraham looked for an eternal city (*Heb. 11:10*), and Paul looked for Christ's return (*Heb. 10:25*).

Why is it important to look for the return of Jesus?

What impact does it have on your life to look for Jesus to return?

Does it make a difference in your choices?

And will your choices change you?

Why does Come and Reason Ministries exist?

Because we want Jesus to come; we want an end to pain, suffering, death, heartache, sin; we believe that if the gospel will be preached to the entire world then Jesus will come; and we believe that Christianity has been infected with a false legal gospel that prevents the true gospel from going to the world thus obstructing God's plan. So Come and Reason Ministries' goal is to present the most clear gospel message we can to inspire more and more people to come to this beautiful picture of God in order to prepare the world so Jesus will come.

TUESDAY

The lesson is about Time, and using it wisely

What is time? It is a dimension of reality in which life events happen in sequence—a before and after.

Newton thought that time and space were completely separate and fixed entities and moving through



time was different than moving through space and they had nothing to do with each other.

Einstein overturned this idea and discovered that time and space are not separate but intimately connected.

Imagine driving 60 mph north, in that direction all your speed is directed northward. If you change your heading to northeast and continue at 60 mph you will no longer be heading north at 60mph, some of your speed is now directed eastward.

Einstein discovered space and time work similarly.

- Imagine standing next to a parked car. You and the car are not moving at all and thus all your movement is through time. You and the car are both moving through time at the same rate.
- However, if the car takes off and you watch it drive away, now some of the car's movement is directed through space and less movement is directed through time. Thus, the progress of car, and the driver in the car, through time slows down; they are moving more slowly through time than you who are standing still.
- The law of relativity states that the combined speed of an object's movement through space added to its movement through time always equals the speed of light
- This means the faster you travel through space the slower you travel through time
- So if one could actually travel through space at the speed of light then all their movement would be directed toward going through space and no movement would be left to move through time, thus for such a person time doesn't move. Another way to say this is that as one approaches the speed of light time slows down. If you are traveling due east then no movement is happening north.
- Light has all its movement through space thus light doesn't age—hmmm God lives in unapproachable light 1Tim 6:16
- 1971 Joseph Hafele and Richard Keating flew cesium atomic clocks around the world on a jet. When they compared the clocks on the jet to identical and synchronized clocks left stationary on the ground they found that less time had elapsed on the moving clocks.

Time is extremely interesting—have you considered how much of your views, decisions, perspectives, choices are influenced by time?

Imagine for a minute, that you will live as long as humans did before the flood, say 950 years. In other words everyone in this room would have around 900 more years on this earth to live—now consider the choices you have made in your life thus far—would you make different choices if you knew you had 900 more years to live?

Would you:

- Have more children?
- Have built your house of different material—to last longer?
- Stay in your same career or go learn something new?



- Would you have a schedule to change careers every 40 years?
- Would your retirement plan look different?
- Would you think more seriously about the impact your choices have on the environment and the next generations?
- Would you get lazy, self-indulgent, think, “I don’t need to get serious about God now, I can have fun, party, experience all the pleasures of the world for centuries and repent seven or eight hundred years from now?” Do you think that happened before the flood?

After Jesus comes and we live eternally, not 950 years, but billions and billions of years, will that impact how we think, how we make decisions?

Should we today think like we only have 80 years or less, or should we think like eternal beings; should we think that those who believe in Jesus will never die—we may sleep, but we will never die?

What is the most precious commodity, i.e. most valuable—gold, money, land—or time? If the richest person in the world were dying and they could exchange their wealth for health and another 100 years of life, what do you think they would do?

What did Jesus say about gaining the entire world but losing one’s soul?

Do we think about our use of time? Do we consider how we move through time?

Not all people pass through time equally—meaning our choices affect how we move through time.

Until Jesus comes, every human being on earth is aging, not just chronologically getting older, but experiencing a slow decline in vitality and ability. Not all of us age at the same rate—why?

Genetics, environment, and choices: Our choices play a huge role in the rate of aging, our slow loss of vitality and ability—the foods we eat, the activities in which we engage, the God we worship, our relationships and more all impact us and will either accelerate or slow the aging process.

In June, my new book *The Aging Brain: Proven Steps to Prevent Dementia and Sharpen Your Mind* comes out and it contains many evidenced-based actions we can take to slow the functional decline and maintain our abilities. But we cannot, on this earth today stop the decline. Time marches on.

So while we cannot stop the passage of time, we can make choices that alters how we move through time, either healthier or more damaging.

Another thought about time, since speed alters the passage of time, is it possible time passes differently in heaven than here?



In Ezekiel's vision he saw heavenly creatures, how fast did they move?

- The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning. Eze 1:14

Could time pass differently in heaven than here?

- Psalms 90:4 "For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night."
- 2Pet 3:8,9: "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

Could it be that in heaven, since Adam's fall, it has only been six days?

The lesson asks, "How important, then, that we develop the habit of making the most of every moment we have been given."

Does this mean we are supposed to be working every moment other than the hours of sleep and the hours of the Sabbath?

No! We are to make healthy choices and healthy choices mean we live in harmony with design law and design law includes the law of restoration.

What is the law of restoration? When a finite being expends a resource that finite being must rest and recover in order to expend more, without proper rest and recovery the finite being will burn out.

This is true not only on a physical level—even with the top athletes in the world, but also on an emotional and relational level. When you expend energy helping others, it is important that you not only sleep, but you get mental rest, time away to decompress and rejuvenate in healthy activities.

Jesus took time away from the masses to meditate and rejuvenate—it is a design law—and Jesus' humanity was like ours. His humanity didn't have infinite resources—it required rest and rejuvenation.

Mothers with small children cannot "turn off" their minds and rest. They must stay on alert, be aware all the time and this is exhausting; thus mothers with young children need time without their children, time where they can be awake, but not "on alert" where they can unwind, relax, and rejuvenate.

Thus, a healthy use of time is to consider, what are the requirements that I need to build into my HABITS that are necessary to maintain my wellness. These would include:

- clean air
- clean and proper amounts of water
- proper nutrition
- daily sleep at night of 7-8 hours for adults



- weekly Sabbath rest—rest from the burdens of the world
- time for recreation, rejuvenation
- exercise both physical and mental
- meditation and contemplation of God
- time with family
- time to minister to others
- work
- others?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about keeping a healthy mind, body and soul, read second paragraph, “Christ worked tirelessly...”

What kinds of work did Christ do when here on earth?

- Healing
- Various other miracles
- Teaching
- Carpentry
- Confrontation with Satan
- Cooking fish
- Helping with the boats when they traveled?
- Bible study?
- Meditation and time with Father?
- Attending weddings?
- Attending feasts?
- Resisting temptation and saying no to selfishness?

What makes it easier to resist temptation?

- Is it merely saying no behaviorally?
- Is it saying no in heart?
- What is the difference?
- Consider addicts who says no behaviorally because they fear the legal or health consequences, but in heart they think or feel, “Yeah, but I wish I could, it would feel so good, that was so fun.” Does this make it easy to resist temptation? What needs to change for this person?
- How do such changes come about?
- How does this apply to the non-addict?



What about changing dietary habits, what helps?

- Understanding the need
- Believing the purpose
- Choosing to apply and sticking with it for 3 months, then neural wiring and taste change

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “The world is given to self-indulgence....” What are some errors and fables that abound in the world, and what impact do they have?

- Godless evolution
- What is the impact?
- Magic and witchcraft

Are there any errors or fables commonly held in Christianity and what is the impact?

- God’s law is imposed
- God is the source of inflicted punishment
- Jesus died to assuage the Father
- Jesus pleads to the Father to protect us
- The ritual of baptism is necessary to be saved
- The blood of Jesus cleanses us from sin
- The Bible is to be taken literally

What is the consequence to believing these distortions? Is there a relationship between these distortions in Christianity and the teaching of godless evolution?

Could it be that godless evolution came about as a reaction to the illogical legal and punitive views of God taught by the church through the Dark Ages?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Come and Reason Ministries has launched a new TV program, “The Dr. Tim Jennings Show,” on WBTN.TV, streaming every Tuesday at 8:00 PM Eastern, Watch our website and Facebook page for announcements regarding these programs.

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

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

April 6, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at PUC, Pacific Union College

April 6,7 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St. Helena SDA church

April 12, 2018: 7:00 PM Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Hixson United Methodist Church: **Addictions and the Adolescent Brain**, Adolescence is a time of marked vulnerability to addictions. Explore the brain’s reward pathway, healthy activities which activate this pathway and how addictions hijack normal reward circuitry and damage the brain.

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

May 25, 26, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in London England at the Stanborough Park SDA Church, 609 St Albans Road, Watford, WD25 9JL

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

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



Stewardship Motives of the Heart Lesson 13 1Q 2018

The Results of Stewardship

presented by: Dr. Jennings (announcements at end)

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “As stewards, we should live as...” The next paragraph states “Our story, then, is not to be isolated from the world around us.”

Does our story change based on the version of the God we worship?

What god do the people at the Westboro Baptist Church of Kansas reveal?

What about the person who shoots an abortion doctor in the name of Jesus?

What about people who, in the name of Jesus, refuse to get their children medical care?

What about people who, in the name of Jesus, claim that God punishes cities with hurricanes for electing a lesbian mayor?

What about Christians who seek to get certain senators, governors, presidents, judges elected or appointed in order to legislate their moral view onto others?

A study done a few years ago found no difference in the ethical behavior of Christian believers and nonbelievers. Further, the study found that participants who saw God as compassionate were more likely to cheat than those who believed in an angry, punitive God.

The secularists use studies like this to warn against the fallacy of religion, but what is actually revealed in this study?

That Christianity is infected with the false law concept. When you believe sin is a legal problem, that it doesn't actually harm you it just gets you in legal trouble. First, such theories have no power to change lives and thus people will live no differently than the non-believing world, which is exactly what is demonstrated. But secondly, having accepted the false imposed legal view, if you believe God is harsh, you fear getting punished so you are more likely to conform your behavior. But, in that setting if you believe God is benevolent and won't inflict punishment, then there isn't anything wrong with sin, because God will pardon you for it and thus people are more likely to cheat.

This all changes when people realize God's law is design law and breaking it injures and damages them.

I have seen this in adolescents who believed the only problem with doing drugs was that they are illegal and as long as they don't get caught then doing drugs is okay. But when I show them brain



images documenting the damaging impact on their brain, regardless of whether they are caught or not, suddenly many didn't want to do them any more.

We must bring people back to worship our Creator God and rid people of this false legal view that dominates Christianity.

Finish reading second paragraph, "Our story, then..." How are we to live differently than the world?

- No pants or cosmetics or jewelry for women?
- Perhaps no bright colors in our clothing?
- Maybe wearing a special hat or full body covering?
- Perhaps a uniform that declares us a Christian?

How are we to live differently than the world?

- Love our enemies?
- Forgive those who wrong us?
- Live to give in order to bless others?

Is the difference between the follower of Christ and the non-follower primarily external—is that the difference, or is it internal?

Are Christians to have a different internal value, priorities, and focus? Are Christians to practice different methods to achieve their goals?

What are the methods of the world?

- Force, coercion, intimidation
- manipulation
- lies, deceit
- criticism, abuse
- behind the scenes attacks
- politics, making deal, compromise
- using the power of the state to accomplish goals

What are the methods of God?

- truth
- love
- freedom
- kindness
- giving
- patience
- healthy boundaries



If a person calls themselves a Christian but uses the methods of the world are they really a Christian?

In other words, can you be Christlike while practicing Satan's methods—even if it is for a good goal?

If you believe homosexual marriage is wrong—can you be Christ-like by seeking to get laws passed to oppose it? Or, do such methods put into practice Satan's characteristics—coercion and force and thus such actions are not like Jesus—not Christian?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Godliness is a vast topic..." What does godliness look like?

Does godliness require one to believe in God?

The Chernobyl explosion is one of the most harrowing examples in history of the danger nuclear power can pose if it isn't kept in check. But the disaster itself could have been much, much worse if it wasn't for the actions of three men.

The situation was as follows: a chamber housing a huge piece of radioactive carbon was in danger of melting right through the floor into a pool of water. If that had happened, it would have caused a massive steam explosion which in turn would have forced thousands of tons of radioactive material into the air.

It was quickly decided that someone needed to drain the pool, in order to save the lives of potentially millions of human beings. Three men volunteered for the task. Alexei Ananenko, Valeri Bezpalo and Boris Baranov all selflessly opted to leap into the water to open the valve. They later succumbed to the massive doses of radiation they had received while saving the lives of their countrymen. <https://listverse.com/2013/04/04/10-more-inspiring-tales-of-self-sacrifice/>

Do you see godlikeness in their behavior? "Greater love has no man than he lay his life down for a friend."

Is it natural to the sinful human heart to sacrifice self for others? Can a sinner, separated from the Spirit of God, act in other-centered love?

If we see someone act in love then, isn't it evidence of the Spirit of God working in them?

I read the following from the book *Prophets and Kings* this morning:

Among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, He [God] sees men and women who are praying for light and knowledge. Their souls are unsatisfied; long have they fed on ashes. See Isaiah



44:20. The enemy of all righteousness has turned them aside, and they grope as blind men. **But they are honest in heart and desire to learn a better way. Although in the depths of heathenism, with no knowledge of the written law of God nor of His Son Jesus, they have revealed in manifold ways the working of a divine power on mind and character.** {PK 376.2}

At times those who have no knowledge of God aside from that which they have received under the operations of divine grace have been kind to His servants, protecting them at the risk of their own lives. The Holy Spirit is implanting the grace of Christ in the heart of many a noble seeker after truth, quickening his sympathies contrary to his nature, contrary to his former education. The "Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9), is shining in his soul; **and this Light, if heeded, will guide his feet to the kingdom of God.** The prophet Micah said: "When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. . . . He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold His righteousness." Micah 7:8, 9. {PK 376.3}

What is more godly, the agnostic who jumps into radiation poisoned waters to save others, or the professed Christian who seeks the power of the state to pass laws to punish people who don't live as they do?

What do you think of the position that "No philosophy offers such a promise"?

What do you think is better religion or philosophy?

What is religion? Dictionary definition:

- a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies, **usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs.**

What is philosophy? Dictionary definition:

- the rational investigation of the truths and principles of being, knowledge, or conduct.
- a system of principles for guidance in practical affairs.

What is the difference between religion and philosophy?

- Religion in addition to seeking to provide answers to the cause and nature of the universe includes rituals and rules for behavior
- Philosophy seeks to provide answers to the cause and nature of the universe, by identifying principles that guide choices, rather than rules and rituals

Hmmm...which do you think will lead us to God, a system of religious rituals and codified rules, or the investigation of truths and principles that life are built to operate upon that lead us to live in



harmony with God's design?

Here is an interesting quote from the book *Christian Education*:

The study of the Bible will give strength to the intellect. [Is the study of the Bible a religious or philosophical endeavor?] Says the psalmist, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." [Psalm 119:130.] The question has often been asked me, "Should the Bible become the important book in our schools?" It is a precious book, a wonderful book. It is a treasury containing jewels of precious value. It is a history that opens to us the past centuries. Without the Bible we should have been left to conjectures and fables in regard to the occurrences of past ages. Of all the books that have flooded the world, be they ever so valuable, the Bible is the Book of books, and is most deserving of the closest study and attention. It gives not only the history of the creation of this world, but a description of the world to come. It contains instruction concerning the wonders of the universe, and it reveals to our understanding the Author of the heavens and the earth. **It unfolds a simple and complete system of theology and philosophy.** [Notice this author didn't say religion and philosophy, but theology which is the study and understanding of God, not a system of rules and rituals] **Those who are close students of the word of God, and who obey its instructions, and love its plain truths, will improve in mind and manners.** It is an endowment of God that should awaken in every heart the most sincere gratitude; for it is the revelation of God to man. {CE 105.2}

What did you hear described—a system of religious ritual and fundamental beliefs, or a philosophy of understanding and thinking which leads us back to God and living in harmony with Him and His designs?

So our *religion* must be one that includes a philosophy of truth, design law, freedom, openness, follow and apply truth—understanding the principles upon which God constructed life to operate and then seeking to share those truth with others for their healing and restoration.

The lesson talks about Job and in the third paragraph states, "His fear of God was manifested in an entire life of godliness, even amid horrific trials."

What do you think is meant by "His fear of God"?

Did Job simply bow his head and say, "God said it, I believe it, that's all there is to it?"

Did Job ask God many hard questions, even arguing with God?

Was Job afraid of God, or did Job have deep respect, admiration and love for God but was not terrified or afraid to question?



MONDAY

Contentment—what is it and from where does it come?

Dictionary definition means a state of being satisfied.

What has undermined your contentment?

From John 21, Jesus has just asked Peter if he loves Him for the third time and Peter says you know all things. Now listen to the dialogue:

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”¹⁸ I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.”¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

²⁰ Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”)²¹ When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about him?” [Is Peter content? Is Peter being tempted to not be content? How did Jesus respond?]

²² Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.”

Do we ever lose contentment because we compare ourselves to others? Do we ever lose contentment because we lose focus on our responsibilities and what God has called us to do?

What other things can undermine our contentment?

- Loss of perspective
 - What do you think of this quote:
 - **God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him. {DA 224.5}**
- Pain and suffering
- Not understanding what is happening

What helps you experience contentment?

- Understanding
- Change in perspective
- Focusing on one’s own responsibilities



- Knowing God and trusting Him
- Knowing this life is transient
- Meditation, prayer, Bible study
- Others?

Is there a danger that contentment can cause complacency and undermine our effectiveness as agents of change?

What is the balance?

Contentment with self, peace with one's identity, position, calling, purpose, responsibilities—is different than contentment with pain, suffering, distress in our family and world.

Thus, we are to be content in our identity as children of God, in our purpose, position, calling, but not content with sinfulness in the world and be actively engaged in opposing it.

TUESDAY

Read Proverbs 3:5 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;”

The lesson asks, “What crucial message is there for us, especially in the last part, about not ‘leaning’ on our own understanding?”

If we have surrendered to God, been reborn, had the law written on our hearts, been fully persuaded in our own mind, experience the mind of Christ, have our thoughts brought into captivity to Jesus—does there ever come a time when God's understanding of things *IS* our understanding also?

In other words, does Proverbs 3:5 mean we will always come to a different understanding from God, so that whatever we think we should do it must be wrong, or, could we actually be changed that our thoughts come into harmony with God so that we actually understand things the way He wants us to?

When a person chooses in any aspect of their life to do that which is in harmony with God and His kingdom whose understanding are they following?

Could a person follow God's understanding without themselves understanding it?

Could a person follow God's understanding because they have come to also understand it that way and agree?

Which do you think God prefers for each of us to achieve?

So, could this passage more accurately mean; Don't lean to your *selfish, carnal* understanding, but do



lean to your Christlike, godly understanding?

Here are some quotes I found recently from a Christian author, what do you think?

If we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwells in the heart, **our feelings, our thoughts, our actions, will be in harmony with the will of God. The sanctified heart is in harmony with the precepts of God's law.** {Acts of the Apostles 563.1}

The Lord wants us to come into harmony with Him. If we will do this, **His Spirit can rule our minds. If we have a true understanding** of what constitutes the essential education, and endeavor to teach its principles, Christ will help us. He promised His followers that when they should stand before councils and judges, they were to take no thought what they should speak. I will instruct you, He said. I will guide you. Knowing what it is to be taught of God, **when words of heavenly wisdom are brought to our mind, we shall distinguish them from our own thoughts. We shall understand them as the words of God, and we shall see in the words of God wisdom and life and power.** . . . {FE 538.1}

By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, **the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life.** This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

So what does all this mean?

- In our own strength—separated from God, without the help of Jesus or the Holy Spirit—can we have right thinking or trust our own understanding? No!
- When we surrender our hearts and minds to God, to be ruled by the Holy Spirit, do we become robots, computers, puppets, who no longer have thoughts and we only parrot what God tells us? No!
- When we surrender to God then the Spirit enters our minds/hearts and begins to transform by two powers—
 - the power of love and the power of truth.
 - These powers bring us new insights, understandings, ideas, upon which we choose to agree, accept, embrace, and apply thus our thoughts, and our minds, our characters are being transformed as we partake of the Word—truth.
 - The thoughts remain our thoughts, but now they are thoughts that have been renewed and cleansed by the Spirit of God. Our desires, attitudes, emotional reactions change.
 - Prejudices are replaced with compassion
 - Judgmentalism replaced with mercy
 - Harshness replaced with kindness



- Resentment replaced with forgiveness
- Dishonesty replaced with honesty
- Selfishness replaced with love
- All the goodness, all the rightness, all the truth, love, and holiness come from God not from us—but as we surrender, our understanding of reality changes and over time we experience the mind of Christ thus we live His life.

Read second paragraph, “Of course, that’s often easier...” When is having anxiety or stressful emotions appropriate, and when does it become harmful?

When Jesus was in Gethsemane, and even a little prior, did He experience anxious or stressful emotions?

Why was Jesus experiencing those emotions? Because of real events from external influences that He was going through; was it wrong for Jesus to experience stressful emotions?

And how did Jesus cope with those emotions?

Did Jesus experience worry and stress about *Himself*? No! Jesus wasn’t stressed with thoughts like, “Why is this happening to me? Did I do something I shouldn’t have? Is God mad at me? Am I not good enough for people to love and trust?”

Jesus was at peace with Himself, but faced a situation that was objectively painful, stressful, difficult and His humanity felt those emotions, which tempted Him to choose to act to protect self, to avoid fulfilling His mission. Those emotions were not coming from a character defect in Jesus.

If you were getting a tooth drilled with no numbing medicine, would pain be normal or abnormal? Would your desire, your intense stressful emotional desire, to avoid the pain be normal or abnormal?

Is the desire to avoid the pain the same thing as worrying about whether the dentist will like you, or whether the person who sat in the chair before you had lice, or if the dentist sterilized their instruments before using them on you, or whether God will count it a sin if you think a curse word when you feel the pain?

What kinds of things do people worry about?

Most people in my practice worry about things that are not their responsibility, rarely do I have patients that are worrying about things that are their responsibility.

For instance people worry about:

- Will I get hired for that job? Is that their responsibility? What is their responsibility?
- Will that person like me?



- What will they think about me?
- Will they agree to the price I offer on the car or house?
- Will my airplane land safely?
- Will our school get enough students registered this year?
- Will my children be saved?

Are any of these worries under the control of the person worrying?

Why do people worry about such things?

Security, wanting to feel safe, fear of some loss or threat and thus trying to address possible outcomes that would be against their current idea of what is best for them.

What is the problem with this type of worry?

- Fails to be truthful about one's own responsibilities—being the healthiest person, who makes the healthiest decisions in governance of self—not in how things turn out
- Often fails to trust God
- Typically fails to allow for possibilities beyond the one desired, so narrow view

Read the next paragraph, “How, then, do we as stewards...” thoughts?

It asks, how do we trust God, and answers, “By stepping out in faith.”

This is a nonsense answer because in the Bible the Greek word for *trust* is the same word translated *faith*. So in reality, the lesson is asking and then saying this: “How do we trust God? By trusting God.”

Upon what is trust based? Trustworthiness of the one whom we place our trust and our ability to actually trust.

I remember a patient who told me all her friends kept telling her that her anxiety would get better if she just trusted Jesus. She said to me, “But Dr. Jennings I just cant do it.”

I responded by saying, “Of course you CANT” which shocked her.

So, I asked her, “If a stranger came up to you in the mall and asked for the keys to your car and house and said, ‘Its okay you can trust me.’ Would you give them to him?”

She of course said, no way. And then I asked, “If you can’t give the keys of your car and house to a stranger, how do you expect to give the keys of your life to a stranger?”

The Bible says life eternal is that we *know* God and Jesus Christ. When we know them then we will trust them because they are trustworthy, but this requires we know them for ourselves.



I propose there are four elements necessary for one to experience healthy trust or faith:

1. The other person genuinely loves you more than self, and would sacrifice self for you. Thus they will not betray you or turn on you or become your enemy. Does God meet this criteria? Yes! (How much trust in God is undermined because legal theologies put God in the role of the one from whom we must be protected?)
2. The other person has demonstrated mature self-governance, the ability to be reliable and consistent in carrying out what they have said they will do. Does God meet this criteria? Yes!
3. The other person possesses genuine wisdom or understanding of how reality actually works and operates in harmony with design law. Does God possess this criteria? Yes!

(First three together constitute someone who is genuinely trustworthy—so trustworthiness is the requirement)

4. You come to actually know that other person for yourself and thus experience 1,2 and 3 for yourself.

Read fifth paragraph, “It’s easier to trust...” This was a difficult paragraph for me to understand what they were trying to say.

For instance:

- Are we supposed to trust God with the things we can control, or are we supposed to actually do that which is on our control?
- Are we supposed to trust God to:
 - Brush our teeth for us?
 - Dress us?
 - Choose to go to work on time?

It reminds me of the story of the hurricane warning:

- The governor ordered an evacuation, but the man said, “I trust in God He will take care of me.”
- When the water was coming in his front door rescuers came by in a boat and told him to get in, but he said, “I trust in God He will protect me.”
- When the water rose so high he had to get on his roof a helicopter came by and told him to get in, but he said, “I trust God, He will take care of me.”
- Then he drowned—in heaven he questioned God, “God, I trusted you. Why didn’t you save me?” God replied, “I sent you warnings, I sent a boat and a helicopter and you ignored them all”

Where is the line between trusting God being responsible to control that which is ours?

Most my patients worry about the things they cannot control, as we discussed above.



WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about influence—what is the difference between influence and responsibility for the outcome of someone else's life?

Do we always know who we have influenced?

Do you remember the story of Hezekiah?

He was a good king who was told he would die, and he prayed and God healed him and gave him 15 more years of life. The sign that this would be true is the sundial turned back 10 degrees.

The wise men in Babylon watched the stars and saw the sundial turn back 10 degrees and when they heard this occurred in answer to Hezekiah's prayer a delegation went to Judah to hear from the king about the God who could do such a thing.

What did Hezekiah do?

Hezekiah, rather than extolling the beauty and power of God, showed off the wealth of Israel. This planted seeds that eventually resulted in the Babylonians coming back to take the wealth.

Did Hezekiah have influence on others?

In the book *Prophets and Kings* regarding this event I read:

The story of Hezekiah's failure to prove true to his trust at the time of the visit of the ambassadors is fraught with an important lesson for all. **Far more than we do, we need to speak of the precious chapters in our experience, of the mercy and loving-kindness of God,** of the matchless depths of the Saviour's love. **When mind and heart are filled with the love of God, it will not be difficult to impart that which enters into the spiritual life.** Great thoughts, noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth, unselfish purposes, yearnings for piety and holiness, will find expression in words that reveal the character of the heart treasure. {PK 347.3}

Those with whom we associate day by day need our help, our guidance. They may be in such a condition of mind that a word spoken in season will be as a nail in a sure place. Tomorrow some of these souls may be where we can never reach them again. What is our influence over these fellow travelers? {PK 348.1}

Every day of life is freighted with responsibilities which we must bear. **Every day, our words and acts are making impressions upon those with whom we associate.** How great the need



that we set a watch upon our lips and guard carefully our steps! One reckless movement, one imprudent step, and the surging waves of some strong temptation may sweep a soul into the downward path. We cannot gather up the thoughts we have planted in human minds. If they have been evil, we may have set in motion a train of circumstances, a tide of evil, which we are powerless to stay. {PK 348.2}

On the other hand, **if by our example we aid others in the development of good principles, we give them power to do good.** In their turn they exert the same beneficial influence over others. **Thus hundreds and thousands are helped by our unconscious influence.** The true follower of Christ strengthens the good purposes of all with whom he comes in contact. Before an unbelieving, sin-loving world he reveals the power of God's grace and the perfection of His character. {PK 348.3}

Are we responsible then for the souls of others? No! We are responsible for our conduct, not for the souls of others. Was Jesus responsible for the loss of Judas?

THURSDAY

Middle of the lesson reads, “At some point after Christ returns, those who claimed to follow Him will hear one of two phrases. What are those phrases, and what does each one mean?”

- ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ MT 25:21
- Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ Mt 7:23

What determines which statement each person hears? Does God determine which statement is given, or is it the actual condition of each person that determines which is spoken to them?

Who determines the condition of each person?

So are these statements judicial pronouncement, or a diagnosis?

Second paragraph states, “our salvation is rooted, not in our works for Christ but in His works for us.”

Does this mean we have no work in our salvation?

What does Paul mean in Philippians 2:12,13?

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

In the salvation process do we have no work to do? Are we just passive, its all up to God; He will save



some and others He won't? Our choices, efforts and works have no bearing on it?

This is the problem that arises when people hold to the false legal religion, the lie that God's law functions like human law, that it is a legal work.

Not so, Jesus as a human being, in His own person, saved the species from the sin condition curing the condition. Thus the species human was saved singly and alone by Jesus with no effort or work from any other human person. This not only saved the species but simultaneously procured a remedy for all who will partake.

Our individual salvation, however, is a joint effort between us and God. We must work and God works. Without our purposeful involvement to choose to spend time with God, trust God, to surrender to Him, to resist temptation, to access divine agencies, we cannot be saved.

A patient will be healed "saved" when they choose to take the remedy the doctor provides. The work of the patient is to partake, to follow the directions of the doctor. The patient does not create the remedy; the patient does not cure or save themselves, but the patient is not saved by the doctor or the doctor's remedy if the patient refuses to partake.

We cannot save ourselves without God and God cannot save a person without that person's cooperation.

Here are some interesting quotes:

- We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}
- **There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies--** divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding,** but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . .** . Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}
- And he who seeks to give light to others will himself be blessed. "There shall be showers of blessing." "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." Proverbs 11:25. **God could have**



reached His object in saving sinners without our aid; but in order for us to develop a character like Christ's, we must share in His work. In order to enter into His joy,--the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice,--we must participate in His labors for their redemption.
{DA 142.2}

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph—law of love described

Read question 1 and discuss



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

NEW TV PROGRAM: Each Tuesday watch our new TV Program—**The Dr. Tim Jennings Show on WBTN.TV Network.** God to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

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

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

April 6, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at PUC, Pacific Union College

April 6,7 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St. Helena SDA church

April 12, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Hixson United Methodist Church: **Addictions and the Adolescent Brain**, Adolescence is a time of marked vulnerability to addictions. Explore the brain's reward pathway, healthy activities which activate this pathway and how addictions hijack normal reward circuitry and damage the brain. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

April 28, 2018: New Two Lecture Seminar: 3PM at Hamilton Community Church: **Decoding the Secret Meaning of the OT Sanctuary, The Day of Atonement and the Feast Days**

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

May 25, 26, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in London England at the Stanborough Park SDA Church, 609 St Albans Road, Watford, WD25 9JL

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

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

Mental Health Matters

Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

The Mind- God's Design & What Went Wrong Thursday, May 10, 2018

The human mind was designed with separate and distinct faculties to operate in a beautiful harmony. Something has damaged that balance and caused pain, suffering and illness. Discover God's design for the mind, what went wrong and how to restore balance to your mind.

The Aging Brain Thursday, August 13, 2018

What happens to the brain as we age? This presentation will examine the evidence-based lifestyle and non-pharmacological interventions which will protect your brain and diminish your risk of dementia. Copies of Dr. Jennings brand new book, *The Aging Brain*, will be available.

Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring



healing to your family. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!



2018 Q2 Preparation for The End Time: - Lesson 14: **The Cosmic Controversy**

presented by Dr. Wendell Moses

INTRODUCTION

- a. How to prepare for the last days
- b. Does this concept / topic / idea cause you heartburn?
 - i. Are you comfortable with the concept of living during the last days?
 - ii. This topic has been a source of fear and frustration throughout my life.
 - (1) My mother would try to prepare her children for what she saw in the future.
 - (2) Many of the devotional talks were fear based
 - (3) The Bible does mention many not nice things about the end times.
- c. My coming to grips with the topic:
 - i. Fear and selfishness are opposite of love
 - (1) If you are working from other centered focus, there will be less time to fear and worry about your personal issues
 - (2) Christ was not happy about upcoming Gethsemane
 - (a) He brought his thoughts to His Father
 - (b) He trusted in His Father's word
 - (c) He rested on assurances given by God and depended on Him for the outcome / future
 - (d) Of anyone who ever lived, Christ most epitomized living in the moment while depending on His Father for the future.
- d. Stories of God's protection and watch care
 - i. Elisha and his servant: 2 Kings 6
 - ii. Balaam: Numbers 22, 23, 24
 - (1) PP 443.4 With great pomp the king, with the chief dignitaries of his

PP 443.4 "kingdom, escorted Balaam to "the high places of Baal," from which he could survey the Hebrew host. Behold the prophet as he stands upon the lofty height, looking down over the encampment of God's chosen people. How little do the Israelites know of what is taking place so near them! How little do they know of the care of God, extended over them by day and by night! How dull are the perceptions of God's people! How slow are they, in every age, to comprehend His great love and mercy! If they could discern the wonderful power of God constantly exerted in their behalf, would not their hearts be filled with gratitude for His love, and with awe at the thought of His majesty and



power?”

Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, that He should lie;
Neither the son of man, that He should repent:
Hath He said, and shall He not do it?
Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?
Behold, I have received commandment to bless:
And He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.
He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob,
Neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel:
The Lord his God is with him,
And the shout of a king is among them."

Awed by these revelations, Balaam exclaimed, "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel." The great magician had tried his power of enchantment, in accordance with the desire of the Moabites; but concerning this very occasion it should be said of Israel, "What hath God wrought!" While they were under the divine protection, no people or nation, though aided by all the power of Satan, should be able to prevail against them. All the world should wonder at the marvelous work of God in behalf of His people-- that a man determined to pursue a sinful course should be so controlled by divine power as to utter, instead of imprecations, the richest and most precious promises, in the language of sublime and impassioned poetry. And the favor of God at this time manifested toward Israel was to be an assurance of His protecting care for His obedient, faithful children in all ages. When Satan should inspire evil men to misrepresent, harass, and destroy God's people, this very occurrence would be brought to their remembrance, and would strengthen their courage and their faith in God. PP 449.1

2. Psalms 34:7 "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, And rescues them."
3. "we must be prepared. How? Perhaps the best answer is found in this text: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him" (Col. 2:6, NKJV). In other words, with so many world events, so many headlines, and so many theories about end times, it's easy to get diverted, focusing too much on the things that we think are leading to Christ's coming instead of on Christ Himself, who alone is the key to our preparation."
4. "This quarter the focus is on the end time, but not totally. The real focus is on Jesus, but in the context of the last days and how to be prepared for them."
5. "The more that we focus on Him, the more we become like Him, the more we obey Him, and the more prepared we will be for all that awaits us, both in the immediate future and in the end, the day when we do enter "the place" that Jesus has prepared for those who love Him."

Memory Text: "And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Revelation 12:17 NKJV)



SABBATH

- a. Read the first paragraph. “The cosmic controversy, sometimes called “the great controversy,” is the biblical worldview. .”
- b. What is the question in the controversy?
 - i. If this is a war, what are the combatants fighting over?
 - ii. Why can’t God just leave Satan alone?
 - (1) (Hint: One day He will, and the end result is death. James 1:13 - 15)
- c. In light of the great conflict, what is the “good news”?
 - i. What is the gospel?
 - ii. Many times the Gospel is depicted as “Christ has died for your sins and now you can be saved.”
 - iii. The last paragraph (in speaking of the great controversy) says: “the good news is that one day it will not only end, but it will end with the total victory of Christ over Satan. The even better news is that, because of the completeness of what Jesus did on the cross, all of us can share in that victory. . .”
 - iv. Is that truly the good news?
 - (1) What did Christ accomplish on the cross?
 - (2) What is the war over?
 - (3) How can God or Satan declare victory?
 - (4) If this is a military like campaign, can God accomplish a victory by display or use of his immense creative / physical power?
 - (5) If God were truly like the person Satan made Him out to be, would you want to live eternally with Him?
 - (6) If God won a physical victory with out answering the question of his character, would there be peace in the universe?
 - (7) So what is the ultimate good news?
 - (8) The lesson says in the last paragraph: “The even better good news is that, because of the completeness of what Jesus did on the cross, **all of us can share in that victory.**”
 - (a) Compare the Great Controversy with a sporting event. Christ’s



- “fans” are not only viewers but participants.
- (b) This is not a spectator sport!
- v. The last sentence of the last paragraph: “Finally, as part of that victory, God calls us to faith and obedience as we await all that we have been promised in Jesus, whose coming is assured.”
- (1) Is that why we have faith? Because God calls?
- (2) Is that why we have obedience?
- (3) What is the source of faith and obedience?

SUNDAY

The Fall of a Perfect Being

- d. Covers the fall of Lucifer
- e. Texts: Ezekiel 28:1, 2, 11-17; Isaiah 14:12-14
- f. Unexplained
- g. Reported
- h. Read the two central paragraphs: Outside the reality of the free will that God has given all His intelligent creatures, no reason exists for the fall of Lucifer. As Ellen G. White so profoundly stated it: “It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence. . . . Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin.”—The Great Controversy, pp. 492, 493.

Replace the word sin with evil, and the statement works just as well: “It is impossible to explain the origin of [evil] so as to give a reason for its existence. . . . [Evil] is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be [evil].”

MONDAY

More Than Head Knowledge

- i. What is your favorite bible text?
- i. Mine: Psalms 8 & Romans 8
- ii. Psalms 32:8 - 11 “The Lord says, “I will teach you the way you should go; I will instruct you and advise you. Don't be stupid like a horse or a mule, which must be controlled with a bit and bridle to make it submit.” The wicked will



have to suffer, but those who trust in the Lord are protected by his constant love. You that are righteous, be glad and rejoice because of what the Lord has done. You that obey him, shout for joy!”

- j. What is your least favorite Bible text?
 - i. Is there a text you avoid?
 - ii. A story you don’t like to read?
 - iii. For me: I do not like to read Genesis 3.
 - iv. Story:
 - (1) Friend going to see movie: “A Cry in the Dark” (in USA, “Evil Angels” elsewhere, 1988)
 - (2) Meryl Streep, the story of Lindy Chamberlain
 - (3) “Don’t leave your baby!”
 - v. I want to say “Don’t go near the tree!” “Don’t listen to the serpent!”
- k. The lesson discusses that Eve had all the knowledge she needed for correct behavior.
- l. **Information does not change behavior**
- m. Health care:
 - i. Acute health care issues
 - ii. Intermediate health care issues
 - iii. Chronic health care issues
 - (1) DM
 - (2) Obesity
 - (3) Hypertension
 - (4) Dental health: plaque and tartar
- n. Beliefs in climate change and world view
- o. Sex education:https://www.mercatornet.com/articles/view/does_anything_work_in_sex_education/
 - i. A 2002 study published in the British Medical Journal examined 26 programmes that included school based programmes, multi-faceted programmes, family planning and clinic based programmes, as well as abstinence programmes in the US and Canada. The results: “The interventions did not delay initiation of sexual intercourse in young women or young men, did not improve the use of birth control at every intercourse, or at last intercourse for either men or women, did not reduce pregnancy rates in young women.”[2]
 - ii. Another study of a very well-designed and well-delivered sex-ed programme in Scotland was also published in the BMJ. The result: “When the intervention group was compared with the conventional sex education group, there were no differences in sexual activity or sexual risk taking by the age of 16 years.”[3]



- iii. Then there is Douglas Kirby's 2001 survey of over 300 programmes of all sorts. "Most studies of school-based and school-linked health centers revealed no effect on student sexual behavior or contraceptive use." [4]
- iv. <https://www.mercatornet.com/features/view/do-sex-education-programs-work-no-says-major-new-study/19035>
 - (1) The studies in the Cochrane review were all randomised controlled trials from Europe, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. Most were of high quality and had follow-ups at between 18 months and seven years. The sex education programmes they investigated included peer and teacher-led education and "innovative uses" of drama and group work.
 - (2) What did the Cochrane Review find?
 - (3) One finding of the review was that providing a small cash payment, or giving away a free school uniform, can encourage students to remain at school, especially in places where there are financial barriers to attending. Such incentives to stay at school reduced pregnancy rates by around a quarter and also reduced sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in both girls and boys.
 - (4) However, the more surprising, and no doubt controversial, finding (to many) will be the admission that the mainstay of the current approach to sex education is not working.
 - (5) School-based sexual and reproductive health programmes are widely accepted and implemented as an approach to reducing high-risk sexual behaviour among adolescents. But the Cochrane review found that sex education programmes do not reduce pregnancy and STIs among the young. In fact, they have no effect on adolescent pregnancy and STI rates.
 - (6) "As they are currently designed, sex education programmes alone probably have no effect on the number of young people infected with HIV, other STIs or the number of pregnancies," said lead author of the review, Dr Mason-Jones.
- p. The original sin for Adam and Eve was not the eating of the fruit, it was the loss of trust of God.
 - i. Tim Jennings: The lies believed leads to the loss of love and trust. Loss of love and trust lead to selfishness and attempts at self-preservation.
 - ii. If we can be diverted away from love and trust to seek our own selfish ways, the battle is lost.



- iii. James 1:14 - 15 “But we are tempted when we are drawn away and trapped by our own evil desires. Then our evil desires conceive and give birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”

TUESDAY

War in Heaven and on Earth

- q. Revelation 12:1 - 17
 - i. The pregnant woman
 - ii. The red dragon who had brought down 1/3rd of heavenly stars ready to destroy new baby
 - iii. Male child born and woman flees
 - iv. War in heaven, came to war on earth, persecution of God’s people
- r. 4th Paragraph: “Lucifer was rebelling against his Maker.”
 - i. This is not an argument over creation vs creator.
 - ii. This is an argument over the character of God and how the universe should be run.
- iii. Read Revelation 12:10 - 12
 - (1) How was the battle won?
 - (a) By the blood of the lamb: which is?
 - (b) By the truth which they proclaim: Which is?
 - (c) This is something so important that people are willing to die for it.
 - (2) God’s people are taken out of the world and are exposed to Satan’s effects and side effects.

WEDNESDAY

With You Always, Even Unto the End

- s. Read bottom paragraph: Persecution and bad things happen to good people.
 - i. John 17:11 - In Christ’s last prayer for His disciples before his crucifixion, Christ prayed: “Keep them safe; don’t take them out of this world. . .”
 - (1) What do you understand this to mean?
 - (2) Is this the same prayer I have for myself, my children, my extended family?



- (3) Did God do what Christ asked?
 - (a) How many disciples died a martyr's death
 - (i) all but one
 - (ii) What happened?

THURSDAY

The Law and the Gospel

- t. The second paragraph:
 - i. "The gospel is"
 - ii. Is that your gospel?
- (1) What is good news to you is from your perspective.

FRIDAY

Further Thoughts

- u. Revelation 12:9 - 12
- v. "Why Was Sin Permitted" pp. 33 - 43, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*; Ellen G. White.



Preparation for the End Time Lesson 2 Q2 2018

Daniel and the End Time

presenter: Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “The Lord had great plans...” What about today? Does any of this have application to us today?

They were to be a kingdom of priests—what about Christians today?

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1Pet 2:4,5

This is very symbolic language—let’s decode it:

- Who is the living Stone, which in the next verse is identified as the cornerstone upon which the temple is built? Jesus
- Who then are the living stones that accept or come to the chief cornerstone? Christians!
- What is a spiritual house called? A temple
- Who are this holy priesthood? Those who are like Jesus in character
- What are spiritual sacrifices? Sacrificing self-righteousness, selfishness, pride, greed, lust, all of the defects of character, our very selves to God to be purified and healed. These sacrifices can take on specific actions, like going without in order to help another, but it is primarily internal character transformation.

Ancient Israel was to be a nation of priests to witness to the world for what purpose? To bring people the knowledge of Yahweh, for what purpose? For all the people of the world to experience healing of their hearts and minds.

What about Christians today, what is our purpose as priests? To be witnesses of God to the world to reveal the truth about His kingdom in order to win people—by love and truth—to God for the healing of hearts and minds.

How did Ancient Israel do? And what happened to ancient Israel? They went into Babylonian captivity.

Does ancient Israel’s Babylonian captivity have any correlation and application to what has happened to Christianity? Has Christianity gone into Babylonian captivity?

Remember the message from Jesus to God’s people at the end of time?



What is the first message from the 3 angels in Revelation 14?

"Be in awe of God, and glorify him by living his methods of love, because the hour has come for everyone to make a judgment about God, and worship the Designer, Creator and Builder who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and springs of water– all of which operate upon his law of love." vs. 7 *The Remedy*

Then the second message:

A second angel followed and said, "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries." Rev 14:8 NIV

And then in Revelation 18 we read:

"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries."

Then I heard another voice from heaven say: "**Come out of her, my people**, so that you will not share in her sins... vss. 2-4.

So, the church is called to leave Babylon... The Jews went into captivity to Babylon, why? Because they worshipped false gods continually. And the priesthood of believers at the end of time, the Christians are called to leave Babylon, would this imply the church has also become a captive of Babylon?

How has Christianity become a captive of Babylon?

Well, the chief god of ancient Babylon was Marduk. This description of Marduk is from the Encyclopedia Britannica:

Originally, he seems to have been a god of thunderstorms. A poem, known as Enuma elish and dating from the reign of Nebuchadrezzar I (1119–1098 BCE), relates Marduk's rise to such preeminence that he was the god of 50 names, each one that of a deity or of a divine attribute. After conquering the monster of primeval chaos, Tiamat, he became Lord of the Gods of Heaven and Earth. All nature, including humanity, owed its existence to him; the destiny of kingdoms and subjects was in his hands...

Marduk's star was Jupiter, and his sacred animals were horses, dogs, and especially the so-called dragon with forked tongue, representations of which adorn his city's walls. On the oldest monuments Marduk is represented holding a triangular spade or hoe, interpreted as an emblem of fertility and vegetation. He is also pictured walking or in his war chariot. Typically, his tunic



is adorned with stars; in his hand is a sceptre, and he carries a bow, spear, net, or thunderbolt. Kings of Assyria and Persia also honoured Marduk... in inscriptions and rebuilt many of their temples.

Marduk was later known as Bel, a name derived from the Semitic word baal, or “lord.” Bel had all the attributes of Marduk, and his status and cult were much the same....

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Marduk>

What were the attributes of Marduk:

- Creator and supreme god
- He was the god of weather
- He was dragon-like and had a forked tongue—symbolic of a liar?
- He was the god of fertility

And, Marduk became known as Baal, and who was Baal?

Baal was the son of El (i.e. El-ohim or El-Shaddai). He was the god of weather. Often called, ‘Almighty’ and “Lord of the Earth.” Baal was the god who brought rain, thunder, lightning, who fertilized the earth, controlled the sun and brought the harvest.

Baal fought the great serpent leviathan as well as battled against Mot, the god of death. And most amazing of all, it was taught that Baal died in his battle with Mot and rose from the dead to bring life to earth.

So what was the problem with worshipping a god who was the “husband and protector of Israel,” the son of El, who controlled the weather, who brought rain, sunshine, and fertility, who blessed with full harvest, who warred against the great serpent and death, who died and was resurrected to bring us life? What was wrong with this god?

Baal required appeasement—Baal required something be offered him in order to appease wrath, prevent punishment and engender blessings.

Baal became:

- Zeus to the Greeks
- Jupiter to the Romans—remember Marduk’s star was Jupiter
- Thor to the Norse people
- Jesus Christ to all those who worship a god that like Baal requires appeasement, payment, propitiation of a human sacrifice in order not to kill

This is why God prophesied through Malachi that before the second coming of Christ the prophet Elijah must come again. Why? Just like Elijah confronted Baal worship millennia ago, so too the



people of God today, must confront Baal worship and call people to choose between two versions of God.

Just like Israel went into captivity to Babylon—so too Christianity is today in the captivity of Babylon. Minds are held captive by Marduk, by Baal, by Satan himself when the lie is taught that God's law functions like human law and thus God is the source of inflicted pain and suffering unless He is paid the blood of a human sacrifice.

Today, we are to be like Elijah, calling people out of Baal worship, calling people out of Babylon, out of this false legal theological system of worship and back to worship "Him who made the heavens, earth, sea and fountains of water."

So, the second angel's message from *The Remedy*:

"Don't trust Babylon the Great—a symbolic description of religions that misrepresent God—as it is fallen into the lies about God and intoxicates the world with its pagan views of God, maddening the people with its adulterous idea that God coerces and must inflict punishment if not properly appeased." Rev 14:8

SUNDAY

Read memory text at top then first paragraph, "He who is faithful..." What does this mean and how do we apply it?

Does it mean:

- If you compromise with a little makeup you will eventually become an adulteress?
- If you are a woman and you wear pants you will eventually become a lesbian?
- If you are a Christian and you drink a glass of wine or have a sip of champagne at New Year's you are going to become an alcoholic?
- If you drink coffee or eat meat or cheese that you are going to betray Jesus?

What does the text mean about being faithful in little things?

What about:

- If you are given 50 cents more than is correct in change and you knowingly keep it?
- You spread rumors about people?
- You flirt with people not your spouse?
- You teach that God is required to use His power to inflict punishment upon unrepentant sinners?

What is the difference between the second list and the first?



- The first list are all external behaviors, the things legalists and rule keeper like to focus on
- The second list are internal, motives, attitudes and beliefs of the heart

Read third paragraph, which is about Daniel and his three friends refusing to eat the king's meats and drinks the king's wines: "Although the text directly..."

Is the link clearly there? Was this issue primarily about dietary health issues? No, this was about worship, about giving honor to the God of Israel and ensuring that no honor was given to Marduk, the Babylonian god.

The foods given them to eat were first blessed by Marduk, thus if Daniel and friends ate that food, then any wisdom, health, or benefit that Daniel and his friends experienced would have been attributed to Marduk. Daniel wanted to make sure that Yahweh was honored, the only way to do this was to not partake of anything that was offered to Marduk.

So, this had very little to do with the laws of health and a lot to do with worship, loyalty, honor, and intention to be a good representative for God.

Do you think Daniel and friends were vegetarians before they became captives in Babylon? No! They would have faithfully participated in Passover and ate the lamb. This wasn't about vegetarianism, but about worship.

Does that mean a vegetarian diet is not beneficial? No, it is, but this text is not primarily about that, nor a very good text to support vegetarianism.

What is the most important reason God was able to work with Daniel and friends—as the lesson says because of their faithfulness, which resulted in what in them?

Faithfulness in them resulted in a *clear conscience*! They didn't have guilt, fear, doubt, shame plaguing their minds. Thus, they remained sensitive to the movements of God's Spirit and could hear the still small voice leading them.

The bottom pink section asks if we have been faithful to what we have been given?

Can we be faithful to God's kingdom if we are promoting the Babylonian view of God? No!

I would suggest what undermines faithfulness to God are any lies we believe that prevent us from knowing Him, that causes us to be afraid of Him, that causes us to seek to be protected from Him, that causes us to create theologies to hide us from Him.

Thus, the entire penal legal theological construct is pagan—it is part of the lie, it is part of Babylon, it is what Christians who are promoting the end-time message are to be refuting, rejecting and leading



people out of.

The legal message makes God's law out to be imposed rules which require imposed punishments. Not only do we create theologies to hide us and protect us from God, which keeps barriers between us and our Savior, but the legal view increases fear, increases doubt, increases insecurity, and causes much spiritual harm and injury—how?

Because the legal view ultimately puts rules over principles and thus constantly causes internal conflicts. It focuses on deeds, rather than motives of the heart, it focuses on legal accounting rather than restoration of hearts and minds into righteousness. Examples:

- Keeping Sabbath in such a way to destroy love and trust—wanting to crucify Jesus for healing on Sabbath
- Telling an adolescent girl who came to vespers that because she was wearing pants she could not stay for the worship service
- Calling a university student out for wearing jewelry
- Refusing to allow students who value this picture of God from receiving worship credits
- Telling high school students that a teen who committed suicide will go to hell and cannot be saved

Yes, the Christian church has been captive to Babylon—intoxicated with the view that God is like Marduk and Baal. We stand at the verge of eternity and have the privilege of standing up like Elijah and giving the true message about God, of calling people to reject the dictator views and come back to worship our Designer, Creator, Redeemer, and Healer!

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “All over the world...” Does God have real foreknowledge? Can God know the specific choices of people before they make them, or only the possible choices?

This has become a big divide in some theological circles.

There are those who teach God cannot know our choices because if He actually knows them, then, as they conceive of reality, we are no longer free, but programmed by God.

The various views on this that I have examined state that God can know what He will do before He does it, but that God cannot know what other intelligent beings will do. Thus, they don't have a problem with Christ choosing to die on the Cross and God predicting it because it was a choice Christ made. They don't even have a problem with the grand landscape of nations rising and falling because they conclude God took charge of His actions or choices behind the scenes to set up or overthrow nations. But they would state God doesn't know the specific choices of individuals until they make those choices.



I understand the concern of those who take the position that God doesn't know our choices before we make them. They want to protect the character of God—as a God of love. They want to promote the principles of God's kingdom—love and they recognize love can only exist in an atmosphere of freedom. And thus, they have concluded that to know our choices before we make those choices, in some way undermines our freedom and thus destroys love, thereby undermining God's character of love.

I empathize with their desire and understand their motive. The problem is that they have two errors in their position: first they have equated foreknowledge with causality—this is primarily because they don't understand what actually is causal in the choice, they think knowledge or awareness is causal, but it is not. Second, they have ignored evidence that explicitly demonstrates God does have specific knowledge of individual human choices before those choices are made.

Examples of God knowing specific individual choices before those choices were made are genuine and God didn't know who would choose what, why didn't Noah build a fleet of arks?

- Joseph's dream about his brother's bowing down to him—how did God know that they would choose to bow to Joseph?
- The dreams of Pharaoh's cup bearer and baker, how did God know what Pharaoh would choose to do with each of them? These were Pharaoh's choices, yet God foreknew it.
- Isa 45:13: "I will raise up Cyrus in my righteousness: I will make all his ways straight. He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free, but not for a price or reward, says the Lord Almighty." How did God know, 150 years before Cyrus was born, what Cyrus would choose to do?
- Ps 22:18: "They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." How did God know what the soldiers would do with Jesus' garment? This was a specific choice made by those men at that time, yet God foreknew it.
- How did Jesus know Judas was going to betray Him and accurately predicted it before Judas did it?
- How did Jesus know that Peter would deny Him, not once, but three times before Peter did it?

No, the evidence is clear, God does know our choices before we make them—but the amazing, awesome, beautiful thing is—we are still free to make those choices and God doesn't treat us differently. Look at Judas, did Jesus treat Him differently than the other 11? No, Judas chose differently than the other 11, but Jesus was the same kind, gracious, loving, forgiving Savior to Judas as to Peter and the rest.

So Isaiah says:

(Isa 46:9,10) "I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times **things not yet done**, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:



Here is an historic quote from the book *Patriarchs and Prophets* that I like:

He that ruleth in the heavens is the one who sees the end from the beginning--the one before whom **the mysteries of the past and the future are alike outspread**, and who, beyond the woe and darkness and ruin that sin has wrought, beholds the accomplishment of His own purposes of love and blessing... {PP 43.1}

If you believe God has the past and the future spread out before him in the same way, doesn't that mean He knows the details of the future choices of people as accurately as we know the choices of people recorded in the past?

TUESDAY

The lesson compares issue of the golden image to the beast of Revelation 13.

What are the similarities and lessons?

In both circumstances coercive pressure from the state is brought to bear to force people to worship.

Is coercive pressure a sign, an evidence, a mark, that we can utilize to identify Satan's false religious systems when and where they present?

Then what would that mean for Christian theologies that teach Jesus will one day return with a rod of iron to punish the nations, to inflict pain and suffering upon all the enemies of God?

Would such a teaching be in harmony with God and God's kingdom, or if we see such teachings do we recognize the mark of the beast?

Greg Boyd, writes in the book *Servant God*, the following:

The unique way Jesus was a social-spiritual revolutionary, we see, was rooted in his preserving the contrast between the Kingdom he came to establish and the reigning kingdoms of the world. To appreciate fully the importance of Jesus' unique way of revolting, we have to fully appreciate how absolute is the contrast.

This contrast was put on center stage when Jesus was on trial. Pilate asked him if he was the king of the Jews (John 18:33), to which he replied: "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders" (John 18:36, NIV). Jesus informed Pilate that the domain over which he was a king was nothing like the power-over governments of the world—it was on a completely different plane and from "another place" (John 18:36). And then, most significantly, he substantiated his claim by drawing Pilate's attention to the fact that *his servants were not fighting* in his defense.



The most fundamental feature of earthly governments is that they are willing to use whatever force is necessary to protect and advance their self-interests. As Jacques Ellul insightfully argued, violence is intrinsic to all power-over systems. Governments, states, and nations cannot exist in this fallen world without the use of violence. Any government that tried to love, bless, and serve threatening enemies rather than retaliate against them would not survive long. This is precisely why Jesus appealed to the absence of violence among those who were citizens of his Kingdom as proof that his Kingdom was completely different from the kingdoms of the world. Rather than using a sword against enemies to defend and advance its cause, the Kingdom “that is not of this world” relies on self-sacrificial love to advance its cause. p. 376,377

The author of the book *The Desire of Ages* understood this. Consider this quote and see if you agree or disagree?

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. **Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order.** His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and **truth and love are to be the prevailing power.** {DA 759.1}

It was God's purpose to place things on an eternal basis of security, and in the councils of heaven it was decided that time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his system of government. He had claimed that these were superior to God's principles. Time was given for the working of Satan's principles, **that they might be seen by the heavenly universe.** {DA 759.2}

What does this mean?

What is the prevailing power in God's government?

Truth and love—how are truth and love prevailing powers?

Where do truth and love have their impact? In hearts and minds.

What kind of war are we in? 2Cor 10:3-5 a war for the hearts and minds of intelligent beings.

What does God want? Love, trust, agreement, loyalty, understanding and friendship.

Can you get love, trust, agreement, loyalty, understanding and friendship by coercion, threats, infliction of punishment? No! What is the only way? To present truth in love and leave people free to decide for themselves!



Do you see again the deep lie, the enslavement of Christians into a false system, the system of Babylon and Marduk, the idea taught that God must inflict punishment in order to be just. This is Satan's view of God, this is Babylon, this is Baal worship—and it is to be rejected by the remnant, those who are preparing to meet Jesus!

This story of the three men not bowing to the idol, helps us understand what it means that the just, or righteous, shall live by faith.

The just, are those who choose, in governance of themselves to do the just or right thing, and then trust God with the outcome, i.e. live by faith or trust in God.

These three men had to choose, bow or don't bow, that was their choice, but how it turned out was not. What Nebuchadnezzar would do was his choice, and what God would do was God's choice.

WEDNESDAY

If the three men didn't trust God, if they didn't choose to do what was right and refuse to bow, would God have had the same powerful opportunity to reach Nebuchadnezzar with the truth?

Their faithfulness allowed God to intervene and reach Nebuchadnezzar—how about us today? Do we ever go through fiery trials or tribulations?

If we stay faithful, trusting God while we choose to do what is right in governance of self—can God use those circumstances to reach others?

If we have this perspective, does it help us in the midst of trials?

In the third paragraph it states, “The once proud monarch had become a humble child of God...”

Did Nebuchadnezzar keep Passover? Worship on Sabbath? Get circumcised? Sacrifice at the Temple in Jerusalem?

What does it mean that he was a child of God, but in OT times, didn't do any of these things?

Does it inform us that being a child of God is about circumcision of the heart, not the body, about renewing the mind, healing the inner man, not ritual?

That the entire Levitical system was not necessary for salvation—it was only theater to act out the reality of God's plan of salvation. Thus God says through Hosea:

I want your constant love, not your animal sacrifices. I would rather have my people know me than burn offerings to me. Hosea 6:6



THURSDAY

The lesson is about Daniel's faithful and upright character and the fact that his enemies could find nothing against him, unless it involved the law of God. Thus the trap they set for him.

The lesson asks us to compare Daniel's loyalty to God and how his enemies sought to trap him by that loyalty, and the righteous at the end of time.

Can you see any parallels? What?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 3 about being born again...what does it mean?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

NEW TV PROGRAM: Each Tuesday watch our new TV Program—**The Dr. Tim Jennings Show on WBTN.TV Network.** God to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

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

April 6, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at PUC, Pacific Union College

April 6,7 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St. Helena SDA church

April 12, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Hixson United Methodist Church: **Addictions and the Adolescent Brain**, Adolescence is a time of marked vulnerability to addictions. Explore the brain's reward pathway, healthy activities which activate this pathway and how addictions hijack normal reward circuitry and damage the brain. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

April 28, 2018: New Two Lecture Seminar: 3PM at Hamilton Community Church:
The Sanctuary & Feast Days: A Hidden End-Time Message

Talk 1: The OT Sanctuary: Decoding the Secret Meaning

Have you ever studied the Old Testament sanctuary and found yourself confused? Have you struggled to understand the meaning of all the various symbols and rituals? The OT sanctuary was a play, an acted out theatrical production directed by God for the purpose of revealing His plan to save humanity from sin. In this presentation we will decode the symbols of the sanctuary to reveal the reality of God's amazing plan to save humanity from sin.

Talk 2: The Day of Atonement and the Feast Days: God's Hidden Plan for Human History

Ancient Israel was instructed by God to celebrate annual feasts or festivals (holy-days, i.e. holidays) to which all the people were to participate. These festivals occurred in a certain order and were to be celebrated every year. Ancient Israel, in addition to being real historic people who did real events, were also God's people to reveal God, His kingdom, methods and plan for saving humanity from sin. In this presentation we will discover, God's plan for human history, hidden in the symbols of the ancient feasts.

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

May 25, 26, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in London England at the Stanborough Park SDA Church, 609 St Albans Road, Watford, WD25 9JL

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

September 14,15, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be Keynote Speaker at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown, Delaware.

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

September 30-Oct 2, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at NAD of SDA Mental Health Education retreat for pastors at Kettering, OH.

Mental Health Matters

Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

The Mind- God's Design & What Went Wrong Thursday, May 10, 2018

The human mind was designed with separate and distinct faculties to operate in a beautiful harmony. Something has damaged that balance and caused pain, suffering and illness. Discover God's design for the mind, what went wrong and how to restore balance to your mind.

The Aging Brain Thursday, August 13, 2018

What happens to the brain as we age? This presentation will examine the evidence-based lifestyle and non-pharmacological interventions which will protect your brain and diminish your risk of dementia. Copies of Dr. Jennings brand new book, *The Aging Brain*, will be available.

Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family.

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!

Preparation for the End Time Lesson 3 Q2 2018

Jesus and the Book of Revelation

presented by: Russell Atkins

SABBATH

“To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne.” Revelation 3:21.

- How many of you were raised as SDA??
- How many of you were raised in an atmosphere of fear regarding the “time of trouble”??
- How many of you went to “Revelation seminars” when you were young?? Did you leave with a clearer picture of Jesus??

How do we readily see “Jesus” in the book of Revelation and others completely miss Him?? Consider the following.

“Finally, let everyone think of it as his own spirit leads him. My spirit cannot accommodate itself to this book. For me this is reason enough not to think highly of it: **Christ is neither taught nor known in it.** But to teach Christ, this is the thing which an apostle is bound above all else to do; as Christ says in Acts 1[:8], “You shall be my witnesses.” Therefore I stick to the books which present Christ to me clearly and purely.” -- The 1522 “Preface to the Revelation of St. John” in Luther’s translation of the New Testament. Pages 398-399 in Luther’s Works Volume 35: Word and Sacrament I (ed. E. Theodore Bachmann; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1960).

From the lesson:

“A crucial aspect of those Old Testament references in Revelation is that, taken together with the rest of the book, they reveal Jesus. Revelation is all about Jesus, about who He is, about what He has done for His people, and about what He will do for us at the end of time. **Any focus on last-day events must keep Jesus front and center out of necessity**, which is exactly what the book of Revelation does. This week’s lesson looks at Jesus in the book of Revelation.” Emphasis mine.

Is it only the “last day events” that must keep Jesus “front and center”?

Why must any focus on “last-day events” keep Jesus “front and center”?

SUNDAY

The Structure of Revelation

From the Remedy Preface to Revelation:

“Some rules of interpretation used in the book of Revelation:

- a. If one part of a passage is symbolic or metaphor, then the rest is symbolic or metaphor unless clear reasons to be literal are expressed in the text.
- b. The Bible will be used to interpret itself (i.e. symbol interpretations will use Bible definitions before other definitions).
- c. The general theme is that of the conflict between Christ and Satan.
- d. God's character of love never changes, therefore interpretations will never result in God being represented in a character other than love.
- e. God's law of love never changes, therefore interpretations will always be in harmony with God's law of love.

What does the book of Revelation [in its entirety] tell us? In some versions of Scripture it's titled “Revelation of Jesus Christ.” What is he trying to tell us?

The lesson suggests that the first 10 chapters are historical and the remainder of chapters are “eschatological” or dealing with last day events, with chapter 12 a mixture of the two.

Can historical events and future events be separated without peril?

Can [should] we learn anything from our history? If so, what?

MONDAY

Images of Jesus

The lesson gives us several texts that name/describe Jesus

Rev. 1: 5 – Faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, ruler of the kings of the Earth.

Rev. 1: 8 – Alpha and the Omega. “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Rev. 5: 8 – “The Lamb.”

Rev. 19: 11-15 – Rider “Faithful and True”. “Word of God” [see sword coming out of His mouth v.15 and Heb. 4:12.]

Rev. 21:6 – Alpha and Omega [again], The Beginning and the End.



From the bottom section: *“How can we learn to make the life, death, resurrection, and the return of Jesus the central focus of our own existence and the foundation for the moral choices we make?”*

How indeed? Are only the “moral choices” to be considered?

By a functional understanding and application of His Law.

OK.

What does that mean?

1. Understanding that His Law does NOT function like earthly governmental laws. His Law is Design Law. Natural Law. NOT imperial law.
2. Application of His Law of Love and the many branches within the Law of Love to our lives results in transformation of character to that like Christ.

TUESDAY

The Sanctuary Motif in Revelation

Two quotes from the lesson:

“In the earthly sanctuary one begins in the courtyard, at the altar of burnt offering, where the animals were slain. After the death of the animal, symbolic of the Cross, the priest would enter into the first apartment of the sanctuary, which was a model of what Jesus did in the heavenly sanctuary after His ascension. This is represented by Jesus’ walking among the lampstands (Rev 1:13).”

Soon after His ascension, Christ was inaugurated in the Holy Place of the heavenly temple, through this first open door. When Christ first appears in the book of Revelation, He is standing before the lampstands of the first apartment in the heavenly sanctuary (see Rev. 1:10–18).

Is there a literal sanctuary building in Heaven or is the entire scene symbolic of a bigger reality?

The lesson asks “What is the significance of the fact that as the heavenly temple was opened, John could see the ark of His covenant, which sat in the second apartment of the earthly sanctuary?”

Good question. Any thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

Christ in Revelation: Part One.

“Everything in Revelation, from the structure to the content, has one purpose: to reveal Jesus Christ.”

AMEN – kind of. Does Revelation reveal someone else, as well? Whom?

Only one, someone else, or more?

From the lesson:

“In Revelation, Christ is introduced as “the ruler of the kings of the earth” (Rev. 1:5, NIV), and near the end of the book He is described as “King Of Kings” (Rev. 19:16). The great news here is that amid all the chaos and confusion on earth, we can have the assurance that our loving Lord and Savior has ultimate control.”

Control of what?

THURSDAY

Christ in Revelation: Part Two

What does Christ mean when he says, “... and I hold the keys of death and Hades.”?

Hades – The Greek god of the underworld.

Hades – The “underworld” itself [inhabited by departed souls], aka “hell”.

“hell” aka *Sheol* [Hebrew]

Sheol aka the grave.

When Jesus describes Himself as the “firstborn from the dead” [Rev.1:5] did He forget about Lazarus, Jarius’ daughter, or the widow of Nain’s son, or the widow of Zarephath’s son, or the Shunammite woman’s son, or unnamed man raised from the dead when he came in contact with Elisha’s bones [2Kings 13]?

What are we to understand from this?

Preparation for the End Time Lesson 4 1Q 2018

Salvation and the End Time

presented by Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

SABBATH

Read memory text: “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1John 4:10, NIV)

What does this text mean?

Who loves us?

What does “atoning sacrifice for our sins” mean?

Does it mean legal payment?

Does it mean to assuage wrath?

What does atone mean? To bring into oneness or unity, so we could rephrase: “to sacrifice himself to bring us into unity with God because we are sinful.”

What about “for our sins”? the preposition “for” in our imposed law mindset leads us to think as a payment.

But the same word is translated: as “of” 148 times, “for” 61 times, “concerning” 40 times, “about” 31 times, “as touching” eight times, “touching” three times, “whereof + 3739” three times, not translated four times, and translated miscellaneously 33 times. ¹ about, concerning, on account of, because of, around, near.

See how it reads if we use these other translations instead of for:

- sacrifice of our sins
- sacrifice concerning our sins
- sacrifice about our sins
- sacrifice as touching our sins
- sacrifice touching our sins
- sacrifice on account of our sins
- sacrifice because of our sins
- sacrifice around our sins
- sacrifice near our sins

Do you get a different connotation, a different reference, a different meaning with a change in preposition?

¹ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



Which of all the possible meanings is the one most likely to lead people to think of a legal interpretation? “for” why then was it chosen? Because by the time the Bible was translated the lie that God’s law is like human law, imposed, and therefore salvation is a legal process had taken root in Christianity.

So more accurately that “for” is because of our sinfulness, here is from *The Remedy*:

This is what real love is: It is not that we have loved God, or that we have done something to get him to love us, but that he loved us so much that he sent his Son to become the Remedy and cure for the infection of sin and selfishness so that through him we might be restored into perfect unity with God.

Read first paragraph, “One fascinating but crucial...” Save them from what?

In pagan religions what is the character, nature, attitude of most of the gods? In order for the worshipper to be blessed in most pagan systems what is required? The god must be paid in some way in order to bless.

In most pagan systems what is the problem if the worshipper fails to meet the requirements of the gods?

So in pagan systems from what are the worshippers ultimately being saved? From the anger and wrath of their god.

What about in Christianity? The lesson is trying to make a point that Christianity is superior to other religions because God does something for us—and I would agree—God does do something for us that we can never do for ourselves. However, despite the fact that Christians get right the idea that God does something for us—Christianity is still infected with the idea that God is the one that needs something done to Him.

So many Christians have paganism as religions in which the worshipper offers the god a sacrifice to pay or propitiate the god, but in Christianity God provides the sacrifice to pay or propitiate Himself. They are blind to the fact that character of the god in both is flawed and is the one from whom the worshipper needs to be saved.

I put in a search engine “From what does Jesus save us?” and the first non-paid hit, from The Christian Apologetics and Research Institute reads as:

On the Day of Judgment God will judge all people for their sins against Him. He will judge all who have lied, stolen, cheated, lusted, dishonored their parents, etc. He will do this because He is holy and righteous. God must punish the sinner. God cannot and will not ignore the person who has broken His righteous law. The Law is a reflection of the character of God. Therefore, to break God's law is to offend God and deny the holiness of His character. He will be vindicated. He will judge.



The Bible says that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). That means that your sins have caused a separation between you and God (Isaiah 59:2) and the result is death (Rom. 6:23) and wrath (Eph. 2:3). The only way to be saved from the wrath of God, is to be saved from it by faith in Christ (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 5:1). You must trust in what Jesus did on the cross to forgive you of your sins and not trust anything else, not even your own sincerity or works. It is Jesus and only Jesus who can turn away the righteous judgment of God upon the sinner. <https://carm.org/christianity/answers-seekers/what-does-jesus-save-us>

This is paganism—the problem articulated here is that of an angry, wrathful, offended god, who is the source of inflicted punishment and therefore needs something done to him in order for him to forgive and not kill. In other words, people in this view are beings saved from this false god.

19th Century Congregationalist Theologian George MacDonald wrote:

“The Lord never came to deliver men from the consequences of their sins while those sins yet remained ... Yet, feeling nothing of the dread hatefulness of their sin, men have constantly taken this word that the Lord came to deliver us from our sins to mean that **he came to save them from the punishment of their sins.**

“**This idea has terribly corrupted the preaching of the Gospel.** The message of the Good News has not been truly communicated. Unable to believe in the forgiveness of the Father in heaven, imagining him not at liberty to forgive, or incapable of forgiving forthright; not really believing him God who is fully our Savior, but a God bound—either in his own nature or by a law above him and compulsory upon him—to exact some recompense or satisfaction for sin, a multitude of religious teachers have taught their fellow men **that Jesus came to bear our punishment and save us from hell. But in that they have misrepresented his true mission.**” George MacDonald, *Discovering the Character of God* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989), p. 39.

I want everyone to see this clearly—this idea that God is the source of inflicted punishment comes from the lie that God’s law functions like human law and requires imposed penalties. This is the lie of Satan from the beginning of the controversy in heaven and it is the lie that the remnant people are to oppose and eliminate as we prepare for the second coming of Christ!

Read second paragraph, “In contrast, Christians...” Let us affirm that salvation is only because of Jesus and His accomplishments and work in our behalf. We agree completely that it is because of Jesus’ incarnation, death, resurrection and ongoing work in heaven that we can be saved—that is NOT in dispute.

The dispute, the question, the controversy is: saved from what—are we saved from sin—or—are we saved from what God will do to us because of sin?



The lie of Satan is that we need to be saved from God—this comes from accepting the lie that sin is legal and therefore God as the supreme magistrate must punish. Seeking legal solutions, despite claiming the reality that only through Christ can we be saved, misapplies what Christ has done and for many fails to actually save. Why?

Because misunderstanding the problem, misdiagnosing the condition, they apply Christ's achievements where they are not needed and thus have no benefit.

It would be like having pneumonia and a physician develops an antibiotic that will cure you, and provides it to you for free. You acknowledge the physician developed it, that you have done nothing to create it, that you haven't earned it, that it was provided at no cost to you and is necessary to save you. But then you take the antibiotic and pour it on the medical records seeking to erase the record of your pneumonia. What happens?

When the doctor comes in to examine you does he find you well or getting worse, dying? But what happens if you point him to your record where you have attempted to erase the record of your pneumonia and claim the cure has been applied to your record?

This is the lie of the legal solution

Or how about this, when the doctor comes in to examine you, you offer the doctor the antibiotic to propitiate his wrath and prevent the doctor from killing you?

What would the doctor do? Might the doctor be sad, might he be angry because you could have been saved/healed if you would only have applied what he freely provided and not wasted it?

If the doctor is angry what kind of anger is it? Is it the anger of him being personally offended and wanting to strike out, or the anger of knowing he needlessly is losing someone he loves?

This is what Christianity has done. It has accurately taught that salvation is found only in Jesus, His incarnation, death, resurrection and work in heaven—but Christianity, has also accepted the lie about God's law and thus misapplies what Christ has done to God, to the heavenly records, to the law and thereby keeps people trapped in sin rather than healed and freed from sin.

So, understanding God's law as design law, what is the problem sin caused that the plan of salvation is designed to fix?

When Adam sinned did God get changed? Did God's law change? Did the condition of humankind change?

Then what did Christ accomplish to save us?

Why did Jesus have to die? What was revealed at the cross?



TRUTHS revealed to win to trust:

- God's character of selfless love
- The character of Satan and the nature of sin (must know two things to be eternally secure the nature/character of God and the nature of sin and then choose God)
- That Christ is safe with the power
- That serving God for the wrong reasons leads to rebellion/enemies
- That Christ didn't even in thought think about harming others
- That salvation isn't simply about being forgiven
- That God does NOT kill the wicked/sinner
- That we have real freedom with God, God would rather die than force us to do things His way
- That God is not unforgiving
- That God is not arbitrary or severe
- That there is no eternally burning hell
- That the Sabbath is the embodiment of the law of liberty – it is evidence of the freedom we have to review the evidence and come to our own conclusion
- That the justice of God is delivering the oppressed not punishing the oppressor
- That the law cannot be changed
- God told the truth that sin destroys – leads to death
- Love cannot be commanded it can only be won
- The wrath of God—He let's go to receive one's own choice
- That there was no manufacturer's defect in the creation of human beings

ACCOMPLISHMENTS to save and heal:

- Destroyed death (the infection of fear and selfishness) 1Tim 1:9,10
- Restored God's law back into the species human developing a perfect human character (Heb 5:9, 1John 3:8)

MINISTRY to apply His achievements:

- Directs all agencies of God to reach and heal us
- Angels to watch, protect, lead
- Holy Spirit to convict, enlighten, transform, empower, apply (Jn 16:15)

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph and questions in black, "Not too long..." John 14:9 reads:

"Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Do we believe God is exactly like Jesus?



Do we teach God and Jesus are the same in character?

Read third paragraph, “One reason...” this is well said.

Have all the lies about God been eliminated from the minds of men?

What lies about God do you find most common and most harmful?

What about the truth that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father except through Him? Does this mean only people who have heard about Jesus and accepted Jesus and have been baptized into Jesus will be saved?

Romans 2:13-15 states:

For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)

Or speaking of the earth made new Zechariah writes:

If someone asks him, ‘What are these wounds on your body?’ he will answer, ‘The wounds I was given at the house of my friends.’ 13:6

How can people be saved who have never heard the Scripture, who don’t know the story of Jesus be saved if people can only come to the Father through Jesus?

Do we have a contradiction in the Bible? No!

Romans 1:20 “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

Why are men without excuse according to this passage? Because the truth about God necessary for salvation is revealed in nature.

Which member of the Godhead created nature?

Speaking of Jesus, the Bible says:

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.



Col 1:16

So if a person comes to God through the truth revealed in nature, who is the one who put that truth there? Jesus, and if they find the God of nature trustworthy and open their heart to the movement of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit works in them to heal them, from where does the Holy Spirit get the healing remedy—the perfected human character to impart? Jesus! So everyone who is saved is only saved because of Jesus and all come to the Father through Jesus—it is just that some know this and some don't yet know it.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Sin separated the human...” What does it mean Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins?

- Does it mean to pay penalty?
- Is it for our bad deeds?
- Is it because of our condition of sinfulness?

Does it make a difference if we say “sins” versus “sin”, what difference?

Why do people fall into the trap of saying “sins” instead of “sin”? Because they are blinded by the false law construct and see sin as behavioral rather than a condition of heart.

Read second and third paragraphs, “Christ was eternal...” Was Christ our substitute? Yes! For what purpose?

What law lens are you using?

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2Cor 5:21

This is substitution so that we might BECOME righteous, what does it mean to BE righteous? Righteous means to be right, what does right mean? It means as God designed, restored to the way God built humanity, in harmony with God's character, protocols, principles—rebuilt into Christlikeness of character, a being who genuinely trusts God and loves God and others, someone who would rather die—eternally die, than hurt another.

Have any sinners ever achieved this level of healing?

- Moses
- Paul
- Stephen
- Martyrs through history
- Miriam and Barbie Fischer



This restoration to righteousness is a reality, a healing, a recreation, a renewal, a rewriting into the inmost being the design parameters of God, i.e. writing the law upon the heart. There is nothing legal about this—the legal view cheats people from this and gives them not only a false legal diagnosis, but a false worthless prescription that tells them they will be legally declared to be righteous even though they are not righteous.

In this healing view, do we make ourselves righteous? Do we heal ourselves? Absolutely NOT! It is only because of the remedy procured by Christ and applied via the Holy Spirit.

However, does God make us righteous without our involvement, choice, effort, and work?

Can God save anyone without their involvement, choice, participation?

Here is a historical quote, what do you think?

The law of God is a transcript of his character; it portrays the nature of God. As in Christ we behold the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, so also in the **law the attributes of the Father are unfolded.** Although the law is unchangeable, his having provided a means of salvation for the law-breaker does not in the least detract from the dignity of the character of God, since the **penalty of man's transgression was borne by a divine Substitute.** [Since the laws of health are unchangeable, does providing a remedy for those out of harmony with the laws of health in any way detract from the dignity of the (law) character of God? Is there a penalty for breaking the laws of health? Is that penalty a legal penalty inflicted by a magistrate? If a substitute bears the disease and suffers the full weight of the penalty the disease causes in order to provide a remedy would that be a legal process?] The Father himself suffered with the Son; for "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself...." {ST, December 30, 1889 par. 2}

God grants men a probation in this world, that their principles may become firmly established in the right, thus precluding the possibility of sin in the future life, and so assuring the happiness and security of all. Through the atonement of the Son of God alone could power be given to man to establish him in righteousness, and make him a fit subject for heaven. The blood of Christ is the eternal antidote for sin. ... [Is this legal or healing, recreative, restorative? Can character be legally declared into a person? Do you see the lie of the penal substitutionary view?] {ST, December 30, 1889 par. 3}

The death of Christ upon the cross made sure the destruction of him who has the power of death, who was the originator of sin. When Satan is destroyed, there will be none to tempt to evil; the atonement will never need to be repeated; and there will be no danger of another rebellion in the universe of God. That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. [what do you think that is?] The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels. [What prevents sin from recurring



again? The understanding of what Christ achieved and revealed] Fallen men could not have a home in the paradise of God without the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. [Why? Because God is unwilling without a blood payment, or human beings would be unfit, terminal, unable to live there?] Shall we not then exalt the cross of Christ? The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven. Human perfection failed in Eden, the paradise of bliss. All who wish for security in earth or heaven must look to the Lamb of God. [can you think of a Bible verse that says this more succinctly? "all things in heaven..."] The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb... [What provides an eternal safeguard? What is the justice of God? Is it punishing sin, or is it healing and delivering the sinner by upholding, establishing, and restoring His law in humanity?] There are many who will be lost, because they depend on legal religion, or mere repentance for sin. But repentance for sin alone cannot work the salvation of any soul... [The penal legal view obstructs people from salvation!] {ST, December 30, 1889 par. 4}

The greatest gift that God could bestow upon men was bestowed in the gift of his beloved Son. The apostle says, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" There was nothing held in reserve. No second probation will ever be provided. If the unspeakable gift of God does not lead man to repentance, there is nothing that ever will move his heart. There is no power held in reserve to act upon his mind, and arouse his sensibilities. The whole character of God was revealed in his Son, the whole range of the possibilities of heaven is displayed for the acceptance of man in the Son of the Infinite One. The way for man's return to God and heaven has no barriers. The matchless depths of the Saviour's love have been demonstrated; and if this manifestation of God's love for the children of men does not prevail to draw men to himself, there is nothing that ever will. {ST, December 30, 1889 par. 6} [Do you see Satan's strategy is to misrepresent God as something other than love, thus failing to see God's true character men remain separated from Him. It is the penal substationary view that contributes to the barrier between God and man! We must come back to see God as He truly is and remove the barrier!]

TUESDAY

Do we believe the Holy Spirit is an individual being, with distinct identity separate from that of the Father and the Son? Yes—why?

The most important reason, beyond the fact that the Scripture tells us, is that it directly impacts on God's character.



The smallest number one can have and have genuine other-centered love is three. Love cannot exist in a singularity, in a solitary, isolated individual because love is outward moving and functional love requires an object. But, two can instead achieve reinforcing narcissism, it is when there are three that sacrifice of one is often necessary for the benefit of the others.

Thus, if we believe God is truly love, then the Trinity is a reality.

The Old Testament teaches God is a plurality, not a singularity:

- Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness... Genesis 1:26
- Even the text quoted by Jews and Muslims that “God is one” teaches a plurality, not a singularity:
- Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: DT 6:4
- Notice the passage in English uses “Lord” and “God”. The reading of this passage with the Hebrew names for “Lord” and “God” would go like this: “Hear, O Israel: *Yahweh* our *Elohim*, *Yahweh* is One.”
- What is interesting is that the word *Elohim* in Hebrew is plural and is the same word used for God in Genesis 1:26. Thus an accurate English reading might go like this: “The One is more than One yet is One”
- In Hebrew there are two words for one, *Yacheed* and *Echad*. The first indicates singular unity as in one and only, the second indicates compound unity, as the oneness of two or more. In this text *Echad* is used along with the plural name of God *Elohim* indicating the oneness of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- The Old Testament also provides texts in which all members of the Godhead are referenced:
- And now the Sovereign Lord [Father] has sent me [Son], with his Spirit [Holy Spirit]. This is what the Lord says— your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: Isaiah 48:16,17
- “Here is my [Father] servant [Son], whom I [Father] uphold, my [Father] chosen one [Son] in whom I [Father] delight; I [Father] will put my Spirit [Holy Spirit] on him [Son] and he [Son] will bring justice to the nations. Isaiah 42:1

WEDNESDAY

What is the assurance of salvation? Why do people seek it?

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. Heb 2:14,15

The entire world is held captive by fear of death, and thus all humans long for freedom from this fear—which is the assurance of salvation, i.e. we won’t die.

How do we experience this assurance?



Those who have a legal definition get assurance from believing in legal solutions—the penalty has been paid, from some legal transaction—which moves the assurance away from trusting a person with your life, to trusting in a system of rules. Why? Because they really don't trust God—they need theological constructs to protect them from God:

- Covered by robe of righteousness
- Washed in blood
- Jesus, Mary, saints to plead in our behalf etc.

But genuine assurance comes from a personal relationship with someone who you trust—in this case God, who you are sure will heal and save you when you trust Him!

With this in mind let's examine some of the Bible verses the lesson points us to:

- He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation." Ps 91:15,16
 - Where is the assurance—in a relationship with God!
- The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. ³² And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls. Joel 2:31,32
 - Where is the assurance—in calling upon God, in trusting Him—to do what? Deliver, from what?
- I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. John 10:28
 - Where is the assurance? In a relationship!
- If you accept the truth that Jesus is God, then confess with your mouth that he represents the Father perfectly, trust God in your heart—realizing that he raised Jesus from the dead—and you will be completely healed and restored to God's original ideal. ¹⁰ For it is with the deep places of the soul that one trusts, and when distrust is removed, unity with God is restored; and it is with the mouth that we reveal that the inner person has been healed. ¹¹ As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts God will never be destroyed by guilt." ¹² For there is no difference between the Jew and Gentile: All humanity is infected and dying, and the same Lord is Lord of all and provides the rich blessing of his perfect Remedy to all who accept it. ¹³ For "Everyone who opens their heart and trusts in God will be completely healed." Rom 10:9-13 *The Remedy*
 - Where is the assurance?
- And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 1John 5:11-13
 - Where is the assurance?

Did you notice, no assurance comes from a legal process—all assurance comes from knowing and trusting God!



THURSDAY

The lesson asks us to read Rev 14:6,7:

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. ⁷ He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

What is the eternal gospel?

How would you describe it?

As the lesson says, “an unchanging God has an unchanging gospel,” what would that be?

The truth about God’s character of love and God’s design laws of love. These are the eternal good news—the good news about God Himself!

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

JUNE 2, 2018: COME AND REASON WILL MEET AT Hamilton Community Church at 10:20 a.m.

NEW TV PROGRAM: Each Tuesday watch our new TV Program—The Dr. Tim Jennings Show on WBTN.TV Network. God to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

New Video Blogs—If you don't follow us on Facebook, then be sure to visit our website we are posting new blogs again, the go up every Thursday.

April 28, 2018: New Two Lecture Seminar: 3PM at Hamilton Community Church:
The Sanctuary & Feast Days: A Hidden End-Time Message

Talk 1: The OT Sanctuary: Decoding the Secret Meaning

Have you ever studied the Old Testament sanctuary and found yourself confused? Have you struggled to understand the meaning of all the various symbols and rituals? The OT sanctuary was a play, an acted out theatrical production directed by God for the purpose of revealing His plan to save humanity from sin. In this presentation we will decode the symbols of the sanctuary to reveal the reality of God's amazing plan to save humanity from sin.

Talk 2: The Day of Atonement and the Feast Days: God's Hidden Plan for Human History

Ancient Israel was instructed by God to celebrate annual feasts or festivals (holy-days, i.e. holidays) to which all the people were to participate. These festivals occurred in a certain order and were to be celebrated every year. Ancient Israel, in addition to being real historic people who did real events, were also God's people to reveal God, His kingdom, methods and plan for saving humanity from sin. In this presentation we will discover, God's plan for human history, hidden in the symbols of the ancient feasts.

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

May 25, 26, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in London England at the Stanborough Park SDA Church, 609 St Albans Road, Watford, WD25 9JL

July 27-28, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Houston, TX, in conjunction with the AACC

September 14,15, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be Keynote Speaker at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown, Delaware.

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

September 30-Oct 2, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at NAD of SDA Mental Health Education retreat for pastors at Kettering, OH.

Mental Health Matters: 6:00 PM @ Hixson United Methodist Church - Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

The Mind- God's Design & What Went Wrong Thursday, May 10, 2018

The human mind was designed with separate and distinct faculties to operate in a beautiful harmony. Something has damaged that balance and caused pain, suffering and illness. Discover God's design for the mind, what went wrong and how to restore balance to your mind.



The Aging Brain Thursday, August 13, 2018

What happens to the brain as we age? This presentation will examine the evidence-based lifestyle and non-pharmacological interventions which will protect your brain and diminish your risk of dementia. Copies of Dr. Jennings brand new book, The Aging Brain, will be available.

Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family.

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!

Preparation for the End Time Lesson 5 Q2 2018

Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary

presented by Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

FRIDAY

Read quote in question 1:

As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin offering and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary, so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary. And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded. But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement. The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation--a work of judgment. This work must be performed prior to the coming of Christ to redeem His people; for when He comes, His reward is with Him to give to every man according to his works. Revelation 22:12. {GC 421.3}

What does it mean?

Do we take this literally, as if this this description is exactly what is happening in heaven, or do we realize this was written to communicate an idea but does not represent the exact way things happen?

What do I mean? Do we believe the Bible is inspired by God? Yes, then, do we take descriptions of things in heaven exactly as the Bible reads or not? Consider the story in 1Kings 22. The setting is Ahab meeting with Jehoshaphat trying to get Jehoshaphat to join him in attacking Ramoth Gilead. The prophet Micaiah is called and this is what the prophet told them:

Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. ²⁰ And the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?'

"One suggested this, and another that. ²¹ Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.'

²² " 'By what means?' the LORD asked.

" 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,' he said.

" 'You will succeed in enticing him,' said the LORD. 'Go and do it.'

²³ "So now the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The LORD has decreed disaster for you."

Do we take this literally, just as it reads? Why not? Isn't this the Bible record of an inspired prophet of God describing things occurring in heaven? Shouldn't we just accept it as it reads? No, we should



understand it through the lens of the rest of divine revelation. We should ask questions like: Does God actually lie? No, then this must mean something else—and what does it mean? That God is sending a message to Ahab, a man who worships Baal and believes all things happen by God who makes them happen. **So, in grace, God steps down and assumes the role of causing the lies** to be told in order to inform Ahab that going to war will result in his death. This was not about how things truly happen in heaven, but a message of mercy communicated in the only way the listener could comprehend that he had been lied to, all in order to save the sinner.

Could the description of what is written in Friday's lesson be similar, written in a certain way because of the mindset of the audience?

So, what questions do we need to ask about the quotation from Friday?

- Do we take this literally as it reads, by itself, isolated and disconnected from any other resource, or do we require our understanding of what is written there to harmonize with the Bible and the author's other writings?
- If Hebrews emphasizes that Christ is a High Priest in the order of Melchizedek, then why do we insist on ascribing to Him all the rituals of the Levitical priesthood?
 - If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come—one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? ¹² **For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law.** Heb 7:11-12
 - Could it be the law that changed was imposed to design?
 - What kind of law is ceremonial law? Imposed law—but what kind of law does God build reality to operate upon?
 - Then, when the priesthood changed from Levitical to Melchizedek, the followers were to leave behind all imposed law, not just ceremonial, but the idea of imposed law as applied to the moral law, and come back to seeing God's law as design law.
- Do we believe Jesus is dropping red corpuscles in a building in heaven to cleanse it from sin?
- Why do we say that the blood of Jesus must be taken into the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary on the day of atonement to remove the sins of the people, which were symbolically transferred to the sanctuary during the year by the blood of the various sacrifices when the blood from those sacrifices was never taken into the Most Holy Place?
 - Where did Jesus say His blood was to be applied? Inside the believer! John 6
- Why do we say the blood of the daily sacrifices that were applied to the altar defiles the sanctuary when, according to Scripture, everything that came into contact with the sacrificed lamb was made holy? Do we believe that when Jesus became sin, even though He knew no sin, that Jesus became contaminated, that sin won? Or did Jesus win and sin was overcome by Jesus? So, is the blood of Jesus contaminated with sin or is it a cleansing agent?
- LEV 6:24 The LORD said to Moses, ²⁵ "Say to Aaron and his sons: 'These are the regulations for the **sin offering**: The sin offering is to be slaughtered before the LORD in the place the burnt offering is slaughtered; **it is most holy.** ²⁶ The priest who offers it shall eat it; it is to be eaten in a holy place, in the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting. ²⁷ **Whatever touches any of the**



flesh will become holy, and if any of the blood is spattered on a garment, you must wash it in a holy place. ²⁸ The clay pot the meat is cooked in must be broken; but if it is cooked in a bronze pot, the pot is to be scoured and rinsed with water. ²⁹ Any male in a priest's family may eat it; **it is most holy**.

- Why do we say that sins are transferred to the sanctuary in heaven?
 - Can inanimate objects be sinful? Isn't this contrary to the entire point of Romans 14 that things offered to idols are not affected by the idols, inanimate objects cannot sin.
 - Sin is lawlessness, rebellion, living in opposition to God's law of love and liberty, how can a building in heaven do this? And how can rebelliousness be transferred to a building?
- It is argued that Daniel 8:14 refers to the heavenly sanctuary because in 1844 there was no sanctuary on earth and the Bible speaks of no other sanctuary "This is the only sanctuary that ever existed on the earth, of which the Bible gives any information. This was declared by Paul to be the sanctuary of the first covenant. But has the new covenant no sanctuary?" {GC 412.4} – but what about:
 - 1Cor 6:19,20 "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."

Isn't this a Bible defined temple/sanctuary on earth in 1844?

- We say that the sanctuary of the new covenant must be in heaven because Hebrews says it was pitched by God and not man, it was not made with human hands;
 - But who made human beings?
 - Consider 2Cor 5:1
 - Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2Cor 5:1
 - What is this tent that was not built by human hands? Could this be the sanctuary that needs cleansing?
 - Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." In 2:19 To what was Jesus referring?
- The same author who wrote the quote in Friday's lesson, from the same book five pages later writes:
 - **"The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of Days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by Malachi, are descriptions of the same event;** and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25." {GC 426.1}
- And what does Malachi say Christ cleanses when He comes to His temple?
 - "See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. But who can endure the day of his



coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; **he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.**" Mal 3:1-3.

- If you look in the SDA Bible commentary you will discover that the Hebrew word translated *cleansed* in Daniel 8:14 is more accurately translated *justified*. Unto 2300 days and then shall the sanctuary be *justified*.
 - But what does justified mean? To set right, to put in order, to put what is out of line back in line. For those of you who have a word processor on your computer there is a command at the top which allows you to *justify* your margins. If you justify the margins what happens? Everything that is out of line is put in line, everything that is out of order is put in order, everything that is out of harmony is put in harmony, everything that is wrong is set right.
 - Now the question is: what needs justifying? What is wrong that needs to be set right? What is out of line that needs to be put in line? What is out of order that needs reordering? What is out of harmony that needs to be brought back into harmony? The mind, heart and character of mankind!
- Another quote from the same author as the quote in Friday's lesson:
"Since the whole ritual economy was symbolical of Christ, it has no value apart from Him. When the Jews sealed their rejection of Christ by delivering Him to death, they rejected **all that gave significance to the temple** and its services" *Desire of Ages* 165:

Could this mean that when we confess our sinfulness then our sin is symbolically placed upon Christ, which means that He becomes our substitute in that He takes upon Himself our sinfulness, our sin, our sin-condition in order to cleanse humanity from sinfulness—is this the simple lesson that the sanctuary is to teach?

Surely he took up our infirmities
and carried our sorrows,
yet we considered him stricken by God,
smitten by him, and afflicted.
5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed. Isa 53:4-6

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2Cor 5:21

- The Bible describes the Sanctuary, the Temple in another way, as the dwelling place of God:
 - And rejoice before the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a **dwelling for his Name**. Dt16:11
 - What does this mean? What is signified by God's name? His character, and what is to be the dwelling place of God's character? Adam and Eve, but they defiled themselves, their sanctuaries were defiled by fear and selfishness. So, a second Adam came, Jesus



to do what? To build and cleanse God's dwelling place, i.e. God's sanctuary.

- Notice what God says through Zacheriah:
- Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is **the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord.**¹³ **It is he who will build the temple of the Lord,** and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. **And he will be a priest on his throne.** And there will be harmony between the two.' Zech 6:12,13

If there was already a building in heaven that was *the* sanctuary, why would Jesus need to leave heaven in order to *build* the sanctuary?

- And where is our dwelling place?
 - **"Lord, you have been our dwelling place** throughout all generations." Ps 90:1
 - **I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever** Ps 23:6
 - Him who overcomes I **will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it.** I will write on him the **name of my God** and the name of the city of my God, **the new Jerusalem**, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him **my new name.**¹³ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Rev 3:12,13
 - So is the temple a construct of unity which centers on God and is built out of living beings?
 - Then what needs cleansing to cleanse the temple? Sinners!

So what does all of this mean?

- Heaven itself was contaminated with lies about God and rebellion from His methods by Satan before the creation of humankind.
- God created humankind to be a temple, a holy place where God would dwell by His Spirit—where His name/character would dwell
- Satan's lies infected the human temple and the human temple became defiled
 - “Eve *believed* the words of Satan, and the *belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband.* They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors...” (RH, January 5, 1886 par. 8).
- Christ branched out, left heaven, and became the second Adam and restored God's character in the species human, defeated the lies, rewrote the law of love into humanity and thus cleansed the Temple from lies, fear and selfishness—restoring God's name/character into the living temple built by God
- Now Christ works to restore the damage done to heaven itself by preparing each of us for that place, cleansing each of us.



Two more quotes from the same author as the quote in Friday's lesson:

"In the building of the sanctuary as a dwelling place for God, Moses was directed to make all things according to the pattern of things in the heavens. God called him into the mount, and revealed to him the heavenly things, and in their similitude the tabernacle, with all that pertained to it, was fashioned.

"So to **Israel**, whom He desired to **make His dwelling place**, He revealed His glorious ideal of **character**. The pattern was shown them in the mount when the law was given from Sinai and when God passed by before Moses and proclaimed, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." Exodus 34:6. ..

"Through Christ was to be fulfilled the **purpose** of which the **tabernacle was a symbol**--that glorious building, its walls of glistening gold reflecting in rainbow hues the curtains inwrought with cherubim, the fragrance of ever-burning incense pervading all, the priests robed in spotless white, and in the deep mystery of the inner place, above the mercy seat, between the figures of the bowed, worshipping angels, the glory of the Holiest. **In all, God desired His people to read His purpose for the human soul**. It was the same purpose long afterward set forth by the apostle Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit:

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17. (Education 34-36).

"In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was God's purpose that **every created being**, from the bright and holy seraph to **man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator**. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and **through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple**. God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every soul. But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. **In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,--from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul**. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and



He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." Mal. 3:1-3. (DA 161).

So what cleanses the sanctuary? Jesus, first in His own personal work, but then in each human who trusts Him.

- In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Heb 9:22

What does this mean? Is it red corpuscles or is it symbolic? Of what is the blood symbolic? Here again from the same author as the quote from Friday:

- “In the *study of the Bible* the converted soul eats the *flesh* and drinks the *blood* of the Son of God, which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words, that are spirit and life.” (Fundamentals of Christian Education 378).
- “The leaven of *truth* works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By it [*the truth*] the impure are cleansed, washed in the *blood of the Lamb*.” (Christ’s Object Lessons 102).

But more questions remain to be answered?

- Why investigate records?
- Who needs to investigate?
- Is there anything God doesn’t know?
- Who was the one lied about?
- Who needs the truth to cleanse them from lies?
- Then who needs to investigate and what?

There was another text referring to the same event, the Daniel 7 text. “The Ancient of Days took his seat...The court was seated, and the books were opened.” (Daniel 7:9,10).

Whose books were opened? In the investigative judgment, when the books are opened and the investigation is going on, whose books are opened? Churches are tax-deductible organizations. They receive donations, which means they keep books: who donated, how the money is spent etc. If the church opens the books for outside examination, who is being examined the contributors or the church?

In heaven, when God opens the books, who is being examined, God or us? Why would God need to open His books and why would God need to open His books about us?

Imagine I present myself to your community and claim I have a cure for cancer and have cured 50 people of cancer. I tell you they are all cancer free. I even present 50 people and ask your medical experts to examine them to see if they can find any cancer and sure enough, not one has cancer. Would you now believe I have a cure for cancer if all were cancer free? How would you know if they ever had cancer to start with?



Conversely, if instead I bring out some medical records that document the presence of cancer, and then, as you review the records you see where a treatment was given and the record indicates the cancer is cured. But, I won't let you examine any patients, would you believe I have a cure for cancer?

Why is this analogy relevant? Because after Satan's original lies about God, which led others into sin, he had some new lies that needed to be dealt with as well. Again another quote from the same author from Friday:

“Many [angels] were disposed to heed this counsel, to repent of their disaffection, and seek to be again received into favor with the Father and His Son. But Lucifer had *another deception* ready. The mighty revolter now declared that the angels who had united with him *had gone too far to return*; that he was acquainted with the divine law, and knew that *God would not forgive...* PP 41

“So far as Satan himself was concerned, it was true that he had now gone too far to return. But *not so* with those who had been blinded by his *deceptions*. To them the counsel and entreaties of the loyal angels opened a door of hope; and had they heeded the warning, they might have broken away from the snare of Satan.” PP 41

So, not only were there the original lies about God, but when some of the angels who sided with Satan were warned and were considering returning to loyalty to God, Satan hit them with a new set of lies. Satan says, “Oh, no! God won't forgive. You can't return once you've chosen to rebel against God.”

Do you see how this second lie continues to infect Christianity today? God won't forgive—someone has to pay the penalty for sin. So, God is on trial, do you trust God, or not?

And thus, in Revelation Chapter 5 we have heavenly books that were sealed with seven seals and only Jesus the Lamb of God is worthy to open the book. And He opens the book for all to see its contents—and what is in the book? Who is examining the book sealed with 7 seals? Who wrote what is contained in the book? What time in human history did the book with seven seals begin to be opened?

Could this be the books that are opened to which Daniel 7 is referring, the Ancient of Days takes His seat and the court was seated and books were opened? This is the same event as Daniel 8:14, and Malachi 3—the investigating of the records—by whom? By those who believed lies and need their minds cleansed. Thus, the royal court of heaven sat and Jesus the worthy, opened the books.

The Bible doesn't say the books opened in Daniel 7 are legal records of sin, but the heavenly books. Revelation tells us of a sealed book that is opened in heaven at the end of time...could this be it?

And what is described in the book sealed before time began? The Great Controversy and God's solution for it along with the names of all the saved, the great multitude! Why? To reveal that God knows everything and yet His foreknowledge doesn't take our freedom, the book of God's foreknowledge matches exactly with the book of records recorded by the recording angels and God is exonerated as being Holy, Righteous, True and Trustworthy!



I encourage you to get *The Remedy* (it is free in the app store) and read Revelation chapters 5-11 with this idea in mind.

What about the idea that the records of our cases are there, our characters our names?

Imagine you have a child who has metastatic cancer, cancer all over their body. The doctors have told you the case is terminal; there is nothing that can be done. But you have heard of a doctor that no matter what disease the person has they always leave with a clean bill of health. So, you pack up your child. You gather all the medical records, the bone scans, biopsy reports, CT scans, MRI's, everything that documents the extent of the disease and you go to this doctor. Finally, you get your day with the doctor. You hand him the medical records documenting in great detail the extent of the cancer which is ravaging your child's body. Then the doctor takes the records and begins to remove all the pages documenting any record of disease and inserts clean blank sheets of paper. And when he has replaced the entire record with blank paper he hands it back and says, "There, no more record of disease. You go on home." Are you satisfied? If you have a doctrine that teaches Christ is in heaven cleansing record books without doing something in you, you are in trouble!

But what if you go to this doctor and he looks at the records documenting the cancer in your child, and then he goes and examines your child and begins to intervene *in your child*, what do you want to happen? You want the cancer to go into *remission*! "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). When cancer goes into remission the cancerous cells remit to their original, normal, healthy non-cancerous state. The cancer is gone. Without the shedding of blood we could not be remitted to our original sin-free state, to our original Christlikeness of character! Without the shedding of blood, without the truth being internalized, without the victorious life and self-sacrificing death of Christ we cannot be restored, we cannot be healed!

And so, the doctor treats your child and the medical records shows the disease, shows the damage caused by the disease, but also shows the treatment applied and the record now shows your child is cancer free! God has records in heaven showing our sickness of heart and mind and the damage sin has caused in us. And hopefully, His records are also showing that we are partaking of His remedy, His treatment, and the records are showing that the sickness of sin is being removed, the rich garments are being put on, the cancer of sin is going into remission, the character of Christ is being reproduced within, the law of God is being written on the heart!

Again from the same author as the quote from Friday:

"The *cases* of all are pending in the *heavenly sanctuary*. Day by day angels of God are watching the *development of character*... All defects must be remedied. The *character* must be assimilated to the *character of Christ*... At an infinite cost a fountain has been prepared for *our cleansing*. In the *blood* of the Son of God *we may wash our garments of character*, and make them white." (ST, April 17, 1901).



Do you see the incredible importance of the Sanctuary message? And how totally corrupted the message becomes when we replace God's design law with human imposed law!

SABBATH

Read memory verse: "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth" Philippians 2:9,10

What name? Why is the name above every other name?

Rev 19:12 says: "His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself."

Why?

Because He is infinite and name is about character and individuality and no other being can fully know the infinite Savior God.

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, "God sent Christ..." What does it mean to condemn sin in the flesh?

Why was the death of Christ necessary?

Would the death of a sinless angel have been any help? Why or why not?

If a divine being could die, would the death of a divine being be of any benefit to our sin condition? No! why? Because the problem of sin is not a legal one and thus no being could die to pay a legal debt; such a payment would NOT resolve the sin problem, because the sin problem is a condition of being, not a legal one. The death of a divine being would have been truth to win us to trust, but would have still left us in a terminal condition.

A sinless human had to die while facing the infection of fear and selfishness in order for a human being to be freed from the infection of fear and selfishness. In other words, it was the only means to cure the human species from the infection of sin, while simultaneously revealing the truth to solidify loyal angels in their loyalty. No natural descendant of Adam could do this, so Christ joined His divinity with our humanity in order to remedy the sin problem.

MONDAY

John 1:29 reads: "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"



Is there a difference in taking away the *sin* versus *sins* of the world?

Why did the lesson authors pluralize it to sins? Because they have the wrong law concept and don't see the sin problem as a condition of being that needs curing, but a behavior problem that needs punishing.

While God has desired to teach men that from His own love comes the Gift which reconciles them to Himself, the archenemy of mankind has endeavored to represent God as one who delights in their destruction. Thus the sacrifices and the ordinances designed of Heaven to reveal divine love have been perverted to serve as means whereby sinners have vainly hoped to propitiate, with gifts and good works, the wrath of an offended God. {PK 685.2}

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Christ is able..." What does it mean a permanent priesthood?

Does this mean we will need Christ to intercede for us for all eternity?

The lesson talks about Christ's intercessory role—with whom is Christ interceding?

Does Christ ever stop His intercessory role and remove His priestly garments? If so, why? And what does that mean for us?

The lesson says that God has the authority to forgive sins—when did God get that authority? Did God have that authority before Jesus died?

Third paragraph states, "After all, considering who it was who died on the cross, how could such an offering not be sufficient for every human being?"

What is implied here? What is being suggested? Why is it sufficient for every human being? Are they suggesting because of who died, meaning, because the divine Son of God died?

But in Sunday's lesson it states, "As an immortal Being, Christ could not die. Therefore, the Lord became a human, taking our mortality upon Himself so that He could die as our substitute...In a way known only to God, the divinity of Christ did not die when Jesus died on the cross."

Hmmm... so on the one hand they suggest because it was a divine being who died how could it not be sufficient for everyone. But on the other hand they say His divine self did not die.... Does anyone see any contradictions?

This is another example of the problem one gets into with the false imposed legal penal view. When



one returns to design law one realizes that divinity never needed to die to save us, but divinity needed to be united with humanity in order to eradicate selfishness and heal us!

So what did He accomplish, according to Heb 5:8,9: “Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered⁹ and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him...”

Notice, He, as a human learned, and made Himself perfect by His choice to develop a perfect sinless character!

The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “Jesus is the forerunner...” What do you hear in this paragraph? What is the problem as it is presented?

The problem is an angry, punishing, sometimes called holy and just, God that is the source of legal infliction of pain, suffering and death, except Christ presents, in the Catholic view His sacrifice to pay for our sins so the Father will forgive us; and in the Protestant view present His merits to the Father to remind the Father that our sins were already paid for at the Cross and now we are legally applying them to our account so the Father pronounces us pardoned.

Both views fail to realize they have a pagan god who requires a payment be made to him in order not to punish and both views are part of Satan's lie.

Christ is not presenting His merits to the Father, but is before the Father carrying out the Father's purpose in reaching each of us with the healing remedy He has procured!

We are the ones who need to be pled with, not God; we are the ones who need convincing, who need truth, who need the righteousness of Jesus—God doesn't need these things—we do!



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

If you would like to be part of our launch team, then go to agingbrainbook.com and click the launch team application section.

JUNE 2, 2018: COME AND REASON WILL MEET AT Hamilton Community Church at 10:20 a.m.

NEW TV PROGRAM: Each Tuesday watch our new TV Program—The Dr. Tim Jennings Show on WBTN.TV Network. God to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

New Video Blogs—If you don't follow us on Facebook, then be sure to visit our website we are posting new blogs again, the go up every Thursday.

April 28, 2018: New Two Lecture Seminar: 3PM at Hamilton Community Church:
The Sanctuary & Feast Days: A Hidden End-Time Message

Talk 1: The OT Sanctuary: Decoding the Secret Meaning

Have you ever studied the Old Testament sanctuary and found yourself confused? Have you struggled to understand the meaning of all the various symbols and rituals? The OT sanctuary was a play, an acted out theatrical production directed by God for the purpose of revealing His plan to save humanity from sin. In this presentation we will decode the symbols of the sanctuary to reveal the reality of God's amazing plan to save humanity from sin.

Talk 2: The Day of Atonement and the Feast Days: God's Hidden Plan for Human History

Ancient Israel was instructed by God to celebrate annual feasts or festivals (holy-days, i.e. holidays) to which all the people were to participate. These festivals occurred in a certain order and were to be celebrated every year. Ancient Israel, in addition to being real historic people who did real events, were also God's people to reveal God, His kingdom, methods and plan for saving humanity from sin. In this presentation we will discover, God's plan for human history, hidden in the symbols of the ancient feasts.

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

May 25, 26, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in London England at the Stanborough Park SDA Church, 609 St Albans Road, Watford, WD25 9JL

July 27-28, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Houston, TX, in conjunction with the AACC

September 14,15, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be Keynote Speaker at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown, Delaware.

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

September 30-Oct 2, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at NAD of SDA Mental Health Education retreat for pastors at Kettering, OH.



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

Mental Health Matters

Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

The Mind- God's Design & What Went Wrong Thursday, May 10, 2018

The human mind was designed with separate and distinct faculties to operate in a beautiful harmony. Something has damaged that balance and caused pain, suffering and illness. Discover God's design for the mind, what went wrong and how to restore balance to your mind.

The Aging Brain Thursday, August 13, 2018

What happens to the brain as we age? This presentation will examine the evidence-based lifestyle and non-pharmacological interventions which will protect your brain and diminish your risk of dementia. Copies of Dr. Jennings brand new book, *The Aging Brain*, will be available.

Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family.

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!



Preparation for the End Time Lesson 6 1Q 2018

The “Change” of the Law

presenter: Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

SABBATH

Read memory text: “He will speak against the Most High and oppress His holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time” (Daniel 7:25 NIV)

What does this text mean?

Read the first paragraph, “Central to our understanding...” Do you agree or disagree? What do you hear?

Consider this quotation from the book *The Great Controversy*:

The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy **concerning the law of God**. Upon this battle we are now entering,—a battle **between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah**, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition. {GC88 582.2}

What kinds of laws do humans make? What kind of law does God make?

The conflict has always been over whether God is trustworthy, which goes directly to the type of law He wields. If God’s law is like human law—imposed rules, then God is a dictator, source of inflicted punishment, coercive and ultimately untrustworthy.

If God is love and His laws are design laws, then they are the protocols for life, health, happiness and only in harmony with them is life possible. In this view God is seeking to heal and restore sinners, not punish sin.

In heaven Satan began his war by alleging God’s law is merely imposed rules and that God is required to punish sin. This is the lie that has infected humanity, this is the change in the law that has occurred and to which Daniel 7:25 is referring. This is the lie that most Christians, including many in our own church, still embrace. This is the lie we are to reject.

Many of you remember this quotation from a book entitled *The Desire of Ages*:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan**; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth



and justice. {DA 761.4}

What kind of law is Satan alleging God uses? The kind that requires God to inflict punishment—which is imposed, not design, law.

Notice this same problem throughout human history:

In Isaiah's day the spiritual understanding of mankind was dark through misapprehension of God. Long had Satan sought to lead men to look upon their Creator as the author of sin and suffering and death. **[How could Satan get people to think God is the source of sin, suffering and death? If God's law is imposed, then from where does punishment and death come? From the judge who punishes.]** Those whom he had thus deceived, **imagined that God was hard and exacting.** They regarded Him as watching to denounce and condemn, **unwilling to receive the sinner so long as there was a legal excuse for not helping him. The law of love by which heaven is ruled had been misrepresented by the archdeceiver as a restriction upon men's happiness, a burdensome yoke from which they should be glad to escape.** He declared that its precepts could not be obeyed and that the penalties of transgression were bestowed arbitrarily. PK 311

Two heroin addicts overdose on heroin, but before they lose consciousness they realize the dose they took was too much. They both have in their possession the antidote—naltrexone, which was given to them at no cost at the methadone clinic. One of the addicts injects himself with the antidote and lives, the other doesn't and dies. Was it an arbitrary punishment that one died and one did not? Do you see the lesson in the punishment sin brings?

In his restless youth the prodigal looked upon his father as stern and severe. How different his conception of him now! **So those who are deceived by Satan look upon God as hard and exacting. They regard Him as watching to denounce and condemn, as unwilling to receive the sinner so long as there is a legal excuse for not helping him. His law they regard as a restriction upon men's happiness, a burdensome yoke from which they are glad to escape. But he whose eyes have been opened by the love of Christ will behold God as full of compassion.** He does not appear as a tyrannical, relentless being, but as a father longing to embrace his repenting son. The sinner will exclaim with the Psalmist, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." Psalm 103:13. COL 204

Both these quotes are stating that Satan's lie which keeps men in darkness is when we see God through imposed law, as the policeman in the sky who must watch for rule breaking and who must inflict punishment. We are to come back and see Him as Creator, and His laws as design laws upon which life is built!



Consider this quote:

It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary **it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven...** {DA 19.2}

Why is the law of love the law of life? Because it is the protocol upon which life exists, and the proclamation, the education, the revelation of this reality is to be the message that lightens the world. Consider this quote:

I tell you, God is testing us now, just now. **The whole earth is to be lightened with the glory of God. That light** is shining now, and how hard it has been for proud hearts to accept of Jesus as their personal Saviour; how hard to get out of **the rut of a legal religion**; how hard for them to **grasp** the rich, free gift of Christ. **Those who have not accepted this offering will not understand anything in regard to that light which fills the whole earth with its glory.** Let every heart now seek the Lord. Let self be crucified, for rich and glorious blessings are awaiting all who shall maintain contrition of soul. With them Jesus can abide; they will let nothing interpose between their souls and God. Lt10-1892.25

This is quotation from theologian George Fiffield's book *God is Love* published in 1897:

God created all things by Jesus Christ, and therefore Christ is the "mighty God," the "everlasting Father" of all intelligent beings in all worlds. God the Father is the Father of Christ, and therefore through him of all these beings created by Christ...

Now the All-Father gave to his children certain rules or laws to regulate their conduct. These laws were not arbitrary, not designed to show his right or power to boss, or domineer, over his children, but, like the rules of well-regulated families, they were designed to promote the happiness of all the children, and the unity of the family life.

Although many might hesitate to express it thus, the thought that lingers in their minds is about like this: **"God is arbitrary and obstinate, and will not permit the slightest variation from his laws without plunging us into eternal death."** This is what Satan has ever said of God and of his government. I desire to show the contrary so that all may see. **I desire to show that it is the variation itself that plunges us into eternal death, and not the arbitrary decree of God.** It is the love of God that will not in any way countenance that variation, because it leads to such terrible results.

The law of God is not simply his fiat; it rests upon eternal principles of pleasure and pain, -- principles as unchangeable in their very nature as the laws that govern the seasons or control the motions of the planets. **The law is not so simply because God said so, but he said so because it was so**, and because it must eternally and universally be so.



On the correct understanding of these principles of the nature of God's law depends our power to comprehend God's love in all his dealings with his creatures. On this rests the whole philosophy of the purpose of creation and of the plan of redemption. The existence of misery and suffering, the need for an atonement, and how that atonement is accomplished by Christ, can be understood in the light of God's love only as the nature of his law stands revealed. It is for this reason that we purpose to dwell at some length in these pages on the nature of God's law.

We have always thought of the ten commandments as requiring our love to God and to all his creatures; **have we ever thought of them as an expression of his love to us? It would be absolutely foolish to demand our love by arbitrary fiat; love cannot be given in that way;** love is born only of love. The state might as well legislate that the sun should not shine or the water should not flow downhill, as for the Lord to make such arbitrary demands for love. In either case the law could not affect in the slightest the things legislated about.

Yet it remains true that all the law of God requires is love, and that, as the apostle says, love is the fulfilling of the law, -- of the whole law. How is this? -- Simply that the law itself, when we understand it, is the revelation of such infinite love as to beget within us a returning, responsive love that can and will fulfill the law.

"God is love." Every word, every jot and tittle, of that law, coming from love, require only such service as love dictates. **When the same love which that law expresses to us is begotten by it in our hearts, and flows out toward God and all his creatures in loving action, then the law is fulfilled.** (Fifield, *God is Love*, p53-55, Theodore Reese, 155 LaSalle Street, Chicago, in 1897)

Do you see again the contrast between imposed law and design law?

So the question in the conflict is over God's law: is it imposed rules like sinners make, or is it design law like only the Creator can make.

Once Christians became infected with the lie that God's law functions like human law, then the Roman church changed the commandments of God, deleting the commandment about images, splitting the 10th in two, and changing the Sabbath commandment to refer to Sunday instead of Saturday.

Sadly, many Christians have failed to see the real change, and instead focused on the evidence of the change only. The real change is not merely the two commandments, but the entire idea of God's law.

Thus, many people who have reclaimed the seventh-day Sabbath, are still infected with the lie that God's law functions like human law, imposed rules, and thus they worship a God like Satan alleges, only on the right Bible day. They are just like the Jews who crucified Christ—wanting Him off the Cross so they can observe the right day!



With this in mind, we can turn to the lesson and ask, where does the weekly Sabbath fit into this conflict over two types of law, and thus over two types of gods?

One of our online friends Dann Wyatt sent me a link to an online debate held March 30, 2018 between Doug Batchelor and Steve Gregg. The link is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8fQtsV5Y4Y>

First, it is important to note that no argument was made over which day of the week is the Bible Sabbath—both Doug Batchelor and Steve Gregg acknowledged that Saturday is the Sabbath of the Bible. And all educated persons agree that the Sabbath of the Bible is Saturday. That is not the question people have. The question is what, if any, role does the Bible Sabbath have for people after the resurrection of Jesus?

I found it quite sad that Doug Batchelor was only able to articulate a level four reason for the Sabbath—the law, the rules. Steve Gregg on several occasions was reaching toward principles, God's love, God's concern with the quality of the character, the heart, not legal behavioral performance. Sadly, Mr. Batchelor was never able to articulate a design law reason, a principle basis, for the Sabbath.

What would you have said? What evidence would you put forth of the value and importance of the weekly Sabbath today?

Is the Sabbath important at this time in earth's history? Why? What difference does it make?

I am going to read a quotation, used by some to make themselves feel good about their behavior, and too often used to accuse or condemn people who worship on Sunday. But let's consider this quote carefully:

- The sign, or seal, of God is revealed in the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, the Lord's memorial of creation. . . . The mark of the beast is the opposite of this--the observance of the first day of the week.--8T 117 (1904). {LDE 224.3}

What do you understand this statement to mean? What law lens to you read it through?

- Is the issue in our salvation, in our preparation to meet Jesus, in our being ready to translate into heaven without seeing death as simple as which day of the week a person worships upon?
- If a person absolutely insists on worshipping on the Bible Sabbath does that guarantee they won't get the mark of the beast?
- Those who crucified Christ 2000 years ago wanted Him off the Cross by sunset why? So they could keep the Sabbath – does that mean they had the seal of God?
- Does Satan care if a group of people worships on Sabbath as long as they worship him?

Here is another quote from the same person as the previous quote, consider it in light of what we have presented:



Be sure the Sabbath is a test question and how you treat this question places you either on God's side or Satan's side. The mark of the beast is to be presented **in some shape** to every institution and every individual.--Ms 6 1889, p. 6. (Written Nov. 4, 1889.) {3MR 189.2}

If God's law is not imposed rules but design protocols, then how is the Sabbath a test question? How is the mark of the beast to be presented in *some shape* to every institution...Is it which day merely, or is it what the day symbolizes, what the day signifies in regard to God, his character and method of governing?

What is a mark or sign?

A symbol that stands for or signifies something else:

- The sign of the cross stands for what?
- The goat's head symbolizes what?
- What is a flag? Is the US flag a sign or symbol of the USA? Is the flag the same as the United States of America?
- Could someone wear the US Flag and be working for another government?
- If someone wears a cross are they saved because it is the sign of our crucified Savior?
- If someone has a goat ornament hanging on their Xmas tree, does that mean they are condemned because a goat's head symbolizes Satan?
- If someone worships on Sabbath are they saved because it is a sign of God?
- If someone worships on Sunday does that mean they are lost?

So, the passages we read state that the Bible Sabbath, and its observance, is a sign or seal of God, whereas Sunday and its observance is a mark symbolizing the beast.

Even if we accept that the day upon which one worships can be a mark of loyalty to one side or the other, does that actually inform us of whom is on which side?

Question, are these days themselves the reality, or are they symbols, signs, marks of some deeper reality, just as a cross, goat's head or flag?

Is it possible the days mentioned are signs because they symbolize something that demarcates God's government from Satan's? Could they stand as signals, signets, of the mode of governing each side uses? Could these days, **in their origin as days of worship**, contain the very elements of the two types of governing – God's vs Satan's?

Here are some more quotes:

"Christ died to save sinners, not in their sins, but from their sins. [Imposed law constructs all teach that we are saved in our sins, from the legal penalty, but not saved from our sins, that we continue live sinfully until Christ returns. The truth is that God actually transforms us here and



now and we stop living for self, and live loving God and others more than self] The warning given in Revelation shows us the terrible consequence of transgression. By lips that will not lie, God's law is declared to be holy, just, and good. **Our duty to obey this law is to be the burden of the last message of mercy to the world.¹ God's law is not a new thing. It is not holiness created, but holiness made known. [Think about rules a parent has for handwashing, or exercise, or sleep etc. Those rules are not healthiness created, but healthiness made known.] It is a code of principles expressing mercy, goodness, and love. It presents to fallen humanity the character of God, and states plainly the whole duty of man.** {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 4}

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' This command contains the principles of the first four precepts. And 'thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' Upon these two great principles, the Word of God declares, hang all the law and the prophets. {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 5}

"These **principles** are made known by the third angel's message, which declares that **the Creator has always required and always will require obedience to his royal law. [Why does the Creator require obedience? Why does the Creator require we breathe? Because that is how life is built to operate. Remember the law is not holiness created but holiness made known. The commandments did not impose a law, but made the law known]** But this law has been disregarded and transgressed, **and is now being ignored by the churches. Human enactments are placed where God's law should be. [Imposed rules take the place of designed reality]** Sunday, a child of the Papacy, has taken the place of God's holy Sabbath. As Nebuchadnezzar made a golden image, and set it up to be worshiped by all, so Sunday is placed before the people to be regarded as sacred. This day bears not a vestige of sanctity, yet it is held up to be honored by all. {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 6}

Understand it is not about worshipping on Sunday—get that clear, just like there is no wrong in worshipping on Wednesday night, or Tuesday or Thursday. It is what the Sunday, within the religious system represents!

And what is the implication of changing the Bible Sabbath to Sunday? What does this act mean in regard to how God and his government are understood? How can a church vote to change the day of worship? What must first happen concerning God's law?

¹ It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth... The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. {COL 415}



So what does it mean if an ecclesiastical board votes to change the Sabbath? That they believe God's law is imposed, and therefore believe God is like a Roman emperor or a cosmic dictator. And accepting this change in the law is the root to the beast system.

And this lie comes out in the rest of Christian doctrines, like God is required to punish; penal substitution theology; eternal burning hell; Jesus died to pay or legal debt; etc. etc.

So let's review – what makes the Sabbath holy?

- What significance is it that the Sabbath was “made” or created?
 - It is not “legislated” any more than any other aspect of God's creation. The earth was made, the animals were made, angels were made, mankind was made, and the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.
- What significance is it that the Sabbath was “made”?
 - When was the Sabbath made?
 - What was happening in the universe?
- What did God do? He RESTED – what does that mean?
 - If He RESTED what was God not doing? He was no longer prosecuting His war, His case. He wasn't pressing his agenda. He wasn't intimidating. He wasn't using his power to force his way!
- It is God's Sabbath – the day He rested, the day He revealed by action how He handles opposition, how He treats enemies, how He deals with allegations and rebellion. He gives us freedom!
- What does it reveal that God created the Sabbath in the context of an assault on his right to rule?
- The Sabbath was “made” as further evidence of God's character of love; truth presented in love leaving us free. The first six days of creation week we learn God has power, but the Sabbath reveals God does not coerce or pressure or threaten with His power, but leaves us free. The Sabbath is evidence of God's character of love, established upon the principles of truth, love and freedom.
- The Sabbath is evidence that Satan's allegations about God, that God imposes rules, that God imposes punishments, that God abuses power are all lies. This is why Satan hates the Sabbath, because rightly seen and understood it reveals Satan as a liar.
 - Satan hates the Sabbath in the same way Richard Nixon hated the Watergate tapes or Clinton hated Monica's dress. Nixon would have loved to destroy the tapes, and in fact tried. Clinton would have loved to destroy the dress. And Satan tries to destroy the Sabbath, to distort and twist the evidence into something it isn't. How? By replacing it or twisting it into an imposed law test.

Therefore, the Sabbath stands symbolic, as a sign, of those who value God's law of love, and practice his methods of presenting the truth in love and leaving others free.

Then what is the mark of the beast?



The time has come for the true light to shine amid moral darkness. The third angel's message has been sent forth to the world, **warning men against receiving the mark of the beast or of his image in their foreheads or in their hands. To receive this mark means to come to the same decision as the beast has done, and to advocate the same ideas, in direct opposition to the word of God.** {RH, July 13, 1897 par. 5}

What decisions did the beast make and what ideas did it advocate that are in direct opposition to the word of God?

That God's law is imposed, and as an imposed law it can be changed, amended, abrogated, altered, thus, under the imposed law construct Sabbath can be changed to Sunday. And, imposed laws require judicial proceedings, investigation, records, judgments, imposed punishments. Therefore, coercive pressure is used to punish law breakers and ensure obedience.

Thus the issue in the end, of which the two days stand as signs, is the issue of God's law of love, versus Satan's imposed law construct; God's rule of love versus Satan's rule of fear and selfishness; God's natural law versus worldly imposed laws. It comes down to the methods one practices and the two days are symbolic of two systems.

Here is another quote from the same founder who wrote the others we have read:

In striking contrast to the wrong and oppression so universally practised were the mission and work of Christ. Earthly kingdoms are established and upheld by physical force, but this **was not** to be the foundation of the Messiah's kingdom. **In the establishment of his government no carnal weapons were to be used, no coercion practised; no attempt would be made to force the consciences of men. These are the principles used by the prince of darkness for the government of his kingdom. His agents are actively at work, seeking in their human independence to enact laws which are in direct contrast to Christ's mercy and loving-kindness.** {RH, August 18, 1896 par. 2}

Prophecy has plainly stated the nature of Christ's kingdom. He planned a government which would use no force; his subjects would know no oppression. [no arrests, no detainments, no imposed punishments, no force] The symbols of earthly governments are wild beasts, but in the kingdom of Christ, men are called upon to behold, not a ferocious beast, but the Lamb of God. **Not as a fierce tyrant did he come, but as the Son of man; not to conquer the nations by his iron power, but "to preach good tidings unto the meek;" "to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;" "to comfort all that mourn."** He came as the divine Restorer, bringing to oppressed and downtrodden humanity the rich and abundant grace of Heaven, that by the power of his righteousness, man, fallen and degraded though he was, might be a partaker of divinity. [which is healing and restorative, an expression of the law of love, the law life is built to operate upon] {RH, August 18, 1896 par. 3}



Those who promote a god who acts like a Roman emperor, who imposes law, who inflicts punishment, are actively promoting the system of the beast—even if they worship on the Bible Sabbath!

Here is the problem regarding days of worship, of which Sunday is a sign:

But when the decree shall go forth **enforcing** the counterfeit sabbath, **and** the loud cry of the third angel **shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his image**, the line will be clearly drawn **between the false and the true**. **Then** those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast.--Ev 234, 235 (1899). {LDE 225.4}

Notice it is not about Sunday, but the “enforcing” worship, about the use of arbitrary power to coerce, this is beastly. This is Satan’s way.

What is the mark of the beast? Imposed law ENFORCEMENT of worship!

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, One of the greatest promises...” What does Romans 8:1 mean, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those....”

What law lens do you hear it through? Is this legal, God doesn’t legally condemn or does it mean something entirely different?

From *The Remedy*:

Therefore, those who trust in Christ Jesus are no longer destined to die,² because through Christ Jesus the law of love has cleansed and healed them from the law of selfishness and death.

Which is more accurate to God’s truth, there is no legal condemnation for those who accept the legal penalty of Jesus’ blood, or those who accept Jesus are healed and therefore are no longer condemned by a terminal condition?

Consider this quotation from a book entitled *Conflict and Courage*:

After the transgression of Adam, God might have destroyed every opening bud and blooming flower, or He might have taken away their fragrance, so grateful to the senses. **In the earth seared and marred by the curse, in the briars, the thistles, the thorns, the tares, we may read the law of condemnation;** but in the delicate color and perfume of the flowers, **we may learn that God still loves us, that His mercy is not wholly withdrawn from the earth.** {CC 19.6}

Just in case someone is tempted to think that this author is suggesting that God put the thorns there to



condemn or punish, the same author wrote:

Christ never planted the seeds of death in the system. Satan planted these seeds when he tempted Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge which meant disobedience to God. **Not one noxious plant was placed in the Lord's great garden**, but after Adam and Eve sinned, poisonous herbs sprang up. In the parable of the sower the question was asked the master, "Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?" The master answered, "**An enemy hath done this**" (Matthew 13:27, 28). **All tares are sown by the evil one. Every noxious herb is of his sowing, and by his ingenious methods of amalgamation he has corrupted the earth with tares.** {2SM 288.2}

So putting these ideas together, what is the condemnation? It is not legal, it is the condemnation that sin does by damaging the creation. Thus, those in Christ Jesus are not condemned because they have had the stony heart removed and a heart of flesh put in, they have had selfishness removed and love put in. This is design law!

Read Romans 7:15-25 from *The Remedy*:

I am frustrated with what I do! For having been restored to trust, I want to do what is in harmony with God and his methods and principles; but I find that even though I trust God, my old habits, conditioned responses, preconceived ideas and other remnants of the devastation caused by distrust and selfishness are not yet fully removed.¹⁶ And if I find an old habit causing me to behave in ways that I now find detestable, I affirm that the law is a very helpful tool revealing residual damage in need of healing.¹⁷ What is happening is this: I have come to trust God, and I desire to do his will, but old habits and conditioned responses—which present almost reflexively in certain situations—have not yet been totally eliminated and thus cause me to do things I do not want to do.¹⁸ I know that my mind was completely infected with distrust, fear and selfishness, which totally perverted all my desires and faculties, so that even when distrust has been eradicated and trust has been restored, the damage caused by years of distrustful and selfish behavior has not yet been fully healed. So, I find that at times, I have the desire to do what is right, but do not yet have the ability to carry out the desire.¹⁹ For the old habits and conditioned responses are not the good I want to do: No! They are remnants of my selfish, unconverted mind.²⁰ So, if I find myself doing what I no longer desire to do, it is not myself that acts, but the vestiges of old habits and conditioned responses that have yet to be removed. And through God's grace, they will soon be removed.

²¹So I find this reality at work: When I want to do good, my old selfish habits and residual feelings of fear are right there with me.²² In my mind, I rejoice in God's methods and principles,²³ but I recognize that I remain damaged from years of being infected with distrust and practicing Satan's methods, so that even though the infection of distrust has been removed, the old habits of fear and self-promotion tempt me from within.²⁴ What a damaged and corrupt man I am! Who will deliver and heal me from a brain and body so diseased and deformed?²⁵ Praise be to God—for he has provided the healing solution through Jesus Christ our



Lord! So then, I find that in my mind I am now renewed with trust in God and love of his methods, but my brain and body remain damaged by years of self-indulgent behavior.

Do you see a legal battle? No, this is the process of healing and transformation.

MONDAY

The second paragraph states, “Two crucial points come from what Paul teaches here. First, he shows that the law is not the problem. The law is ‘holy, and just, and good.’ The problem is sin, which leads to death.”

This is well said—the question—why does sin lead to death? Two answers, based on two laws—in the imposed law, because God is required by justice to execute the wicked. This is the lie.

The truth—because sin is deviation from God’s design for life and results in death and the lesson indicates this in the last paragraph when it states, “The law does not produce death; sin does.”

That is correct, the law of respiration does not cause death, breaking the law by filling your lungs with water does.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson points out that after the death and resurrection of Christ the Sabbath was still observed by Christians. Any questions about this?

THURSDAY

The first paragraph states, “God’s law, the Ten Commandments, is still binding and that law includes the seventh-day Sabbath.”

What does it mean “Still binding?” Was the Sabbath in existence before the creation of earth? Did Lucifer in heaven lead the angels in breaking the Sabbath?

What does this mean?

The law of God existed before the creation of man or else Adam could not have sinned. **After the transgression of Adam the principles of the law were not changed, but were definitely arranged and expressed to meet man in his fallen condition.** Christ, in counsel with His Father, instituted the system of sacrificial offerings; that death, instead of being immediately visited upon the transgressor, should be transferred to a victim which should prefigure the great and perfect offering of the Son of God. {1SM 230.1}

Do we present God in His true light by emphasizing a legal understanding of the Sabbath?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

JUNE 2, 2018: COME AND REASON WILL MEET AT Hamilton Community Church at 10:20 a.m.

NEW TV PROGRAM: Each Tuesday watch our new TV Program—The Dr. Tim Jennings Show on WBTN.TV Network. Go to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

New Video Blogs—If you don't follow us on Facebook, then be sure to visit our website we are posting new blogs again, they go up every Thursday.

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

May 19, 2018: Jfest at Camp Jordan in Chattanooga. Local radio station J103's all day Christian Concert and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth at the event.

May 25, 26, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in London England at the Stanborough Park SDA Church, 609 St Albans Road, Watford, WD25 9JL

September 14,15, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be Keynote Speaker at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown, Delaware.

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

September 30-Oct 2, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at NAD of SDA Mental Health Education retreat for pastors at Kettering, OH.

November 9,10 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Houston, TX, in conjunction with the AACC

In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church
Mental Health Matters

Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

The Mind- God's Design & What Went Wrong Thursday, May 10, 2018

The human mind was designed with separate and distinct faculties to operate in a beautiful harmony. Something has damaged that balance and caused pain, suffering and illness. Discover God's design for the mind, what went wrong and how to restore balance to your mind.

The Aging Brain Thursday, August 13, 2018

What happens to the brain as we age? This presentation will examine the evidence-based lifestyle and non-pharmacological interventions which will protect your brain and diminish your risk of dementia. Copies of Dr. Jennings brand new book, The Aging Brain, will be available.

Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family.

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!



Preparation for the End Time 2018 Q2 Lesson 7

Matthew 24 and 25

presenter: Dr. Wendell Moses

“Moses said to them, “This is the food that the Lord has given you to eat. The Lord has commanded that each of you is to gather as much of it as he needs, two quarts for each member of his household.”

“The Israelites did this, some gathering more, others less. When they measured it, those who gathered much did not have too much, and those who gathered less did not have too little. Each had gathered just what he needed.” Exodus 16:15-18 (GNT)

Memory Text: “For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect” Matthew 24:24 NIV

SABBATH

Christ tells what is going to happen in the future

- He answered the question

He gave additional parables of the end times and His second coming.

- If heeded, the parables would prepare his followers for whatever they were to face: The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple for his first century followers and for His coming for his end of the age believers.

SUNDAY

A Powerful Confirmation of Prophecy

Text of the day: Matthew 24:1 - 25

“Christ is concerned with deceptions that will confuse His people through the ages and into the end time.”

Why? Because he is concerned for His children, both for those who believe and trust in Him and for those who are confused and diverted by sin.

Third paragraph: We have seen . . .

- Have you seen a false Christ?
- Have you been tempted to believe a false Christ?
- What is a false Christ?

Christ - anointed one

Christ was the “anointed one”

Who else is anointed?



Anointed by whom?
Anointed for what purpose?
what will help us determine if the anointed one is “false”?
the type of ceremony?
the one who anoints?
the qualifications of the one anointed?
The qualifications of the one doing the anointing?
Does it help if there are “manifestations” that verify the anointing?
what would qualify the process as being genuine?
If you had Christ do the anointing?

Judas, Simon Magus

What are the dangers that I/we face when we think we have not seen such?

What are the characteristics of a false Christ that will tip you off to the lie/deception/etc?

Is the location of the person’s feet have anything to do with your confidence?

If Lucifer is the smartest created being in the universe, do you think his trick / temptation / false ideas will have much to do with where his feet are when you see him?

Christ said (Matthew 24:24 GNT “For false Messiahs and false prophets will appear; they will perform great miracles and wonders in order to deceive even God's chosen people, if possible.”

What are the characteristics you are looking for to make a decision?

- Bible based
- If they are quoting scripture, are they to be trusted?
- No coercion
- Other centered love
- manner of coming
- goals
- Any others? (Galatians 1:8, 9)

How are these above counterfeited?

How can you prepare for determining the counterfeit?

- concentrate on the original
- practice discerning the originals attributes

It does not help to concentrate on a phony if that is not the phony we are going to be given to examine

- the Maginot line
- Evan’s mustache clip
- my father’s whistle: then and now

Devil diversions

- Red devil with a forked tail
- Christ temptations in the wilderness
- Devil as an angel of light and assistance

It is by spending time with our heavenly Father that we will recognize His voice, His ways, His character

At the bottom of the page read Matthew 24:25 **“What can we take away from this that should help us in our faith?”**

- “Listen! I have told you this ahead of time.” Matthew 24:25
- Why did Christ tell us this as He did?
- To some it sounds like “I told you so!”
- Others: “Now you are responsible since you have been told.”
- Christ’s last discussion with His disciples before He left the upper room and last supper:
 - John 14:15 - 31 He speaks of the coming of the Holy Spirit and the help that we would receive from His presence.
 - In this discourse Christ speaks a lot about obedience and love. He also speaks about the Holy Spirit’s functions.

“I have told you this now before it all happens, so that when it does happen, you will believe.”
John 14:29

- What are we to believe?
- The Greek word means believe or to entrust in someone.
- Amplified Bible “And now I have told you [this] before it occurs, so that when it does take place you may believe and have faith in and rely on Me.

MONDAY

Enduring to the End

"Then you will be arrested and handed over to be punished and be put to death. Everyone will hate you because of me. Matthew 24:9 (GNT with Deuterocanon)

The second beast was allowed to breathe life into the image of the first beast, so that the image could talk and put to death all those who would not worship it. Revelation 13:15 (GNT with Deuterocanon)

Read the first paragraph: “Christ’s concern . . .”

- Is Christ really concerned for a global deception?
- Isn’t really Christ concerned for His children in whatever state of comprehension they are in?

- God's children in the end times will not face anything that His children haven't faced before.
- Christ is concerned that I am ready for what may happen to me. How am I ready?

By placing my trust in Him

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the Lord in everything you do, and he will show you the right way." Proverbs 3:5 (GNT)

He doesn't tell us the bad things about the future to make us worry or fret.

- He knows the future and we are to put our trust in Him.
- This will take endurance.

How do you increase your endurance?

- Running
- Swimming
- Reading
- Praying
- Walking with Him

Texts for endurance

Revelation 1:9 (GNT) "I am John, your brother, and as a follower of Jesus I am your partner in patiently enduring the suffering that comes to those who belong to his Kingdom. I was put on the island of Patmos because I had proclaimed God's word and the truth that Jesus revealed."

Revelation 13:10 (GNT) "Whoever is meant to be captured will surely be captured; whoever is meant to be killed by the sword will surely be killed by the sword. This calls for endurance and faith on the part of God's people."

Revelation 14:12 - one of the church's favorite passages is about the terrible things that the wicked will be experiencing around the righteous. The witnessing of this wickedness is what is prompting the need for endurance on the part of God's children.

Matthew 7:24 - 27 the builder of the house upon the rock. Read the last paragraph: "As important as it is to be grounded. . ." Then read the colored section at the bottom.

If this is true, why is it true? This is natural law

Like learning a foreign language; you have to use it to make it part of your brain pathways. It is only by practice that your life skills in righteousness will become automatic.



TUESDAY

The “Abomination of Desolation”

The “terrible horror” The “horror that destroys”

If the “dreadful desecration” set up in the Holy Place was in Christ’s time.

- What is it to be now?
- How does our current understanding match with our understanding of the temple?

WEDNESDAY

The Ten Virgins

Matthew 25:1 – 13 Thoughts about the parable

- It is about Christians
- All of the Christians slept
- They thought there was a delay in the Lord’s (bridegroom) coming
- The difference between the wise and the foolish: the amount of oil they had prepared in advance
- Oil is referred to the Holy Spirit

Do we buy it? How? Do we store it? How?

- The bridegroom’s coming was a surprise (in timing) to both groups

Both groups were wanting Him to come. Both groups “went out to meet Him”

Read the seventh paragraph (quote from Christ’s Object Lessons pg 411) “The spirit works . . .”

Does this sound like an arbitrary condition or a result of natural processes?

THURSDAY

Using Your Talents

Matthew 25:13 – 30 Parable of the talents

Thoughts regarding the parable

- All the servants received a responsibility
- The difference is in what each servant did with the given responsibility

Questions:

- Was the character of the “master” different toward each servant?
- Was the perception of the master different between each servant?
- Who was accurate about the master’s character?



- Did the “lazy” servant ever agree in principle the dealings of the master to him?

Will the wicked ever see the Lord as being righteous?

Every knee will bow, but will it be an acknowledgement of righteousness or power?

Is it the use of power that will be their ultimate destruction?

The single talent servant:

- Didn't use / utilize to the benefit of the landowner his goods
- Did he waste the resource?

Can we give to others our talent/responsibility?

- What does it mean that he could have taken the talent to the bank?
- Could the servant have taken the talent to the bank? (What is the alternative to what he did with the talent / resource?)

FRIDAY

Further Thoughts

Read the final paragraph from Christ's Object Lessons pp 355, 356 at top of page. "He that is faithful in that which is least"



Salvation and Preparation for the End Time Lesson 8 2Q 2018

Worship the Creator

presented by Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

Kent Johnson, an online listener, sent in the following email this week:

It's amazing how much I come across the non legal way of looking at salvation now that I've learned to see God's law with new lenses. Thank you again for providing this understanding. Such a neat quote below.

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving - kindness of the Lord." God's healing power runs all through nature. If a tree is cut, if a human being is wounded or breaks a bone, nature begins at once to repair the injury. **Even before the need exists, the healing agencies are in readiness;** and as soon as a part is wounded, every energy is bent to the work of restoration. **So it is in the spiritual realm. Before sin created the need, God had provided the remedy.** Every soul that yields to temptation is wounded, bruised, by the adversary; but whenever there is sin, there is the Saviour. It is Christ's work "to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, ... to set at liberty them that are bruised." Luke 4:18. Ed 113.1

In this work we are to co - operate. "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ... restore such an one." Galatians 6:1. **The word here translated "restore" means to put in joint, as a dislocated bone. How suggestive the figure! He who falls into error or sin is thrown out of relation to everything about him.** He may realize his error, and be filled with remorse; but he cannot recover himself. He is in confusion and perplexity, worsted and helpless. **He is to be reclaimed, healed, re - established.** "Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one." **Only the love that flows from the heart of Christ can heal.** Only he in whom that love flows, even as the sap in the tree or the blood in the body, **can restore the wounded soul.** Ed 113.2

Love's agencies have wonderful power, for they are divine. The soft answer that "turneth away wrath," the love that "suffereth long, and is kind," the charity that "covereth a multitude of sins" (Proverbs 15:1; 1 Corinthians 13:4, R.V.; 1 Peter 4:8, R.V.) - **would we learn the lesson, with what power for healing would our lives be gifted! How life would be transformed, and the earth become a very likeness and foretaste of heaven!**" Ed 114.1

Wow—wasn't that a powerful quote? This is the truth about God's law, it is design law, and we as a Christian people will never fulfill God's plan until we reject the imposed law lie and return to worship our Creator God!



SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “As Seventh-day Adventist Christians...” Are SDAs the only ones who believe in the concept of present truth, that truth unfolds over time?

And if Christians of any group believe this, how would it manifest? Would it manifest by doggedly defending ideas that are centuries old when better insights and understandings present, or leaving old ideas behind when truth presents?

Let’s give an example of truth for a time that is no longer truth today and in fact if clung to today obstructs the truth for this time:

- Historically, the Roman Church had come to a point in history where they held people hostage to the authority of the church institution. Salvation was dependent not upon a trust relationship with Jesus Christ alone, but a combination of faith in Jesus and works controlled by the church to include penance, baptism, mass, and indulgences. Further, salvation could be obtained through purging of the wickedness after death in a place called purgatory. A living person could help a loved one out of purgatory by purchasing a pass from the church to accomplish this.
- Martin Luther wanted to remove the power of the church to hold people hostage with the false teaching about purgatory, so in his theology he developed the idea of penal substitution—the idea that all sins were placed upon Christ and punished in Christ thus when a person accepts Christ there is nothing left to punish or purge as it was already done in Christ. The sinner needs only the legal application of Christ to their heavenly record.

This was a powerful idea which helped millions break free from the falsehood of purgatory and the power of the institutional church to send souls to heaven or hell. The truth that Luther presented was that Salvation is found in Jesus not in a church institution, but is his theory of how it mechanically worked, the penal view truth for today? No! Why?

Because penal substitution theology is based upon the lie that God’s law functions like human law—imposed rules requiring imposed penalties. Martin Luther, coming from such deeply seated distortions, falsehood, darkness was not capable of comprehending and correcting all the errors. He corrected many, but left man uncorrected—the biggest the imposed law construct.

As the lesson says in the second paragraph, the message for this time is the 3 angel’s messages which is the message to worship the Creator—which requires we reject the imposed law, embrace design law and reject the false theologies based on imposed law, including penal substitution theology.

This week I was reading in the book *Prophets and Kings* and came across this:

There is no such thing as weakening or strengthening the law of Jehovah. As it has been, so it is. It always has been, and always will be, holy, just, and good, complete in itself. It



cannot be repealed or changed. [what kind of law is this? It is design law] To "honor" or "dishonor" it is but the speech of men. {PK 625.1}

Between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah will come the last great conflict of the controversy between truth and error. [What kind of laws do men enact? Imposed law, but God's law is design law. The final conflict will be over this issue, and upon what type of law does penal substitution theology rest? Imposed law! It is a lie that has infected Christianity and God is waiting for a people to cast it off] **Upon this battle we are now entering--a battle not between rival churches contending for the supremacy, but between the religion of the Bible and the religions of fable and tradition...**[We are not in a battle between rival churches? How much of SDA eschatology has pitted the SDA church against the Roman and other Sunday keeping churches? Such a construct is a lie, we are not battling against other churches, but against the pagan god constructs that operate upon imposed law, inflict imposed punishments and require propitiation with a human sacrifice. We are to come back and worship Him who made the heavens...Why does it seem the SDA church battles against other churches? Because the SDA church, which I love, has been infected with the same imposed lie as all the other churches, and having accepted that lie about the law many in leadership in the SDA church don't see the true gospel and therefore focus on the doctrinal differences between church groups.] {PK 625.2}

What is fable? A story not founded in fact—the idea that God's law functions like human law then is a fable—a story not founded in fact; humanity has accepted that fable and we are called to present to truth to set people free!

SUNDAY

The title The Universality of the Gospel: What is the gospel? How would you define the good news?

Why is the idea that Jesus died for our sins NOT the universal gospel?

- Is the gospel only for humans or for all beings in the universe?
 - “But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all to myself.” John 12:32
 - The gospel is for all beings in the universe, not just humans. Did Angels in heaven need Jesus to die for their sins?
 - “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” Col 1:19,20
 - Was something about what Christ accomplished at the cross necessary for the angels in heaven? Yes—was it that they needed Him to die for their sins? No! So, the idea that the universal gospel is Jesus dying for our sins is incorrect. A correct way to say it would be: Jesus dying for our sins is an expression or outworking or manifestation or revelation or consequence or evidence of the gospel.



- Did Jesus' death on the cross pay for the sins of Satan?
- If the gospel is universal—for all beings, but the death of Christ on the cross was not to save Satan then the death of Christ on the cross for our sin problem is not the universal gospel, but an acting out of, or result of, or expression of the universal gospel.
- Another way to say it is: was there no gospel before sin? Or is the good news an eternal gospel, true in eternity past?

Consider this commentator's view on what was Satan's opportunity for salvation, what do you think? And what are the implications?

God in His great mercy bore long with Lucifer. He was not immediately degraded from his exalted station when he first indulged the spirit of discontent, **nor even when he began to present his false claims before the loyal angels.** [What are false claims? Would it be bearing false witness about God and Jesus to the angels? Attempts to incite rebellion? Is this sin?] Long was he retained in heaven. **Again and again he was offered pardon on condition of repentance and submission.** [If he was offered pardon on condition of repentance wouldn't that mean he had sinned and needed both pardon and repentance? But in this account where is the blood payment of a sinless sacrifice?] Such efforts as only infinite love and wisdom could devise were made to convince him of his error. The spirit of discontent had never before been known in heaven. Lucifer himself did not at first see whither he was drifting; he did not understand the real nature of his feelings. But as his dissatisfaction was proved to be without cause, **Lucifer was convinced that he was in the wrong**, that the divine claims were just, and that he ought to acknowledge them as such before all heaven. **Had he done this, he might have saved himself and many angels.** He had not at this time fully cast off his allegiance to God. Though he had forsaken his position as covering cherub, yet if he had been willing to return to God, acknowledging the Creator's wisdom, and satisfied to fill the place appointed him in God's great plan, **he would have been reinstated in his office. But pride forbade him to submit.** He persistently defended his own course, maintained that he had no need of repentance, and fully committed himself, in the great controversy, against his Maker. {GC 495.3}

Was there good news, a gospel, in that description? What was the gospel or good news described? Was it not the same eternal good news as is manifested in the Cross—the good news about God's character of love?

According to this view, was the death of Christ necessary for the reinstatement of Satan? Why not—he had already borne false witness, which is breaking God's law, why was a death penalty not necessary for his sin?

Because sin has never been a legal issue, sin does not need to be punished, that is Satan's lie, sin is deviation from design law, which results in a terminal condition that needs to be cured, healed—the sinfulness needs to be removed.



So, how was it Satan could have been restored without the death of Christ but humanity could not, if you believe this view?

The same author has a rational:

But even as a sinner, **man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love.** Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. **But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry.** The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. **For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.** {DA 761.5}

What was the difference? What then was necessary for human beings to be saved?

Why did Christ have to die for human beings? Two reasons—to reveal the truth and to cure the condition.

Why could Lucifer have returned without that? Because, Lucifer was not born with a corrupted or fallen nature and at the point that he was offered pardon he had not fully hardened himself beyond restoration and if he would have humbled himself, rejected the lies, embraced the truth it would have been healing to him. But no human being after Adam sinned had the ability to discern the truth nor choose it, nor overcome the internal corruption with which we are born, thus Christ had to do it for us.

So, with this in mind, what is the gospel—the eternal gospel, the gospel that has always been true in eternity past and eternity future?

The truth about God, His character and methods of love!

And the imposed law with its penal substitution theology opposes the good news, presents a false gospel and puts barriers between people and God.

The first paragraph states, “In a sense, one can say that the first angel’s message is the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19) given now in the context of the last days.

Let’s compare the Great Commission and the First Angel’s Message:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Mt 28:19,20



Revelation 14:7:

“Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

How is the message of the first angel the gospel commission? It again goes back to whether we are presenting the truth of God or fables and tradition. If we present the fable that God’s law is like human law then we are not presenting the gospel—the first angel’s message is instead a message of bad news—that God the ruling authority is examining records and if you don’t have both the legal payment of Jesus to pay for your past sins AND observe the right religious observances then God, when Jesus ceases His intercessions will see all your remaining sins and inflict just pain, suffering, torture and ultimate death upon you.

But, when we come to the truth about God’s law as design law, we reject the pagan fables that have corrupted the gospel and realize that we are to give God glory by revealing His character and methods in how we live because the time has finally come in human history for people to make a right judgment about God and stop worshipping the dictator and instead worship Him who made the heavens, earth, sea...

Mt 28:19,20 from *The Remedy*:

So go and spread the Remedy to the entire world: Teach the people of every nation, immersing their hearts and minds into the character and methods of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teach them to live in harmony with the law of love-the design protocols upon which life is built-exactly as I have instructed you. And you can be sure that I am always with you—all the way, right through to the very end of time."

Read third paragraph, “The universality...” What is the emphasis? “have done wrong”...which implies or reveals what?

Does all have sinned mean all are in legal trouble?

Does “all have sinned and are fallen short of the glory of God?” mean they are short of the glory of God because they have sinned, or that they have sinned *because* they are short of the glory of God?

Is it the sins, the bad deeds that causes one to be short of the glory of God, or is it the character, the condition of the heart?

David wrote in Psalms 51:5: “I have been evil from the day I was born; from the time I was conceived, I have been sinful.” GNT

Was he short of the glory of God at birth? Had the baby David done a sin to cause him to be short of the glory of God?

Are humans and the nations short of the glory of God because we have done wrong, or do we do

wrong because we are short of the glory of God?

The sins, the bad deeds, the wrongs are symptoms of a condition with which we were born because of Adam and Eve. This condition is a terminal condition and results in death, but BEFORE we die of this condition we suffer with symptoms, those symptoms are both internal and external. Internal symptoms include fear, guilt, shame, lust, selfishness. External symptoms include the bad behaviors, what we call sins.

The problem with the false legal view is that sin is considered to be the bad deeds and the bad deeds need punishing, which obstructs the internal condition being cleansed and healed. People claim legal salvation for their sins but don't experience renewal of heart in order to actual live in God's presence.

The last paragraph has it right, Jesus is our remedy to the sin problem!

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to review the account of the thief on the cross who put his trust in Jesus and asks "How does this story reveal the great hope of the 'everlasting gospel' for all sinners?"

What was the gospel the thief had presented to him?

Did the thief have someone say to him, "If you accept Jesus as your personal Savior all your sins will be placed on Him and right now He will be punished by God for your sins and God will accept that payment and then God won't torture you in hell for all eternity—because God loves you?"

No! This was not what the thief saw—what gospel did the thief see?

He saw the crowd mocking Jesus. He saw the religious leaders reject Him, taunt Him, crucify Him. And he saw Jesus, love His enemies, forgive His abusers, be kind, think about others, and was any of this the gospel, the good news that won the thief?

I like the question the lesson asks, "Did Jesus, in any way, bring up the thief's past mistakes?"

Did Jesus say, "Have you repented of every sin you ever committed?" Or "Did you ask for the payment of my blood to be applied your account in heaven so my Father can legally pardon you?"

Read last two paragraphs, "No. Instead, Jesus..." What are they saying the gospel is?

Is the gospel that we can be forgiven of our sins, or does the gospel result in our being forgiven of our sins?

What leads us to repentance according to Scripture?



do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? Rom 2:4 NIV84

If the kindness of God leads us to repentance, if knowing God is eternal life (Jn17:3), then what would Satan want to do? Would Satan want us to see God as kind? So what ideas might Satan want taught in Christianity? How about that God, in order to be just, must punish sin? That God is the source of inflicted torture and death upon those who won't repent? Does this show God to be kind? And if we don't know God, if we don't experience God's kindness then the method God uses to lead us to repentance is obstructed!

TUESDAY

The lesson is about the first angel's message and fearing God and giving Him glory, read third paragraph, "In the verses above..." thoughts?

The lesson states: "Who hasn't at moments faced the startling realization of the evil of their deeds and what they would deserve at the hands of a just and righteous God for those deeds? This is the *fear of God*."

Is this the gospel or is this the lie, the false gospel, the distortion of Satan that infects Christianity and prevents the true gospel from lighting the world?

Where is the emphasis—is it that we should be afraid of sin, or afraid of God who will do terrible things to you because of sin?

The Bible says that perfect love casts out all fear, how is it that if we have perfect love we will fear cast out, yet the lesson tells us that we are to be afraid of God?

What kind of fear does perfect love cast out?

Does love cast out awe, admiration, respect? No! Does love cast out terror, dread, fearfulness? Yes!

Thus, the lie of Satan is that we should be afraid of God because God gives rules and then is the source of uncompromising punishment—so be terrified of Him. This lie undermines trust!

Consider these quotations—something the SDA church taught in its inception, but which seems to contradict what we just read in the lesson:

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Hence he has sought to **misrepresent the character of God**, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. **The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself,—as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving,—that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men.** Satan hoped to so



confuse the minds of those whom he had deceived that they would put God out of their knowledge. **Then he would obliterate the divine image in man and impress his own likeness upon the soul;** he would imbue men with his own spirit and make them captives according to his will. {5T 738.1}

According to this view it is Satan's goal to instill in our minds ideas that would cause of to be afraid of God—did we hear something similar in the lesson? And what is that evidence of? The infection of imposed law operating in the minds of people!

How can Satan get people to teach lies about God yet have them believe they are on God's side? By getting them to accept the lie about the law, once that happens, then in their worldview it is only right and just for God to enforce His law and thus God becomes the one from whom we need protection.

Consider this quote:

The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary. [Consider the meaning, the law was burdened with needless exactions, what kind of law can we do that to? Imposed law!] He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes. [What is setting men right called in theological jargon? Justification, what is keeping men right? Sanctification—and according to this author what is the only way to do that? By a legal payment? No! By a revelation of the truth about God, why? Because what sets us wrong? Believing lies about God! {ST, January 20, 1890}

The truth is that sin kills, not God. God is the source of life and only and always seeks to heal and restore those who will let Him. We have nothing to fear from God, we should fear unremedied sin in our lives!

Does it make a difference in obeying God as to what level of development we are?

Could a person at one level of development, think they are obeying God, and in the very act that they believe is obeying God they are actually misrepresenting God?

- Why was David not permitted to build the Temple? Because he had killed so many people—Did David's killing of enemies represent God in the best light? But who empowered him to succeed in his many acts of violence?
- Why did Saul of Tarsus seek to persecute those who accepted Jesus? Was Saul doing this because Saul was seeking to obey or disobey God? Did Saul's actions in doing this bring glory to God?



So, is it sufficient to suggest that we give God glory by obeying Him and then tie various behaviors to our obedience things like:

- A dress code?
- A dietary code?
- Some ritual observance, baptism in a certain way, foot washing?
- Worship in a certain way—pray so many times per day facing a certain direction or going to church on a certain day?

Is this what it means to glorify God?

Did Rahab bring glory to God? When, by doing what? She is in the hall of faith...what did she do? Behaviorally, she lied, she deceived, but characterologically she sacrificed self, she put self in harm's way to protect others. Did her actions glorify God?

What does it mean to give God glory to observe certain codes or rituals, or to have the character of Christ reproduced within such that we love God and others more than self and thus live in harmony with God's design laws?

Could living in harmony with God's design laws mean that we might break some religious codes or rules, like David did when he ate the show bread, or Jesus did when He healed on Sabbath and instructed people do things that, in that culture, were considered working on Sabbath?

WEDNESDAY

What is being referred to by the hour of His judgment has come? What law lens do you view the three angel's messages through?

Read first paragraph, "In the first angel's..." Notice again the lesson is putting ideas in the minds of people that the problem is not sinfulness, not the condition which injures us, damages us, and separates us from God—no, that isn't the problem. The problem is God and what He will do to you for the sin.

The lesson states, "No wonder people need to fear God." How horrible! This is a lie—we do NOT need to fear God. God is our friend. God is our Creator. God is our comforter. God is our counselor. God is our Savior. God is our tender Father. "If God is for us who can be against us."

But the lesson posits that God is against us. That God is the enemy from whom we need to fear and be protected. This is Satan's goal to infect our minds with ideas that God will hurt us if something isn't done to God.

Don't think this is a problem only in the SDA church—it is Christianity wide. I was listening to Christian radio last week and heard a preacher from a local non-SDA church saying all these same types of things.



Read second paragraph, “And that’s why the...” What are they saying? Why won’t we face the penalty and punishment that we deserve for our sin and lawbreaking?

What law lens?

The imposed law posits that it is because all the sins were placed on Jesus and God punished Jesus for those sins and the saved have accepted the legal payment for their sins and thus the record has been erased from the books.

The design law view realizes that in accepting Jesus we open our hearts in trust and He writes His law, (design law) into our inmost being and we are healed, renewed, reborn, transformed, recreated with new character and thus sin is purged from us and we don’t suffer the penalty and punishment from sin because we are cured from it.

Read third paragraph, “The God who knows...” What does this mean? Through what law lens to you understand it?

Does God’s judgment of the world mean judicial or diagnostic?

Ephraim is tied to his idols, let him go...is this a judgment?

How does Christ’s righteousness get us through the judgment?

There are two theories—one which covers, hides, obscures truth and the other which reveals truth.

The legal view is a view of lies, deceit, and distortion. It states that the righteousness of Christ covers our wickedness, we are still unrighteous but the Father can no longer see our unrighteousness because Jesus righteousness covers us. Notice the deception, the lie, the obscuring of truth.

This is Satan’s methods being applied to God. God is truth and His methods always bring truth to light. Thus, we never find methods of distortion or deceit in God’s plan.

Here is one view of the covering of Christ’s robe of righteousness, notice in this view there is no deceit, no covering over, no obscuring of reality:

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us.... By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-



leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

This is the reality—the healing of the inner person, the partaking of the divine nature, the design law of God being restored within the believer.

The legal lie, the penal view, distorts God's character, insights fear of God, leads people to distrust God and creates theologies designed to hide us from Him which ultimately uses Satan's methods of distortion, deceit, coercion, and punishment.

Read last paragraph, "Man cannot meet these charges..." What does this mean? What law lens are you reading this through?

Who is the accuser? Who listens to Satan's allegations? All heaven says, "The Lord rebuke you Satan" no one in heaven listens to Satan.

When Satan alleges our sins are too great for God to forgive, that we are too corrupt for God to love, that if God saw our sins He would be overcome with wrath, anger, and lash out in fury to punish, who listens to such lies? Only sinful humans are susceptible to such lies—then to whom is Jesus pleading?

Jesus is pleading to you and to me to realize God's love for us, God's true character, God's patience, grace, goodness and accept the truth that God never needed persuasion to save us—WE NEEDED persuasion to be saved!

So, one of the founders of the SDA church wrote:

Through the plan of salvation, **Jesus is breaking Satan's hold upon the human family and rescuing souls from his power.** All the hatred and malignity of the archrebel is stirred as he beholds the evidence of Christ's supremacy, and with fiendish power and cunning he works to wrest from Him the remnant of the children of men who have accepted His salvation. {LHU 234.2}

He leads men into skepticism, causing them to lose confidence in God and to separate from His love; he tempts them to break His law, and then he claims them as his captives and contests the right of Christ to take them from him. He knows that those who seek God earnestly for pardon and grace will obtain it; **therefore he presents their sins before them to discourage them.** He is constantly seeking occasion against those who are trying to obey God. Even their best and most acceptable services he seeks to make appear corrupt. **By countless devices, the most subtle and the most cruel, he endeavors to secure their condemnation.** [by whom? Whom does Satan seek to get us condemned? Is it not in our own minds, that we conclude we are beyond salvation, too sinful to be loved?] Man cannot meet these charges himself. In his sin-stained garments, confessing his guilt, he stands before God. **But Jesus our Advocate presents an effectual plea in behalf of all who by repentance and faith have**



committed the keeping of their souls to Him. He pleads their cause and vanquishes their accuser by the mighty arguments of Calvary. [To whom is Jesus pleading? Who needs to have the allegations of Satan refuted? Who needs to believe that God loves them and Jesus' righteousness is sufficient for them? Does God need to be persuaded that Jesus righteousness is sufficient to save a sinner? Who doubts? It is you and me that need to hear Jesus' plea!] His perfect obedience to God's law, even unto the death of the cross, has given Him all power in heaven and in earth, and He claims of His Father mercy and reconciliation for guilty man. [notice now to whom Jesus speaks] To the accuser of His people He declares: "'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.' These are the purchase of My blood, brands plucked from the burning." Those who rely upon Him in faith receive the comforting assurance: "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." [to whom is Jesus pleading? He rebukes the accuser and pleads for us not to listen to his lies and to trust in Him!] All that have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness will stand before Him as chosen and faithful and true. Satan has no power to pluck them out of the hand of Christ. . . . **We cannot answer the charges of Satan against us. Christ alone can make an effectual plea in our behalf. He is able to silence the accuser with arguments founded not upon our merits, but on His own** (Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 470-472). **[To whom does Christ's plea need to effect? you and me!]**

THURSDAY

How do we worship Him who made the heaven's earth and fountains of water?

The lesson suggests it is by going to church on Sabbath—is this what the message of Revelation is saying?

Or, is it by returning to worshipping the designer and promoting the truth of His character and methods of love, by rejecting the legal, penal, dictator lies about God and presenting the truth in love while leaving others free?

What about the law of worship, by beholding we are changed—what if we worship on the seventh-day Sabbath but worship a God who is the source of inflicted pain and suffering for sin?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

JUNE 2, 2018: COME AND REASON WILL MEET AT Hamilton Community Church at 10:20 a.m.

NEW TV PROGRAM: Each Tuesday watch our new TV Program—The Dr. Tim Jennings Show on WBTN.TV Network. God to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

New Video Blogs—If you don't follow us on Facebook, then be sure to visit our website we are posting new blogs again, the go up every Thursday.

May 19, 2018: Jfest at Camp Jordan in Chattanooga. Local radio station J103's all day Christian Concert and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth at the event.

May 25, 26, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in London England at the Stanborough Park SDA Church, 609 St Albans Road, Watford, WD25 9JL

September 14,15, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be Keynote Speaker at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown, Delaware.

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

September 30-Oct 2, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at NAD of SDA Mental Health Education retreat for pastors at Kettering, OH.

November 9,10 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Houston, TX, in conjunction with the AACC

In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church
Mental Health Matters

The Mind- God's Design & What Went Wrong Thursday, May 10, 2018

The human mind was designed with separate and distinct faculties to operate in a beautiful harmony. Something has damaged that balance and caused pain, suffering and illness. Discover God's design for the mind, what went wrong and how to restore balance to your mind.

The Aging Brain Thursday, August 13, 2018

What happens to the brain as we age? This presentation will examine the evidence-based lifestyle and non-pharmacological interventions which will protect your brain and diminish your risk of dementia. Copies of Dr. Jennings brand new book, The Aging Brain, will be available.



Salvation and Preparation for the End Time Lesson 9 2Q 2018

End-Time Deception

by Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

SABBATH

What are the most effective deceptions—the ones easy to see or the ones hard to spot?

A little boy with chocolate on his face, when mommy asks “Have you been eating chocolate?” answers “no.” Such deception is easy to spot.

But what was the problem with the Galatians that Paul was dealing with? Many will suggest it was one of works, they were working for salvation—however, Paul elsewhere says that we are to “work out our salvation with fear and trembling.” Can a person be saved without their own participation?

We have a role to play in our own salvation—the species was saved in the person of Jesus without our individual work, but every individual saved has to cooperate with God and make choices—to work out their salvation, not work to earn their salvation, but work to apply and experience what Christ has achieved.

So, what was the deception of the Galatians? Circumcision being a requirement to salvation—and what kind of work would that be? What was the basis of the bodily circumcision? Is it found in design law or imposed instructions?

Thus, the root deception to the Galatians wasn’t circumcision, but the underlying foundation upon which it was based—the lie that God’s law is imposed and not doing the right rules requires arbitrary infliction of punishment.

We will see this is the root lie from the beginning of the conflict in heaven and is the lie we are still fighting today—the deception hidden from obvious view because it presents itself as accepted orthodoxy—I will give you a sad evidence in Fox News yesterday in a few minutes.

Read first paragraph, “Even in heaven...” What was the core lie, the root lie, which undermined trust in God? If Satan’s goal wasn’t reverence for God, what was his real purpose?

What is implied by this description? Could someone be in church leadership, could someone be purporting to be promoting reverence for God today and actually be working against God?

How can we tell if someone is promoting God’s truth, or Satan’s lie—when both are purporting to be interested in reverence for God?

In the book *The Desire of Ages* is a chapter entitled *It Is Finished* the author does an incredible job of giving insights into Satan’s deceptions in heaven and on earth. Let’s go through part of that chapter



and see if you agree:

Picking up the chapter after the death of Christ on the Cross, from the perspective of the angels in heaven watching:

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. **He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings.** [Who do you believe killed Christ on the Cross, God or Satan and sinful humans? So, the **FIRST test point** in uncovering Satan's lies is to ask who killed Jesus. If someone teaches it was God who killed Jesus, then that would be evidence of the lie. The Penal Substitution view teaches that God, in order to satisfy divine justice, killed Jesus. This is the first test point you can use to expose the end-time deception, of which Penal Substitution is part. If you want references documenting that Penal Substitution theology teaches this lie see either *The God-Shaped Heart* book or the *Designer Dictator* session of Come And Reason's *From Fear to Friends: God And Your Church* seminar video] **Henceforth his work was restricted.** Whatever attitude he might assume, **he could no longer await the angels** as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. [What was the cause of the restriction of Satan's work? Why was Satan's work restricted? Because the truth had been revealed to heavenly intelligences and no lies of Satan would work on them any more. Satan was not restricted by God using might and power; God doesn't work that way. Satan was restricted by truth, revealed in love, leaving intelligences free—God's methods! So, the **SECOND test point** to differentiate end-time deception is to watch the methods being employed. God never coerces, but leaves free!] The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken. {DA 761.2}

Yet Satan was not then destroyed. **The angels did not even then understand all that was involved in the great controversy.** [What did angels not yet understand? They understood Satan had lied and could not be trusted. They understood God and Jesus told the truth and *could* be trusted—so what did they NOT understand yet?] **The principles** at stake were to be more fully revealed. [What are principles? Design laws! They didn't fully understand God's principles, methods, design laws!] **And for the sake of man, Satan's existence must be continued.** [How is it for our sake that Satan's existence is continued? What benefit could there be for us? Is there a difference in someone telling you your son is a thief, and you catching your son in the act of stealing? Is there any need for Satan to reveal his own nature? And is there any design law involved in our response to this truth?] Man as well as angels **must see the contrast between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness. He must choose whom he will serve.** [Why must we choose? Because God can only change a heart, heal a mind, transform a character with the free-will choice of that intelligent being involved. If God were to use His power to over-write the choice of the intelligent being God would destroy that being and create a robot. Thus, it is for our good to see the contrast between the two systems and choose. When we choose we are transformed by either opening the heart in trust to



God and experiencing His healing presence within, or closing the heart and hardening ourselves. And between what are we choosing, merely to believe in God or not to believe in God? Or, what kind of God we believe in, what methods and laws does God use? But what was the lie that Satan told to start the rebellion?] {DA 761.3}

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it **would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan**; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice.[What is Satan's lie? What kind of law does Satan attribute to God? Imposed, and what role does Satan describe God as fulfilling? Inflictor of punishment for justice sake. So, here is another test point. If you hear theologies that present God as the source of inflicted punishment for sin, this is evidence of Satan's view at work. Such ideas are based on the lie that God's law functions like human law, and God is then presented in character as one no different than a human dictator. God then becomes the one we must fear and from whom we need to be protected. This is a **THIRD test point** to discern the end-time deception: Does a system teach God's law is imposed and God must punish sin? Again, we find Penal Substitution Theology to be promoting the end-time deception.] When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. **God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner.** {DA 761.4} [Have you heard this line of reasoning from those who hold the penal view? Again, part of the lie. When you hear such things recognize such ideas as diagnostic evidence of Satan's lies at work]

But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. [We read this paragraph last week—what was different about man's situation?] Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. **But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry.** The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. **For him there was hope in [In what? A legal payment?] a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.** {DA 761.5} [What kind of law is involved in this process? Design law, the laws of truth, worship, sewing/reaping, exertion, love and freedom]

Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; **but mercy does not set aside justice.** [What is justice? What law lens do you use? If one uses impose law, justice is infliction of punishment—this is Satan's lie. What is justice under design law—doing what is right, which is what? Restoring people to harmony with God's law—saving and healing, while destroying the death causing infection of sin! For Bible references see either the *God and Your Brain* series lecture 2 Designer or Dictator] **The law reveals the attributes of God's character, [What attributes? Love!] and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his**



fallen condition. [Why? For the same reason the law of respiration cannot be changed to meet a drowning person under water. So, if the law of respiration cannot change to meet the drowning person, and if the person is to be saved what is needed, what has to change? Does a legal payment need to be made to the God who made the sea in order to save the drowning person, or does the drowning person need to have his or her position changed in relation to the law of respiration? Thus, Christ came to change the nature of humanity, to put the species back into harmony with God's law of life!] **God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."** 2 Corinthians 5:19. {DA 762.1} [What is the just thing to do? To sacrifice Christ in order to reconcile the world back to God, what does this mean? What was the problem that was separating the world from God? In Satan's view—the penal view—it is God's anger and wrath resulting from breaking rules that require God to inflict punishment. But in God's reality it is our sinful condition—so notice the next paragraph of what God's justice achieved in order to reconcile us]

The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. [According to this commentary, the law does not require legal payment, but a healed and righteous life, just like the law of respiration require we breathe] He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, **lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character.** These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. **Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.** [Why do we have remission of past sins—through a legal payment? NO! that is the legal lie of Satan that every sin must be punished. It is through God's forbearance, however God's forbearance is not the same as a cure, a remedy. Thus Jesus came and developed a perfect character as a remedy. It would be like a parent whose child has a sickness and vomits, has diarrhea, makes a mess, but the parent provides a remedy that cures the child, there is no need to make up, pay, or do something to the parent to have them forgive the previous mess; it is forgotten, remitted when the remedy is applied. But if no remedy is taken, they only get worse and die.] More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2} [Notice the justice of God is healing, recreating, and restoring sinners to perfect righteousness—nothing legal!]

God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. [What is justice in the design law understanding? Doing what is right, and what is the right or just thing for a parent to do if their child disobeys and drinks poison? To seek to heal and save. Thus God's justice is all about providing remedy, salvation, healing, as described in the previous paragraph, which requires restoring sinners to harmony with His design law. But notice Satan's strategy--] **It had been Satan's purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice.** [How? By getting us to believe justice is not healing, not saving, not restoring to righteousness, but the infliction of



punishment for breaking the law. Do you see the incredible perversion, the horrible, disgusting distortion? People, claiming reverence for God, are actually promoting Satan's lie when they teach God's justice is the punishing of sin. This is divorcing God's mercy from truth and justice. **The FOURTH test point to discern the end-time deception: Is mercy divorced from truth and justice?** The Penal Substitution view again is demonstrated to be on Satan's side of the spiritual war] He sought to prove that the righteousness of God's law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Psalm 85:10. {DA 762.3}

By His life and His death, Christ proved that God's justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed. [Remember Satan's lie is that God cannot forgive sin. Sin must be punished. Thus, the Penal Substitution view says every sin was placed on Jesus and God punished every sin when God executed Jesus on the cross. This divorces mercy from justice, as it turns the truth of God's justice (which is healing and restoring sinners to perfection) into the lie that justice is inflicting punishment for sin. Again, the Penal View is a lie. When will God's end-time people stand up and free themselves from this Penal Substitution end-time lie? Parents need to ask that Christian schools and churches stop teaching their children this gross distortion and begin presenting the end-time truth of the 3 angels, worship Him who made the heavens...] **Satan's charges were refuted.** God had given man unmistakable evidence of His love. {DA 762.4}

Another deception was now to be brought forward. Satan declared that mercy destroyed justice, that the death of Christ abrogated the Father's law. [What kind of law can be abrogated? So, this lie is again founded on imposed law. What would happen to the universe, as we know it, if the law of gravity were changed? Understanding design law makes clear why nothing about God's law can change because the universe as we know it would cease to exist. But, if we accept the lie that God's law is imposed, then the death of Christ, paying the penalty sets aside the need for God to inflict any more penalties, thus the law and our need to live in harmony (obey) is set aside. It would be like having diplomatic immunity, the law is there, but has no power because you are immune to it thus you don't have to obey. This is what has happened to much of Christianity.] Had it been possible for the law to be changed or abrogated, then Christ need not have died. But to abrogate the law would be to immortalize transgression, and place the world under Satan's control. **It was because the law was changeless, because man could be saved only through obedience to its precepts, that Jesus was lifted up on the cross.** Yet the very means by which Christ established the law Satan represented as destroying it. **Here will come the last conflict of the great controversy between Christ and Satan.** {DA 762.5} [Are you hearing again the tension between design law and imposed law?]

That the law which was spoken by God's own voice is faulty, that some specification has been set aside, is the claim which Satan now puts forward. [And in so doing promotes the idea that the law is changeable, or imposed, which is the true deception. But, Satan hides that



true deception beneath the fight over whether one or two specific precepts have been changed] It is the last great deception that he will bring upon the world. **He needs not to assail the whole law; if he can lead men to disregard one precept, his purpose is gained.** [What is his purpose? To get people to operate upon imperial rules of imposition, coercion, force, threat, and legal accounting, thus undermining trust in God and hardening the heart, all the while claiming reverence for God!] For "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2:10. By consenting to break one precept, men are brought under Satan's power. **By substituting human law for God's law, Satan will seek to control the world.** [Which is what? Accepting the idea that God's law functions like human law!] **This work is foretold in prophecy.** Of the great apostate power which is the representative of Satan, it is declared, "He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand." Daniel 7:25. {DA 763.1}

So with all that in mind consider these two quotes:

The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God. Upon this battle we are now entering,—a battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition. {GC88 582.2}

There is no such thing as weakening or strengthening the law of Jehovah. As it has been, so it is. It always has been, and always will be, holy, just, and good, complete in itself. It cannot be repealed or changed. [what kind of law is this? It is design law] To "honor" or "dishonor" it is but the speech of men. {PK 625.1}

Between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah will come the last great conflict of the controversy between truth and error. Upon this battle we are now entering—a battle not between rival churches contending for the supremacy, but between the religion of the Bible and the religions of fable and tradition... {PK 625.2}

With all that in mind, after another tragic school shooting in Texas yesterday, Fox News posted on their website an article by Max Lucado. Before I read the article I want you to remember the **reference points, the litmus tests, to discern the end-time deception.** If any of the following are taught it is evidence of Satan's lies:

- **God killed Jesus on the Cross**
- **Methods that violate God's law of love, truth, liberty such as coercion, threat, force, deception**
- **That justice requires God to use power to inflict punishment**
- **By separating justice from mercy, by teaching that justice is infliction of punishment and not the healing and restoration of sinners, or the surrendering of sinners to their free-will choice of non-existence, both of which is also merciful**



An online class member, Ben Welebir, sent me the this Fox news article. Evaluate it using the test points above:

Max Lucado: Texas high school shooting -- This evil will not last forever

I'm not sure how many more of these we can take. When I saw the words: students shot in Sante Fe school, my reaction was, "Not again." We seem to lurch from tragedy to tragedy, shooting to shooting, bombing to bombing. The kids didn't deserve such a death. Their parents don't deserve such grief. And we received an all too common reminder: life isn't fair.

When did you learn those words? *It's not fair*. What deed exposed you to the imbalanced scales of life? Did a car wreck leave you fatherless? Did friends forget you, a teacher ignore you, an adult abuse you? Have you ever prayed the psalmist's prayer? "O Lord, how long will you look on?" (Ps. 35:17). When did you first ask the question of the prophet, "Why does the way of the wicked prosper?" (Jer. 12:1)?

Why indeed? Why do drug peddlers get rich? Sex offenders get off? Charlatans get elected? Murderers get out? Cheaters get by? Scoundrels get in? Hypocrites get chosen?

How long will injustice flourish? God's answer is direct: Not as long as we might think. Scripture reveals a somber promise: "For [God] has set a day when he will judge the world" (Acts 17:31).

He is not sitting idly by. He is not twiddling his thumbs. Every flip of the calendar brings us closer to the day in which God will judge all evil. A Judgment Day has been chosen. The hour is marked and moment reserved. Judgment is not a possibility, but a stark reality.

"Judgment Day" is an unpopular term. We dislike the image of a great hour of reckoning. Which is ironic. We disdain judgment but we value justice, yet the second is impossible without the first. One can't have justice without judgment. For that reason, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).

Followers of Christ hold to this promise: Jesus will forever balance the scales of fairness. A day is coming, sooner than we might expect, in which we will see the devil pay for all the evil he has inflicted upon the world. Satan, and all who follow him, will hear the sentence: "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt. 25:41).

Justice will prevail.



This promise may not matter to you. For some people, life feels fair and just. If that describes you, count your blessings. There are others, however, who fight a daily battle with anger. They've been robbed; evil people have pilfered days they would have had with their loved ones, disease has sapped health from their body. **They believe that justice must be served.**

I'm one of these people. My brother was robbed. Alcoholism heisted the joy out of his life. For two-thirds of his fifty-seven years, he battled the bottle. It cost him his family, finances, and friends. He was not innocent, I get that. He bought the liquor and made the choices. Yet, I am convinced that Satan assigned a special goon squad to tempt him. When they found his weakness, they refused to let up. They took him to the mat and pounded the self-control out of him.

I'm ready to see Satan pay for his crimes against my brother. I am looking forward to that moment when I stand next to Dee, our bodies redeemed and souls secure. **Together we will see the devil bound and chained and cast into a lake of fire. At that point we will begin to reclaim what the devil took.**

"For [God] has set a day when he will judge the world" (Acts 17:31).

Let this covenant abate the anger you feel at the hurting world. Devastations have wounded every home. Just last week I met with a family whose six-year-old twins were sexually abused by a grandparent. Two nights ago, our neighbors were assaulted and robbed in their own home. One of our church members spent two years in prison for a crime he did not commit. The guilty party went free. He went to jail. It's not right, it's not just, it's not fair that evil prospers. **When you wonder if wickedness will go unpunished or injustices will go unaddressed, let this promise gratify your desire for justice.** God will have the final word. "God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day" (Ps. 7:11).

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2018/05/18/max-lucado-texas-high-school-shooting-this-evil-will-not-last-forever.html>

Did you hear the gospel of Jesus Christ or Satan's end-time deception?

Sadly, this article presents the lie—why? Because it is all based on a fundamental failure to understand reality—it views God's law functioning no differently than the laws sinful humans make. Thus, God is viewed as governing no differently, holding tribunals and inflicting punishment.

This view fails to understand the nature of sin—sin damages and destroys those who are not delivered from it. He presented the idea that those who commit crimes and are not caught and punished by human governments get away with their crime—this is a lie. No one gets away with it, why? Because of God's design law—you cannot violate it without damaging yourself.

His view would be like saying the teen who smokes cigarettes but doesn't get caught by his parents



gets away with it. No they don't!

Sin warps the character, sears the conscience, hardens the heart and ultimately results in death. No one ever gets away with it!

Can you see in this article Satan's end-time deception? How many people in your church will agree with Max Lucado?

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, "Revelation shows us just..." What is Satan's power?

- Lies Heb 2:14, John 17:3
- Fear
- Selfishness
- Coercion

How does Satan wield his power?

The lesson suggests Satan gets people to doubt in his existence. Certainly, if we have no awareness of an enemy we are more vulnerable—but is it possible he gets people to doubt his existence by getting them to reject the belief in God?

And how has Satan gotten millions, if not billions, to reject the belief in God?

By presenting an arbitrary dictator who is the source of inflicted pain and suffer, a being of cruelty and unreasonableness. And if there is no God, why would there be a Satan?

MONDAY

Read the last paragraph, "Through the two great errors..." Before we unpack the impact of these two errors, we should confirm the assertion that they are in fact errors.

Bible Text Evidence that immortality of the soul is an error:

- "The soul who sins is the one who will die." Ez 18:4
- "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. Gen 3:22-24
- "God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light..." 1Tim 6:15,16
- "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom



6:23

- “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can **destroy** both soul and body in hell.” Mt 10:28

And there are many more texts that say the same thing. So, the evidence of Scripture is that there is only one immortal being—God. Humans are mortal and can receive the gift of immortality from God, but we do not in our own selves possess immortality.

Second evidence that the idea of immortality of the soul is an error are the implications and what it would mean if immortality of soul were true:

- Does God have foreknowledge?
- If yes, then God foreknew humans would sin and God still created them with immortality foreknowing some would only live less a few years but then spend all eternity suffering in the flames of hell. What kind of a god would that be? Sadistic, cruel?
- If no, then what kind of a god is he—limited, finite—not truly God. But more than that, such a being is either unwise because such a god couldn’t even anticipate the possibility of an immortal being rebelling, or cruel as he did anticipate and created beings to suffer eternally anyway?
- So, if God is love, and God has foreknowledge, would God make beings with inherent immortality knowing when they rebelled they would experience unending eternal suffering? How many of you would do that to your children? And this is the real goal of the doctrine of immortality of the soul—to undermine trust in God by teaching horrible things, like God would torture His own children for all eternity.

We dealt with the question of Sunday sacredness a couple of weeks back. All Bible scholars from every denomination acknowledge that the Sabbath of the Bible is Friday sunset to Saturday sunset, and that Sunday as a day of worship came about slowly over a couple of centuries as more and more pagans converted to Christianity while at the same time the Jews became greater enemies of Rome. The combined impact caused a gradual move away from the Bible Sabbath to Sunday worship, which eventually caused the church to legislate Sunday as a day of worship.

And that is the problem—note what the problem actually is. It is not a problem to go to church on Sunday, or to worship God on Sunday—the problem is to treat God’s law like imposed law and suggest one can legislate such changes. So, Sunday as a church VOTED holy day is the problem, not going to church or worshipping on Sunday.

One of our online listeners, Dr. George Graves, sent me this quote from one of the founders of the SDA church, demonstrating worshipping God and studying the Bible on Sunday is not a problem:

To defy the Sunday laws will but strengthen in their persecution the religious zealots who are seeking to enforce them. **Give them no occasion to call you lawbreakers.** If they are left to rein up men who fear neither God nor man, the reining up will soon lose its novelty for them, and they will see that it is not consistent nor convenient for them to be strict in regard to the



observance of Sunday. **Keep right on with your missionary work, with your Bibles in your hands**, and the enemy will see that he has worsted his own cause. **One does not receive the mark of the beast because he shows that he realizes the wisdom of keeping the peace by refraining from work that gives offense, doing at the same time a work of the highest importance.**

When we devote Sunday to missionary work, the whip will be taken out of the hands of the arbitrary zealots who would be well pleased to humiliate Seventh-day Adventists. **When they see that we employ ourselves on Sunday in visiting the people and opening the Scriptures to them, they will know that it is useless for them to try to hinder our work by making Sunday laws.** {9T 232}

There is nothing wrong with church attendance, Bible study, missionary work on Sunday—the problem is coercion, treating God’s law like imposed law and getting people to think that one can change God’s law.

So the two lies, immortality of the soul leading to spiritualism i.e. the belief that souls are suffering in hell and souls might come back and haunt us leads to fear and distrust of God. And imposed law constructs lead to fear and distrust of God.

This is what Satan wants, for us to be motivated by fear and distrust in God so that we seek to save ourselves.

TUESDAY

Read all three paragraphs, “In recent decades...” Are such stories evidence of immortality of the soul? Why or why not?

Reports of NDE experiences go back almost 2000 years and are reported by approximately 20% of people who suffer a heart attack and are revived.

Interestingly, however, a person does not have to be *near death* to experience a NDE. A 1990 study at the University of Virginia Health Sciences Center in Charlottesville of 58 people who had experienced NDEs found that half would have survived without medical care—in other words, they were not near death. Something as innocuous as fainting can produce an NDE.

There are many theories about the cause of NDEs to include hypoxia (lack of oxygen to the brain), which could trigger seizures in the temporal lobes and cause the symptoms of NDE, hypotension (loss of blood pressure to the brain), release of endorphin and enkephalin (brain produced mood elevators and pain killers) in the brain, drugs injected during resuscitation, low blood sugar, and other metabolic processes.

Recently, Kevin Nelson, a neuropsychologist at the University of Kentucky, has done research into



NDEs and offered a most reasonable explanation. NDEs are actually a form of sleep disorder called REM intrusion in which dreams occur in a non-sleep state. During this time a person is awake but paralyzed, may experience the sensation of floating, will have vivid dreams that would be experienced more like a hallucination, and have out-of-body experiences. All of this will be remembered quite vividly after the event is over with a sense of conviction to the veracity of the experience.

A study published in 1994 by Thomas Lempert, then at the Rudolph Virchow Clinic in Berlin, Germany, documented how volunteers made themselves faint through a combination of hyperventilating while seated, then standing and holding their breath. Many of them experienced euphoric NDE-like sensations such as floating out of their body, entering another world, or encountering supernatural beings. This is thought to be due to activating the vagus nerve which stimulates the brainstem to cause these NDEs. This would explain the high occurrence of NDE in people being resuscitated from a heart attack as vagal nerve stimulation occurs during this process.

Did you notice the reason the lesson gave about why NDEs are not reliable? “nothing about sin, and nothing about judgment to come—the most basic biblical views.”

Hmmm... last week the lesson pointed out that when the thief on the cross was dying, near death experience, and put his faith in Christ that Jesus did not bring up his sin, or mention the judgment, only that he would be with Jesus in paradise. Should we say, “Well Jesus didn’t mention his sin or judgment the most basic biblical views, this can’t be a reliable experience?”

This is a bad argument and we should reject this argument and base our rejection of NDEs as evidence of an immortal soul on other more reliable evidence.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson speaks about the theory of evolution as an end-time deception. I agree that it is a deception, why do you think it has arisen, and why do you think so many people hold to it?

My view is that evolutionism arose in response to the imposed law concept. The false dictator view of god caused thinking people to recognize that nature did not operate the way religion suggested so they sought an explanation on their own. Unfortunately, they instead of finding the truth found the law of sin and death in nature—which is the survival of the fittest principle.

Naturalists did not make up this law, it is there, but it is an infection to God’s design and causes suffering and death. The law of love is God’s design, the principle of giving. In nature these two forces are at war. But without Scripture many fail to comprehend accurately what they see.

Had the church not so grossly misrepresented God as arbitrary and severe, I believe the break between science and Christianity would not have occurred.

Which is more scientific creation or the Big Bang? We have a new 5 minute video blog out this week



which goes through the evidence.

THURSDAY

The counterfeit trinity:

- Dragon—counterfeits the Father
 - Power and authority given to the other beasts
- Sea beast—counterfeits the Son
 - Receives deadly wound and recovers, in power 42 months (3.5 years, 1,260 days)
- Earth beast—counterfeits the Holy Spirit
 - Promote interest of sea beast, brings fire down from heaven

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

JUNE 2, 2018: COME AND REASON WILL MEET AT Hamilton Community Church at 10:20 a.m.

NEW TV PROGRAM: Each Tuesday watch our new TV Program—The Dr. Tim Jennings Show on WBTN.TV Network. God to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

New Video Blogs—If you don't follow us on Facebook, then be sure to visit our website we are posting new blogs again, the go up every Thursday.

May 25, 26, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in London England at the Stanborough Park SDA Church, 609 St Albans Road, Watford, WD25 9JL

June 16, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing a one day seminar at Folsom Women's Prison in California.

September 14,15, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be Keynote Speaker at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown, Delaware.

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

September 30-Oct 2, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at NAD of SDA Mental Health Education retreat for pastors at Kettering, OH.

November 9,10 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Houston, TX, in conjunction with the AACC

In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church
Mental Health Matters Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

The Aging Brain Thursday, August 13, 2018

What happens to the brain as we age? This presentation will examine the evidence-based lifestyle and non-pharmacological interventions which will protect your brain and diminish your risk of dementia. Dr. Jennings brand new book, The Aging Brain, will be available.

Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family.

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!



2018 Q2 Preparation for the End Time - Lesson 10

America and Babylon

presented by Lori Atkins

SABBATH

Much of this week's lesson is centered on Revelation Chapter 13, so I want to start by reading it from The Remedy paraphrase:

"The dragon stood beside the massive sea of his followers, and while I watched, out of that sea of people arose a beastly power: It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns (symbolizing political powers), and a blasphemous name on each head (symbolizing religious powers). It represented a conglomerate religio-political world power comprised of multiple governments and false religions of the world. 2 This beastly power arose from the vestiges of Greece, Persia and Babylon — symbolized by a leopard with the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion — **and it received its power and authority from the dragon**, which means it will use Satan's methods of deceit, coercion and imposition of law to distort God's character with pagan concepts. 3 One of the seven heads received what **appeared to be a fatal wound**, but then the wound was healed—which symbolized a blow to its power, and then recovery and a resurgence in power. The entire world was in awe and followed the methods, principles and teachings of this beastly power. 4 By accepting the pagan imposed law constructs as representative of God's kingdom, people actually worshiped the dragon, as these distortions about God originated from him; and since the beast used the dragon's lies as the basis for its authority, they also worshiped the beast. They marveled, "Who can compare to the beast? (Some versions say **Who is like the beast?**) Who can fight against it?" 5 The beast had a mouth that boasted and blasphemed—and it exerted its power for forty-two months—which symbolizes the manner in which this beastly system would misrepresent God's character and methods while claiming to have God's authority to speak for him on earth. 6 It blasphemes God and misrepresents his character, and distorts the reality of God's dwelling place and those who live in heaven. 7 It wars against the saints with lies and distortions about God's methods and principles, teaching that God uses power—like an earthly emperor—to impose law, lord over the people, and inflict punishment for disobedience. It conquers the saints and infects the world—every tribe, nation, language, and people—with its lies about God. 8 All the inhabitants of the earth accept its distortions about God and thus give homage to the beast—all except those whose names have been recorded in the book of life that belongs to Jesus the Lamb who committed himself to be the Remedy to sin before the world was created. 9 Those whose minds are open to truth will understand. 10 Anyone determined to be captive to sin will into bondage go. And anyone whose character develops upon the kill-or-be-killed principle will in the end be killed.



Overcoming the selfish drive to survive requires patient endurance and trust by those who are healed. 11 Next I saw a different beast arising out of the earth. It had two horns like lamb's horns but spoke like a dragon—which symbolized a new power, arising in a different part of the earth, that initially promotes lamblike principles of freedom but eventually practices dragon-like methods of coercion. 12 As the first beast watched, the second beast exercised all the tactics of the first beast and led the world to practice its methods, thus giving honor to the first beast whose fatal wound was healed. 13 The beast required everyone to choose whom they would worship—symbolized by the miracle of calling fire down from heaven. 14 Because of the astonishing act of restricting religious freedoms and the economic coercion that it was given power to wield, it duped the entire world. It commanded them to form a coalition of religious and political power to enforce its way, which was modeled after the first beast's ways. 15 It had the resources and ability to bring this coalition into a living reality—a fitting model honoring the first beast. It even imposed a death penalty for all who refused to practice its methods. 16 It forced everyone—weak or powerful, rich or poor, free or slave—to make a choice. Some chose to *believe* that the methods of the beast were godly, and these were marked in their *minds* (or foreheads...and what's behind your forehead?) to be like the beast. Others chose to go along with the beast for convenience and gain, and they were marked by the work of their *hands*. 17 No one could buy or sell except for those who chose the methods of the beast and thus marked themselves as "loyal" by embracing its character and being numbered as its followers. 18 This calls for wisdom. Anyone with spiritual discernment—let him count the number of the beast: it is a human's number. The number is 666.

As we look at this week's memory text from Daniel 12:1

“ ‘At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book’ ”

I am reminded that I share some of Dr. Wendell's discomfort with this topic of end time events and the time of trouble. I share his experience of having two parents who are now deceased, but who were firmly convinced that these events would happen in their lifetime. I also grew up with basements that contained enough super-preserved canned faux meat products to feed a small army.

I also remember while growing up in this community and in this denomination, being very uncomfortable with some of the language used to describe other Christian faiths...and I was very reluctant to bring a non-Adventist neighbor or friend to church with me...for fear of what they might hear from the pulpit that would disparage their own religious practices, or their family, or their church.



Anyone else? In Sunday's lesson, the quarterly asks, "how can we proclaim present truth in a way that causes as little offense as possible?" I never cared for the at best pitting or comparing or competing of one denomination against another, and at worst the belittling, criticism, and ridicule of other denominations...so please know that is so not my intention in studying this week's lesson. I do not believe anyone is saved or lost based on their denominational membership, and I believe the Holy Spirit's application of the healing remedy can save and transform folks to have Christ-like character in any and in every and in no denomination. but I also believe scripture points to specific institutions in specific time periods, and describes the specific roles they will play in last-day events...and the proper identification of these powers can help us properly position and prepare for the prophetic period we are living in.

SUNDAY

Deadly Wound Healed

This lesson refers to the passage we just read in Revelation 13 and specifically verse 3, where one of the seven heads on the Sea Beast received a "deadly wound"...what was that wound?

The Roman church had been both the central religion AND the political center of the Western world - for centuries. But, toward the end of the 18th century, with the reformation, the enlightenment, and the French Revolution - specifically Napoleon's blow against the church when he captured and imprisoned the pope in 1798. But then wound is said to have healed, referring to the recovery and resurgence of the church in terms of political power and influence, which is continuing even today.

What are the typical results of uniting political and religious powers?

MONDAY

The United States in Prophecy

Now around the same time as the deadly wound or near the end of the 42 months, another creature appears...commonly referred to as the land beast.

There seems to be quite a bit of consensus from Biblical scholars on who this land beast in Revelation refers to:

- Time in history - late 1700's
- Arising out of the earth (sparsely populated) versus the sea (densely populated)
- Lamb-like horns representing two governing principles of civil and religious liberty
- No crown - also labeled a representative republic or republicanism (little "r"), which means a government without a king
- Protestantism - a church without a pope



One of the founders of our church wrote:

“And he had two horns like a lamb.” The lamb-like horns indicate youth, innocence, and gentleness, fitly representing the character of the United States when presented to the prophet as “coming up” in 1798. Among the Christian exiles who first fled to America and sought an asylum from royal oppression and priestly intolerance were many who determined to establish a government upon the broad foundation of civil and religious liberty.

Their views found place in the Declaration of Independence, which sets forth the great truth that “all men are created equal” and endowed with the inalienable right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” And the Constitution guarantees to the people the right of self-government, providing that representatives elected by the popular vote shall enact and administer the laws.

Freedom of religious faith was also granted, every man being permitted to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. Republicanism and Protestantism became the fundamental principles of the nation. These principles are the secret of its power and prosperity. The oppressed and downtrodden throughout Christendom have turned to this land with interest and hope. Millions have sought its shores, and the United States has risen to a place among the most powerful nations of the earth. – {GC 441.1}

I want to present you with a comparison...show you some parallels and some evidence that this first beast in Rev 13, the Sea Beast, is actually a parody or perversion of Jesus Christ. I got some of this information from a presentation by Dr. Jon Pauline, a professor at Loma Linda University - the reference is in the notes, but I found these parallels fascinating and persuasive.

First, we probably need to review the false or counterfeit trinity represented by the three beasts in Rev 13. This was covered in Thursday of last week’s lesson, but as often happens in this class...I don’t think we ever made it to Thursday. But the information is available in last week’s notes, and the common interpretation is that the Dragon counterfeits God the Father, the Sea Beast counterfeits God the Son, and the Land Beast counterfeits God the Holy Spirit. I want you to keep those details and relationships in mind as we go over these parallels between the Sea Beast and Jesus.

1. The Sea Beast looks just like the Dragon (which is described in Rev 12) - both had 7 heads, 10 horns, and crowns...Jesus looks just like the Father - in John 14:9 He says, “if you have seen me, you’ve seen the Father...the Father and I are one.”



2. The Sea Beast does not have its own authority, it gets its authority from the Dragon...Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.” (Matt 28:18) By whom? The Father!
3. This beast has a ministry of 42 months - how long is 42 months? 3.5 years, which correlates with the period of Christ’s earthly ministry.
4. In Rev 13:4, it is said of him, “Who is like the beast?” in a boastful way. This is also a parody of Jesus’ name Michael. Did you know that the name Michael is a hebrew term that means “who is like El?” Remember the Israelites proclaiming who is like our God?
5. The Sea Beast also has a death and a resurrection. Remember the deadly wound? If you go to the original language, it’s a “wound unto death”, and its deadly wound was healed. Now if someone dies and then gets healed, what would we call it? A resurrection! In verse 8 (which references “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”), you have the same word for death as is used in verse 3. There are 4-5 different Greek words for death and killing, but John uses the same word in both verses...and in both cases the word is translated “slaughtered”. His head was as it were slaughtered to death (v3), and the lamb slaughtered from the foundation of the world (v8). The cross of Christ and the death of this beast are equated. He is a counterfeit of Jesus.

So a worldwide alliance will act like and dominate the world like the medieval church did - and the contrast in methods will be Deception and Coercion versus Truth and Freedom. The enemies of God’s people at the end of time are the very same entities once thought of as God’s allies - one of those being our country, the United States. In case you thought I forgot where I was, but I didn’t...we’re back to the US in Prophecy!

How will this country transition from lamb-like to “speaking like a dragon”, and what does that mean anyway? See Rev. 13:11 - “Next I saw a different beast arising out of the earth. It had two horns like lamb’s horns but spoke like a dragon—which symbolized a new power, arising in a different part of the earth, that initially promotes lamblike principles of freedom but eventually practices dragon-like methods of coercion.”

Ellen White says,

“Such action would be directly contrary to the principles of this government, to the genius of its free institutions, to the direct and solemn avowals of the Declaration of Independence, and to the Constitution. The founders of the nation wisely sought to guard against the employment of secular power on the part of the church, with its inevitable result—intolerance and persecution. The Constitution provides that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” and that “no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.”



Only in flagrant violation of these safeguards to the nation's liberty, can any religious observance be enforced by civil authority. But the inconsistency of such action is no greater than is represented in the symbol. It is the beast with lamblike horns—in profession pure, gentle, and harmless—that speaks as a dragon.” – {GC 442.2}

Is there a drift in this country toward a more gentle foreign policy or a more aggressive one? We have been called the “Reluctant Empire” by some...to which you say, we are not an empire, we don't control other countries, but...we don't really have to, do we? Every action of the United States affects pretty much every other country on earth...most all of them want or need to know, what is the US going to do. Is there a trend in this country toward greater freedoms and liberties or fewer? From what I see there has been an ongoing and increasing tension between liberty versus security, and it really ramped up after 9/11. If you are old enough to really remember the tragic events of September 11th and the aftermath, then you know what I'm talking about, and you can no longer doubt how how eminently feasible this seemingly unfeasible armageddon scenario can be - on a worldwide scale. The Battle of Armageddon envisions a worldwide unity against a small group of people hiding in the rocks and the mountains and caves. September 11 showed us just how quickly this revelation scenario could happen. Overnight, the entire political realm...the entire religious realm, were united against a group of people that we hadn't even heard about the week before. That's how fast it happened...basically we watched a big chunk of the Revelation scenario play out in just a matter of days. We're going to talk more about Armageddon here in Tuesday's lesson.

Then what happens? Does this mean that the whole world converts to catholicism?

TUESDAY

An Issue of Worship

The first paragraph states,

“All through sacred history, the Lord constantly had to deal with those who fell into idolatry and other forms of false worship. In the final crisis, as depicted in Revelation 13, the issue of worship will again arise. Here, too, God's people will have to make a choice about whom they will worship and serve.”

But, hasn't it always been about worship? Why is that? Because it's a law - the law of worship! We become like that which we admire - we become like the kind of God we worship. so, how will this issue of worship manifest itself in the final crisis - or the battle of Armageddon?

Do you know what Armageddon means? It means mountain of Megiddo from the Old Testament. Now there is no mountain with that name, but if you go to the city of Megiddo, the ancient ruins, there



is a mountain right next to it. You know what it is called? Mount Carmel. Mount Carmel is the place where there was a showdown between two gods - two types of gods - the true God and the false god Baal. What was to be the compelling sign of which one was the true God...how would the people know which god won? Fire would come down from heaven and consume the offering on the altar.

What was the problem with worshipping Baal? What made Baal a false god? Was it simply a matter of using the wrong word "Baal" when worshipping God? Was it because they were not saying "Yhwh" (Yahweh)? Or was it something else?

"The Hebrew noun ba'al means 'master', 'possessor' or 'husband'. Used with suffixes, e.g. Baal-peor or Baal-berith, the word may have retained something of its original sense; but in general Baal is a proper name in the OT, and refers to a specific deity, Hadad, the W Semitic storm-god, the most important deity in the Canaanite pantheon. "Yahweh was 'master' and 'husband' to Israel, and therefore they called him 'Baal', in all innocence; but naturally this practice led to confusion of the worship of Yahweh with the Baal rituals, and it became essential to call him by some different title; Hosea (2:16) proposed 'îš, another word meaning 'husband.'" Wood, D. R. W., & Marshall, I. H. (1996). New Bible dictionary (3rd ed.) (108).

The problem was not the syllables used, as ba'al was one name used for the true God. Therefore, the problem must have been something else. There must have been some distortion presented in the character of Baal that is not in the character of God. So, what was Baal like? Baal was the son of El (i.e. El-ohim or El-Shaddai). He was the god of weather. Often called, 'Almighty' and "Lord of the Earth." Baal was the god who brought rain, thunder, lightning, who fertilized the earth, controlled the sun and brought the harvest. Baal fought the great serpent leviathan, as well as battled against Mot, the god of death. And most amazing of all, it was taught that Baal died in his battle with Mot and was resurrected from the dead to bring life to earth. So what was the problem with worshipping a god who was the "husband and protector of Israel," the son of El, who controlled the weather, who brought rain, sunshine, and fertility, who blessed with full harvest, who warred against the great serpent and death, who died and was resurrected to bring life to the earth?

What was wrong with this god? What was Elijah opposing? What made Baal worship false?

"Determined to keep the people in deception, the priests of Baal continue to offer sacrifices to their gods and to call upon them night and day to refresh the earth. With costly offerings *the priests attempt to appease the anger of their gods*;" White, E.G., Prophets and Kings, p. 124.2.

And the Bible confirms this: "So the prophets prayed louder and cut themselves with knives and daggers, *according to their custom*, until blood flowed." (1 Kings 18:28)



Could it be that Baal represented the characteristics of Satan's version of God, the idea that he (as god) must have bloody sacrifices in order to be appeased, have his wrath assuaged, or have his anger propitiated? And is God waiting for His church on earth to complete the reformation by eliminating this pagan god concept and restoring the true picture of God as revealed in Jesus? So again, notice the issue is about worship, who do you trust, how do you understand God?

- So, we know that there will be a great end-time deception. In Revelation 13, who brings fire down from heaven in the final crisis? The land beast! In the final crisis of earth's history, there will be a Mount Carmel showdown, and the fire will fall on the wrong altar - testing the faith of everyone who is not grounded in scripture and in God's character and methods.
- So, in the light of a severe deception like that, what's our takeaway from this lesson? Number one, we should be studying God's word and assimilating truth like we've never studied it before; number two, we need to pray like we've never prayed before; and number three, we need to exercise some serious self-distrust...because the more confident we are that we've got it all figured out, the less open we are to God's leading when the time comes.
- What if the scenario doesn't play out exactly as portrayed in the Great Controversy? Biblical prophecies are often open-ended, leaving God the freedom to shift with circumstances and with how people respond...we see a God who is deeply engaged with history and He responds to human choices. In that context, prophecy becomes more open-ended. We should not over-specify the end-time details before they happen. Jesus said, "I tell you these things ahead of time so that **when it happens**, you will know that I spoke the truth." Prophecy is best understood when it is fulfilled. Final principle: prophecy was not given to satisfy our curiosity about the future...it was given to teach us how to live today.

The last paragraph in Tuesday's lesson says, "An outward appearance of truth can deceive us by disguising the deadly "wine of Babylon." What is the wine of Babylon? That God's law is imposed, that sin must be punished, and thus we view Satan's behavior as God's behavior.

When it comes to prophecy, we try not to manage the details too early. Do you remember one time in history when that happened? There was a group of people who had massive charts regarding the end-time, and particularly the role of the Messiah...they're called Pharisees, and when the Messiah came they rejected him and murdered him because He didn't fit the details they expected. Just want to throw out a scenario: One of the deep and strong convictions of most Seventh-day Adventists is that before Jesus comes there's going to be an international Sunday law. Just a couple of facts...there were seven versions of great controversy (did you know that?), but only three of them have a Sunday law - the last



three, and the first one introduces it after there was a bill in the US Senate for a national Sunday law...and that's when Ellen White starts talking about it, so evidently Sunday law is not absolutely essential to the end time because she has four versions where it's not there. In the 1880s, the colonial powers dominated the world, so the idea of an international Sunday law is easy to imagine - it made sense.

Today, $\frac{2}{3}$ of the world is ruled by non-christians. According to Dr. Jon Paulien, the vast majority of legislators in California no longer believe that faith-based institutions have a place in the state, and they fight almost daily to keep them from passing laws that would essentially put us (Loma Linda) out of business. So, the Sunday law scenario in Ellen White was definitely a piece of the environment in which she lived...and if the end had come during her lifetime, it likely would have included a Sunday law. Is it absolutely certain then that there will always be a Sunday law from now on? Perhaps so...just raising the point, what if Adventists are stuck on the Sunday law and it doesn't happen? What if there is some other opposition to the Sabbath?

Reference: Pauline, Jon. (2017). USA in Prophecy 2017.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYaFngohgw0>



2018 Q2 Preparation for the End Time - Lesson 11

God's Seal or the Beast's Mark?

Presented by Linda Ojala

SABBATH

Memory Text – Revelation 15:3, “Great and Marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are they way, thou King of saints.” This begins the song of Moses and the Lamb, sung by those who had gotten the victory of the beast and over his image, and over his mark and over the number of his name.

This week, we will study the mark of the beast and the seal of God, with the aim of understanding how to receive the seal of God and salvation....to overcome, because the end of all things is at hand!

The Bible is like a giant jigsaw puzzle, with the pieces of each issue scattered throughout to encourage us to keep reading and studying it. Take any one verse and run with it and you'll have only a partial piece of the picture, or maybe get the wrong idea altogether.

SUNDAY

God's Sign Identifying His People

In Old Testament times there were two outward identifiers of God's true people. One of them was circumcision (visible to those you are intimate with – including non-Jews, cult prostitutes, etc.), the other was Sabbath Worship (visible to all).

Regarding Circumcision, which began at Abraham:

- **Genesis 17** it is **sign of the covenant between God and Abraham** and his descendants that He would be their God and give them an everlasting possession of the land He was giving to them.

Paul explained the New Testament perspective:

- **Romans 2:28,29**, “A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code.”
- **Circumcision of males on the 8th day of life**, was a sign of the covenant of salvation. It was meant to symbolize the need for renewal of the heart.



- **1 Corinthians 7:19**, “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commands is what counts.
- **Galatians 5:6**, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.”
- **Galatians 6:15**, “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, what counts is a new creation.”
- Does circumcision mean, be more sensitive to God, cut off anything that decreases sensitivity to God?

Regarding the Sabbath, which began at Creation:

- **Genesis 2:1-3**, “This the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing, so on the Seventh day he rested from his work. And **God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.**”
- **Isaiah 58:13,14**. “If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, **then you will find your joy in the Lord and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.**” The mouth of the Lords has spoken.”
- **Hebrews 4:9**, “There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefor, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.”

Isaiah is told by God that in the new earth, we will continue to worship on his Sabbath:

- **Isaiah 66:22-23**, “As the new heavens and the new eath that I make will endure before me,' Declares the Lord, 'so will your name and descendants endure. From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me, 'says the Lord.”
- **The only reason we have a 7 day week is because of God's command.** There is nothing in nature that calls for a 7 day week. We have the earth's rotation that defines 24 hour days. We have the earth's rotation around the sun that defines a year, we have the moon that marks off months.

MONDAY

The Beast and False Worship

Worship means loyalty, emulation, relationship:

- **The three angels' messages of Revelation 14 separates all of humanity into two groups:** those who worship the Creator by keeping all of His commandments, including the seventh-day Sabbath command, and those who worship the creator.
- **Revelation 14: 9-11**, “A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: **If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury**, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the lamb. And the smoke of their torment rises forever and ever. **There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name.** This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.”
- **Genesis 2:1-3**, “This the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing, so on the Seventh day he rested from his work. **And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.**”
- **Exodus 20:8-11**, “**REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY by keeping it holy.** Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

Note that the one commandment that says “Remember” is the only one we choose to forget.

TUESDAY

The Seal of God

Part of Prince Harry and Megan Markle's wedding scripture:

- **Song of Solomon 8:6.7:** “Place me as a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, it's jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned.
- **Function of a seal:** To insure correct authorship and protection, to ensure no changes have been made, to indicate completion.



- **Ellen White**, one of the church founders wrote, "By keeping His Sabbath holy, we are to show that we are His people. His word declares the Sabbath to be a sign by which to distinguish the commandment keeping people. This God's people are to preserve among them a knowledge of Him as their creation. Those who keep the law of God will be one with Him in the Great Controversy." Manuscript 14, 1901
- **Lesson Paragraph 4:** The seal is given to true worshipers of God while the mark is given to worshipers of the beast. The seal is given only in the forehead, indicating a definite choice of the mind to worship God in the way the He has commanded. The mark, on the other hand, is given either in the forehead or in the hand. This means that people may worship the beast for one of two reasons. Either in their minds they agree with it, thinking that they are truly worshiping God, or they don't agree with it but they go along with it because they are afraid of the serious consequences of not conforming; being unable to buy or sell and eventually being killed. Revelation 13:15,17
- **Lesson paragraph 3,** " The book of Revelation describes another sealing, just prior to the Second Advent. **This final seal is given to the 144,000 at the time of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain.** They have God's name (or signature) written in their foreheads. Through the Holy Spirit's work in their lives, they come to reflect God's character."
- Ellen White wrote, "Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their soul by obeying the truth, these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads." Testimonies for the church, vol.5, p 216

WEDNESDAY

The Mark of the Beast

- **Rev 13:11-18: "The Beast out of the Earth** – Than I saw another beast coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. He was give power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. **He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beat or the number of his name.** This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beat, for it is man's number. His number is 666."



- **Revelation 19:20**, “But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. **With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image.**”
- **Revelation 14:9-11**, “A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: '**If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury**, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the lamb. And the smoke of their torment rises forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name. **This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.**”
- **Revelation 20:4**, “I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. **They had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands.** They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

Other marks in the Bible:

- **Genesis 4:8-16, Mark of Cain** – A visible mark so that no one would kill him, after he murdered his brother, lied about it and was unrepentant..
- **Leviticus 19: 28** – Do not put tattoo marks on yourself. I am the Lord.
- **The last sentence just before the pink section**, “”the mark of the beast will not be given until this final test does come. Therefore, no one has yet received the mark of the beast.” Question – what about the people who died before the end of time?
- **Sunday worship came about when Constantine changed the seventh-day Sabbath** to coincide with the pagan “Day of the Sun”, what we know as Sunday, to get everyone he ruled over on the same page.

THURSDAY

The Sabbath as the Seal

Why did God create the Sabbath?

- For 6 days, He had used tremendous power to create the earth.
- We can take a very small amount of matter and create an atom bomb. Can you imagine how much energy it would take to create matter from energy?



- He could have said, “I am all powerful! Worship, love and trust me!” But instead after witnessing his powerful creation, he created the seventh day to allow us to **think about HOW he uses his power.**
- **God cannot make us love or trust him.** Love and trust must be won.
- **John 1:1-4, 14, 34, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.** In him was life, and that life was the light of men....The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth....I (John the Baptist) have seen and I testify that this (Jesus) is the Son of God.
- **John 13:1-6, “It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extend of his love.** The evening meal was being served and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. **Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.”**
- That same night, not just Judas, but every single disciple was either going to betray him, deny him, or abandon him. But he washed All of their feet.
- This Jesus is the same one who created the world, who has all power. But look how He uses it, THIS is what God does with His power:
- **Luke 22:27, at the Last Supper, Jesus tells his disciples, “For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.” Think about what this means!**
- **Revelation 4:9-11, “....You are worthy, our Lord and God to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”**
- Even in death, Jesus rested on the Sabbath, and during his ministry on earth, he went to the synagog on the Seventh-day Sabbath. Are we followers of this God?
- **A wedding ring shows that I am married to the man who gave it to me.** We promised to love and be faithful to each other, to serve and be intimate only with each other, but what if I ran around on him, was unfaithful? Would I not be taking his name in vain? It is a sign of our marriage, but it isn't our marriage.



- **So, the Sabbath is a sign of our relationship with God. It doesn't save us.** Many people kept the Sabbath, but won't be saved. Think of the church leaders in Christ's day who wanted his body removed from the cross by the Sabbath, so they could go home and worship their creator on the Sabbath.
- Only an intimate, trusting and loving relationship with Christ Jesus/God saves us. The Sabbath is a sign, not the actual relationship.

So why keep the seventh day Sabbath? Here are a few reasons among many:

- 1) It is a sign for all to see which God we worship, who has our heart, our love and trust.
- 2) It is the means of keeping our relationship with God close and intimate.
- 3) It is the perfect symbol of the fact that we cannot save ourselves, that from start to finish it is Christ's work made possible through faith.

Look at the miracles Jesus did on the Sabbath. He could have chosen to do them on any other day. He could have healed everyone in sight. He did these miracles for a reason:

- **Luke 6:1-11** Man with a shriveled hand was restored – It is good to save life.
- **Luke 13:10-16** A woman crippled for 18 years – compared to untying a donkey and giving it water, set free from bondage.
- **Luke 14:1-6** A man suffering from dropsy in the house of a prominent pharisee – compared to pulling a trapped son or animal out of a well.
- **John 5** A man paralyzed for 38 years – whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life...he has crossed over from death to life.
- **John 7:23** Healing the whole man
- **John 9** Man born blind. Jesus performed a miniature version of the creation of man, spitting into the dirt, rubbed mud on the man's eyes to make him see. And those who see are not blind. He not only healed the man's eyes, but recreated the part of his brain that interprets sight, as the body would have gotten rid of those unneeded brain cells as the child developed.
- The Great Controversy by Ellen White, Page 605 says, “the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God.”

FRIDAY

Further Thought



I see many surprised people at the end of time:

- Matthew 7:21-23 describes people telling God at the end of time what they did in his name, and were told to get away from God because he doesn't know them (or they don't know him). These are people doing amazing things for God, but having no intimate relationship with Him.
- Matthew 7:21-23 describes the wise and foolish builders, build on the rock, not on sand, which is the only way you will survive when the storms come.
- Matthew 25:31-46 describes that what you do or do not do for one of the least here on earth, you did or did not do for Jesus/God.
- Luke 1:67-74 – John the Baptist's father Zechariah prophesies that one of Jesus' mission to earth is to enable us to serve God without fear.

Read Psalm 107:1-32

- We are ignorant, trapped, sick, overwhelmed and imbalanced, but Jesus has showed us what God is really like. Through his life and death, he has offered us freedom to choose, power to cut us free from our addictions, has healed us through His Holy Spirit, and has calmed and balanced us in preparation for going home.
- **John 17:3**, “This is eternal life, that you know God.”
- He asks us to “**Remember**” the sign in time that shows the world we are His and His alone. It costs nothing, except our time. Nothing can separate our love for Him and His love for us. We have his seal and the impress of his insignia ring on our characters. Allow God to work through you to bring as many of your brothers and sisters as you can with you, because **the end of all things is at hand!**

Preparation for the End Time Lesson 12 2Q 2018

Babylon and Armageddon

SABBATH

Read memory text: “On her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Rev 17:5 NKJV)

What does this mean?

Is it speaking of Iraq or is Babylon symbolic of something else?

It is local to the Middle East or worldwide?

What does abomination mean? Something vile, disgusting, reprehensible, shameful, what, in Bible terms, would fit this description?

What is this power described as doing? Is it working for God or opposing God? Could we say this power wars against God?

What kind of war? Is the war a physical one?

What is Satan’s goal in the war? Is Satan’s goal to physically destroy righteous people, knowing that they will be raised to everlasting life—or is Satan’s goal to corrupt the hearts, minds and characters of righteous people?

What is more abominable to kill an innocent child in their innocence or to turn an innocent child into a perpetrator and lover of violence, evil and sin?

Now, what would be more abominable than turning God’s children into enemies of God? Doing it is such a way that the evil-doers believe they are carrying out God’s will, thus not only corrupting their own character, but grossly misrepresenting God, leading more and more to either accept this lie about God or reject God and in either case have their characters also corrupted by the principles of fear and selfishness.

Now, with this description in mind, can you specify or demarcate the attributes that make a clear distinction between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan—and once we do this we will apply it and see if we can identify what is the most horrible abomination in the world today.

God's Kingdom	Satan's Kingdom
Values truth and thinking	Devalues truth and thinking
Emanates from and brings forth more Love	Emanates from and brings forth more selfishness
Based on Design law	Based on Imposed law
Worship freedom	Worship enforcement
God as source of salvation	God as source of destruction
Jesus is God's agency to heal His creation	Jesus is man's advocate to remove God's wrath
God's justice is saving and healing	God's justice is inflicting punishment
Leads to order and peace	Leads to chaos and violence
Leads to unity	Leads to fragmentation

With this in mind can you identify systems that promote God's methods versus Satan's methods and what the abomination then is? What is the harlot and her prostitute daughters?

Revelation 17:5 from *The Remedy*:

The title written on her forehead, descriptive of her character and methods, was:
Mysterious BABYLON THE GREAT—the confusing system of religious tradition, fable and falsehood that obscures the truth about God; THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES—the many diverse religious sects who sell their virtue for earthly advantage and seduce others into their bed of lies about God; THE ABOMINATION OF THE EARTH.

Do we see the religions of the world more consistently promoting the truth about God, or corrupted with the wine—false teachings—of Babylon?

What might that look like?

SUNDAY

The title for Sunday's lesson is "The Wine of Her Wrath" referring to Babylon. To what is this referring?

What does wine do? What impact does wine have on the mind, on the reasoning ability, on the ability to discern, comprehend, self-govern, make critical decisions?

So, what does Babylon distribute that has the effect of damaging the mind, undermining reasoning ability, impairing discernment, comprehension, self-governance and critical decision making?

Lies about God, false theologies, distortions in beliefs that are contradictory and incite fear and doubt.

Examples:

- God is love but will burn you in hell forever if you don't love Him—this idea violates the law of liberty and this is inconsistent with reality. The only way to believe it is to not reason, not think, thus people actively choose to say things like: “I take that on faith” or “God’s ways are a mystery but it must be love.”
 - It would be like saying: “The best health comes from drinking cyanide” or “Love grows strongest by torture.”
 - From the book Christian Education: “Satan has ascribed to God all the evils to which flesh is heir. **He has represented him as a God who delights in the sufferings of his creatures, who is revengeful and implacable.** It was Satan who originated the doctrine of eternal torment as a punishment for sin, because in this way he could lead men into infidelity and rebellion, distract souls, and **dethrone the human reason.**” {CE 73.2}
- God loved the world so much He sent Jesus and then killed Jesus because if He didn't He would have killed us for our sins.
- Relics, which are artifacts from the saints of the past, are useful in helping our prayers and requests ascend to God.
- God records your sins in a book and if you don't apply Jesus' blood to that book then God will find that record of your sin and torture and kill you
- Jesus is in a building in heaven and as we pray He lifts a censor and burns incense and presents our prayers to His Father for us.

Do you see how false beliefs lead to confusion, loss of wisdom, dethrones reason, leads to beastly behaviors in which people in the name of God will imprison and kill each other?

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “The second angel’s message....” Revelation 17 goes on to describe this fallen religious system, and then in chapter 18 the three angels’ messages are to be given again.

In Revelation 14 the three angels’ messages were presented initially, which began in the 19th Century with the call for people to leave the fallen system of Babylon, but after that call the imposed law lies infected the group called to take this last day message to the world—so in Revelation 18 the Bible teaches that the message must be given again to a new generation, to our generation. This is the beginning of Revelation 18 from *The Remedy*:

After this, I saw another messenger coming down from heaven—symbolizing the Godly origin of his message. He had the great authority and power of truth, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor.² With a voice reverberating throughout the earth, he shouted: “Babylon the Great is a fallen system of religious tradition, fable, and falsehood distorting the truth about God! Every demonic distortion about God, every evil attitude toward God,



and all filthy and destructive heart-motives find their home with her,³ for she intoxicates the world with her pagan views of God, maddening them with her adulterous idea that God coerces and must inflict punishment if not properly appeased. Earth's leaders corrupt themselves with her by practicing her methods, and people not anchored in God's kingdom of love, and those who wander from philosophy to philosophy, fill their minds with her smorgasbord of lies."

⁴Then I heard another voice calling from heaven, saying: "Come out of her, my people! Leave that confusing mess of evil thinking so that you will not share in her spiritual sickness and rebellion, and so that you will not receive the suffering she has chosen;⁵ for her violations of God's design for life have piled up to heaven, and God diagnoses her condition accurately.⁶ She will reap what she has sown: all that she has done will come back on her—with double intensity—from her own evil condition.

Do we find that the fallen system of Babylon, confused by its acceptance of the lie that God's law is imposed and the subsequent multiplicity of various doctrines, rules, arguments, and its punishing god has infected all the world?

- Every Christian group is infected with this view
- Agnostics and evolutionists tasted the idea of such an irrational god and rejected God altogether
- Islam and Judaism worship the same imperial god, the source of punishment upon their enemies
- All pagan religions have gods that require some payment, sacrifice, work, appeasement to induce them to bless
- Yes, the entire world is drunk on this wine—this lie about God's law and thus about God

What happens in a person who operates upon the lie that God's law is like human law, imposed rules which we must obey, and disobedience is bad deeds that get recorded, and one day unconfessed and unforgiven sins God will punish?

Does something different happen in a person who views God as their loving Savior and realizes that His law is the protocols upon which life is built and God is diligently seeking to heal them from sin?

Consider this quote from a book *Steps to Christ*:

There are those who profess to serve God, while **they rely upon their own efforts to obey His law**, to form a right character, and secure salvation. **Their hearts are not moved by any deep sense of the love of Christ, but they seek to perform the duties of the Christian life as that which God requires of them in order to gain heaven.** [What kind of a law construct leads to such living? This is imposed law, this is penal substitutionary theology.] **Such religion is worth nothing.** [Why? Because it doesn't heal, it gives a false legal security. What is necessary?] **When Christ dwells in the heart, the soul will be so filled with His love**, with the joy of communion with Him, that it will cleave to Him; and in the

contemplation of Him, self will be forgotten. **Love to Christ will be the spring of action.** [Notice this is internal healing, transforming, recreating, cleansing—not a legal process. This is design law!] Those who feel the constraining love of God, do not ask how little may be given to meet the requirements of God; they do not ask for the lowest standard, but aim at perfect conformity to the will of their Redeemer. With earnest desire they yield all and manifest an interest proportionate to the value of the object which they seek. **A profession of Christ without this deep love is mere talk, dry formality, and heavy drudgery.** {SC 44.2}

Is there a need for a clarifying message to go forward?

What is the message that is to go forward today and in what way is it different than the way it was presented over 100 years ago?

As a people, we have preached the law until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboa that had neither dew nor rain. We must preach Christ in the law, and there will be sap and nourishment in the preaching that will be as food to the famishing flock of God. {RH, March 11, 1890 par. 13}

How did the message go forward over a 100 years ago? Through the legal law view—arguing the law itself, through an imposed view of law. God gave a law, He gave this law, not that law, you aren't keeping the right day, or baptized in the right way, and therefore God is keeping a record, and when He returns He will punish those who haven't kept the right law.

What would it mean to present Christ in the law?

- Would we present the truth by presenting Christ as our legal payment for our sins—is that what it means? No! That perpetuates the law lie
- Christ in the law is Christ as the living embodiment of the law. God's law is the law of love. The law of love is a living law, it cannot be fully understood or seen written on stone. Jesus lived the law because God's law is the protocol for life.
- Thus the message today is to be given differently, it is the message of Revelation 18—Babylon is the fallen system of imposed law, leave her and return to worship Him who made the heavens... worship the Designer, reject the dictator views of God. This means we must reject the penal substitutionary theologies which are founded on this lie and have made the lie a bedrock of our Christian institutions!

Read last two paragraphs, "Whether that perfect fulfillment..." Is this the final message, the message to call people out of Babylon, the confused system of imposed law with a punishing God from whom we need to be protected, OR is this evidence of the infection? This idea is a distortion of truth from which the message of Rev 18 is to call people out!



Let's examine what is described here:

- Babylon will face judgment—from whom? From God
- What is implied will happen as a result? That God will punish
- For what will there be punishment? According to the lesson, “everyone will have to answer for their deeds”
- Christians have a source of comfort—what is it? An intercessor in the judgment. What is the lesson suggesting the intercessor will do? Protect us from what God would do to us if the intercessor wasn't there.

If you think my conclusions about what is described is misrepresenting the lesson, the bottom pink section of this page states: “How can you take comfort in the promise that all the injustice and iniquity that seems to go unpunished now will face one day final retribution by God?”

Do you hear that? We are to be comforted in the knowledge that if we have a child who has fallen into addictions, pornography, alcoholism, stealing, or simply rejected God for the good times of the world, then one day we can rejoice to stand on the walls of the New Jerusalem and watch God torture our child with the utmost pain only an infinite being could inflict and then kill them. Are you not comforted?

Let me put this plainly:

- This is the wine of Babylon. This idea, this concept, that we must be protected from God is a lie.
- The idea that God's law requires God to inflict punishment is a lie. It is Satan's lie from the beginning in heaven and it has infected all humanity; it is the basis of paganism.
- It is the reason for the rejection of God and evolutionism.
- It is the basis of Penal Substitution Theology which is a lie, and it is this distortion about God from which the message of the Three Angels is to free people.

TUESDAY

When you hear the Battle of Armageddon, what comes to mind?

How is it most frequently taught?

What is the truth about the Battle of Armageddon, to what is it referring?

The lesson states in paragraph 3, “Scripture presents Armageddon as the ultimate climax—not between squabbling nations, but between the two sides of the cosmic controversy. It's a religious struggle, not economic or political, however much economic and political factors might come into play.”

The lesson asks us to read Revelation 16:12-16:

From the NIV1984:

The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East. ¹³ Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.

¹⁵ “Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.”

¹⁶ Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

What does this mean? What kind of battle is being described?

From *The Remedy*:

¹² The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates—symbolizing the withdrawing of God's forces of righteousness as a shield against the kings from the East symbolic of the corrupting powers of mysticism. ¹³ I saw three spirits whose minds had not been cleansed of the lies about God. They looked like frogs catching their prey with their lying tongues. They came telling the lies of mysticism and spiritualism from the dragon, the lies of coercion and force from the beast, and the lies of pagan appeasement theology from the false prophet. ¹⁴ They are the spiritual movements of fallen angels—demons who perform miracles and go to the rulers of the world to unite them in war against the truth about God and his methods of love, on the great day of God Almighty.

¹⁵ “Understand this: To the unhealed, my coming will be unexpected—like that of a thief. But the healed, who have guarded their hearts and kept their characters pure, will be happy at my coming and will not be shamed by the exposure of an unhealed character.”

¹⁶ Then the demonic forces united the nations together in their opposition to God and his methods of love, bringing them to what is known in Hebrew as Harmageddon, or The Mount of Assembly,—the mountain where God rules.

Do you agree?

There are four primary distortions being taught about God in this final battle for the minds and hearts of people on earth:

- Mysticism—there is no intelligent God with His own identity and individuality, but a cosmic force that requires both good and evil to exist together for all eternity to provide balance. And we have the power to access the force for either good or evil.
- Spiritualism—you cannot die and the dead continue to exist in a conscious not physical form carrying out both good and evil
- Imperialism—Justice is the use of power to coerce, force and punish those who disobey
- Penal Substitution Theologies (which manifest in most pagan religions): God is the source of

inflicted punishments and will punish you unless He is offered the blood of an innocent human sacrifice to propitiate His wrath.

Do you see the infection, the lies, the war going on for your heart and mine?

Now, with this in mind let's jump back and read the third paragraph in Monday's lesson which is a quote from the book *The Great Controversy*:

"The Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord, Satan will work 'with all the power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness;' and they that 'receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved,' will be left to receive 'strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.' 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11. Not until this condition shall be reached, and the union of the church with the world shall be fully accomplished throughout Christendom, will the fall of Babylon be complete. The change is a progressive one, and the perfect fulfillment of Revelation 14:8 is yet future." 1888

What would the union of the church with the world look like? Would it not be the acceptance of the world's methods, the world's understanding of law i.e. imposed rules and teaching that God functions like the governments of the world? Would it not be the very ideas we have exposed as the basis of Penal Substitution Theology a god who requires a blood payment or he will use his power to torture and kill—and it is taught such behavior to exact vengeance and retribution is justice?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "What, thought, is the great..." What was the problem at Carmel? Was it they were not religious? Or was it that they accepted a false version of God?

What of this quote?

Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God. {FLB 59.8}

The lesson rightly connects Armageddon with Mount Carmel, let's review the historic roots and show these connections and the problem today:

The chief god of ancient Babylon was Marduk. This description of Marduk is from the Encyclopedia Britannica:

Originally, he seems to have been a god of thunderstorms. A poem, known as Enuma elish and dating from the reign of Nebuchadrezzar I (1119–1098 BCE), relates Marduk's rise to such preeminence that he was the god of 50 names, each one that of a deity or of a divine attribute. After conquering the monster of primeval chaos, Tiamat, he became Lord of the Gods of Heaven and Earth. All nature, including humanity, owed its existence to him; the destiny of kingdoms and subjects was in his hands...

Marduk's star was Jupiter, and his sacred animals were horses, dogs, and especially the so-called dragon with forked tongue, representations of which adorn his city's walls. On the oldest monuments Marduk is represented holding a triangular spade or hoe, interpreted as an emblem of fertility and vegetation. He is also pictured walking or in his war chariot. Typically, his tunic is adorned with stars; in his hand is a sceptre, and he carries a bow, spear, net, or thunderbolt. Kings of Assyria and Persia also honoured Marduk... in inscriptions and rebuilt many of their temples.

Marduk was later known as Bel, a name derived from the Semitic word baal, or "lord." Bel had all the attributes of Marduk, and his status and cult were much the same....
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Marduk>

What were the attributes of Marduk:

- Creator and supreme god
- He was the god of weather
- He was dragon-like and had a forked tongue—symbolic of a liar?
- He was the god of fertility

And, Marduk became known as Baal, and it was Baal who was being worshipped by Israel at the time of Elijah. Who was Baal?

Baal was the son of El (i.e. El-ohim or El-Shaddai). He was the god of weather. Often called, 'Almighty' and "Lord of the Earth." Baal was the god who brought rain, thunder, lightening, who fertilized the earth, controlled the sun and brought the harvest.

Baal fought the great serpent leviathan as well as battled against Mot, the god of death. And most amazing of all, it was taught that Baal died in his battle with Mot and rose from the dead to bring life to earth.

So what was the problem with worshipping a god who was the "husband and protector of Israel," the son of El, who controlled the weather, who brought rain, sunshine, and fertility, who blessed with full harvest, who warred against the great serpent and death, who died and was resurrected to bring us life? What was wrong with this god?

Baal required appeasement—Baal required something be offered him in order to appease wrath, prevent punishment and engender blessings.



Baal became:

- Zeus to the Greeks
- Jupiter to the Romans—remember Marduk's star was Jupiter
- Thor to the Norse people
- Jesus Christ to all those who worship a god that like Baal requires appeasement, payment, propitiation of a human sacrifice in order not to kill

This is why God prophesied through Malachi that before the second coming of Christ the prophet Elijah must come again. Why? Just like Elijah confronted Baal worship millennia ago, so too the people of God today, must confront Baal worship and call people to choose between two versions of God.

Read last paragraph, “In many ways...” What does it mean to forsake God's law today?

What does it mean to worship Him who made the heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water?

This is contrasting those who worship the god who imposes law (Baal) versus the Creator God whose law is design protocols (Yahweh).

THURSDAY

Prior to the confrontation at Carmel there had been no rain for 3.5 years, according to Revelation how long does the beastly system have power? 3.5 years, and what would no rain symbolically represent?

Could it represent that when we worship, believe, present, teach the false penal view of God that the latter rain of the Holy Spirit doesn't fall?

And in Elijah's day as soon as the people rejected the Baal version of God and accepted the true God what happened? The rain came—could it be that when we as Christians reject the Penal Substitutionary dictator view of God and accept the true view of our Designer view of God and His law that the latter rain will fall?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

NEW TV PROGRAM: Each Tuesday watch our new TV Program—The Dr. Tim Jennings Show on WBTN.TV Network. God to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

New Video Blogs—If you don't follow us on Facebook, then be sure to visit our website we are posting new blogs again, the go up every Thursday.

June 16, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing a one day seminar at Folsom Women's Prison in California.

September 14,15, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be Keynote Speaker at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown, Delaware.

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

September 30-Oct 2, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at NAD of SDA Mental Health Education retreat for pastors at Kettering, OH.

October 20, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar at Camelback SDA church, in Phoenix, AZ.

November 9,10 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Houston, TX, in conjunction with the AACC

In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church
Mental Health Matters
Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

The Aging Brain Thursday, August 13, 2018

What happens to the brain as we age? This presentation will examine the evidence-based lifestyle and non-pharmacological interventions which will protect your brain and diminish your risk of dementia. Dr. Jennings brand new book, The Aging Brain, will be available.

Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family.

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

The God-Shaped Brain, Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!

Preparation for the End Time Q2 2018 – Lesson 13

The Return of Our Lord, Jesus

SABBATH

“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:27).

What does this text mean to you?

Does it conjure up scenes of God using lightening bolts to slay the wicked?

From the Lesson:

“The poet T. S. Eliot began a poem with the line: “In my beginning is my end.” However succinct, his words carry a powerful truth. **In origins exist endings.**” Emphasis mine.

The lesson draws some comparisons to Christ’s 2nd coming and the Creation. It, correctly, emphasizes Christ as the Creator.

Didn’t the Jews at Christ’s 1st advent believe in a Creation?

Doesn’t most of modern day Christianity [at least, Protestantism] believe in Creation?

Doesn’t it matter the character of the Creator? Is it damaging to believe Christ, as the Creator, will kill his children if He’s not loved in return?

What foundational issue is missing from the lesson’s comparisons? Design Law.

God’s Law. It was Law in eternity past [pre-Creation] and will remain Law in eternity future[forever after the 2nd Advent of Christ]. The Creation was an unfolding of God’s Law, The Crucifixion and Resurrection were deeper revelations of God’s Law, and Christ’s 2nd & 3rd comings [along with the destruction of the unrighteous] will be continued revelations of God’s Design Law.

SUNDAY

The Day of The Lord

From the Lesson:

“There is no question that the “day of the Lord” will be a day of destruction and sorrow and turmoil for the lost. But it is also a day of deliverance for all of God’s people, those who are



“found written in the book” (see also Phil. 4:3, Rev. 3:5, 13:8). This theme—that of the “day of the Lord” as a time of judgment against the wicked but also a time when God’s faithful are protected and rewarded—is found first in the Old Testament. For instance, although some will face the “Lord’s fierce anger,” those who heed the call to “seek righteousness” and “seek humility” will “be hidden / In the day of the Lord’s anger” (Zeph. 2:1–3, NKJV).”

Why is Christ’s 2nd coming a “day of destruction and sorrow and turmoil for the lost”?

From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. Rev. 19:15.

The sword coming from Christ’s mouth is symbolic of what?

Pure, glorious Truth. Interesting that if you remove the “S” from sword, you get “word.”

The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, **because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.** Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that **all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.** 2 Thess. 2: 9-12.

From the bottom section in Sunday’s lesson:

“As final events unfold, the side we are on will only become more apparent. What choices can and must we make now to make sure we’re on the right side?”

Is this accurate?

Jesus told them another parable: **“The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.**

“The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’ “ ‘An enemy did this,’ he replied. “The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’

“ ‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’ ” Matt. 13: 24-30.

“Christ has plainly taught that those who persist in open sin must be separated from the church, but He has not committed to us the work of judging character and motive. **He knows our nature too well to entrust this work to us.** Should we try to uproot from the church those whom we suppose to be spurious Christians, we should be sure to make mistakes. Often we regard as hopeless subjects the very ones whom Christ is drawing to Himself. Were we to deal with these souls according to our imperfect judgment, it would perhaps extinguish their last hope. Many who think themselves Christians will at last be found wanting. Many will be in heaven who their neighbors supposed would never enter there. Man judges from appearance, but God judges the heart. **The tares and the wheat are to grow together until the harvest; and the harvest is the end of probationary time.**

There is in the Saviour’s words another lesson, a lesson of wonderful forbearance and tender love. As the tares have their roots closely intertwined with those of the good grain, so false brethren in the church may be closely linked with true disciples. The real character of these pretended believers is not fully manifested. Were they to be separated from the church, others might be caused to stumble, who but for this would have remained steadfast.

The teaching of this parable is illustrated in God’s own dealing with men and angels. Satan is a deceiver. When he sinned in heaven, even the loyal angels did not fully discern his character. This was why God did not at once destroy Satan. Had He done so, the holy angels would not have perceived the justice and love of God. A doubt of God’s goodness would have been as evil seed that would yield the bitter fruit of sin and woe. Therefore the author of evil was spared, fully to develop his character. Through long ages God has borne the anguish of beholding the work of evil, He has given the infinite Gift of Calvary, rather than leave any to be deceived by the misrepresentations of the wicked one; for the tares could not be plucked up without danger of uprooting the precious grain. And shall we not be as forbearing toward our fellow men as the Lord of heaven and earth is toward Satan?” COL. 72. Emphasis mine.

MONDAY

Daniel and the Second Coming of Jesus

The lesson has us focus on Daniel 2 [Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the tall idol] and, and its import regarding the eventual kingdom of God.

Who had the dream in the first place, and who was God trying to reach with the dream?

What does the dream tell us about Earthly kingdoms? About God’s Kingdom?



Did the dream tell us all we needed to know about God's Kingdom, or was there some important pieces missing?

34 You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

44 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.” Daniel 2: 34, 35 & 44, 45.

From the lesson:

“These verses leave little ambiguity about what happens when Jesus returns.”

Did Nebuchadnezzar have any ambiguity? Do we?

TUESDAY

Long Term Prospects

This lesson refers back to Sabbath's lesson in that origins are tied to endings. I think the take home lesson here is that a correct understanding of design law is critical if we are to form a useful foundation for our faith, and, if necessary, be able to present compelling evidence in support of that faith.

Simply believing in Creation is having a foundation built on sand [i.e. “God said it, I believe it, that settles it”]. Understanding how life is designed to work, and being able to harmonize multiple threads of evidence in support of our understanding is building on the Solid Rock.

WEDNESDAY

In the Clouds of Heaven.

The lesson mentions a theory about Jesus' return being the outpouring of the Holy Spirit [what we consider the “Latter Rain”]. I've personally never met anyone who subscribes to this approach. I think, and Scripture is clear on, it will be a literal return to Earth. For some, it will be deliverance. For others, it will be hell.



Consider the quote from Great Controversy the lesson chose to include.

“The firmament appears to open and shut. The glory from the throne of God seems flashing through. The mountains shake like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury. There is heard the shriek of a hurricane like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom for wickedness are swallowed up by the angry waters. Babylon the great has come in remembrance before God, ‘to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.’ ”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 637.

On some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh. Jude 22, 23.

I just came across the text from Jude earlier this past week. Which is better, saving with compassion or with fear?

THURSDAY

The Living and The Dead

Why will the “dead in Christ” be raised?

Why was Jesus, Himself, raised from the dead?

How was He able to accurately predict His own resurrection?

Can we the assurance He had about loved ones and ourselves falling asleep?

The Book of Acts Lesson 1 3Q 2018

You Will Be My Witnesses

presenter: Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

I am so humbled to realize how God works in our lives. When I was in my residency I had a patient who motivated me to research Biblical principles for healing the mind, and she is described in the opening of *Could It Be This Simple? A Biblical Model for Healing the Mind*. I wrote the primer paper that became the book when I was in my residency and the book was initially published in 2007. As you know our ministry has been distributing this book since our founding in 2010.

Last week I was at Folsom Women's Prison in California conducting an all-day seminar for the inmates there. Susan and Rich Kollenberg have been doing prison ministries for years using *Could It Be This Simple?* and with our permission they have just created a *Could It Be This Simple?* Prison Ministries Work Book. They, along with the prison officials, have found that those who take their course have reductions in behavior problems and recidivism.

The lectures last week were recorded and we are creating a new DVD set to go along with the new workbook, and will make these available at no cost to prisons and prison ministries around the country.

The new DVD set will include the following four lectures:

- The Mind God's Design and What Went Wrong
- Recovering from Sexual Abuse
- Healthy Love versus Love Addiction
- Guilt Resolution

A few days before the seminar at Folsom I received the following email:

I am a doctoral student at the University of the Cumberlands in Williamsburg, Kentucky and an LPCC in private practice in London, Kentucky. As a part of my practice, I have a contract to provide mental health services to the Laurel County Correctional facility that currently houses on average 576 male and female inmates. I do individual counseling and I lead small groups. Currently I have five groups going through your book Could It Be This Simple? Additionally, I have been using this book in my private practice for over six years with amazing results.

At the jail I also use the Adverse Childhood Experience Measurement and have been keeping stats on the results. Ninety-three percent of all the inmates who have taken this assessment have had a score >4. The majority of them have also had multiple incarcerations which continue to add to the national recidivism dilemma. I am finding that as I use your book in small groups with the inmates, their minds and hearts are changing. I know this because their symptoms of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts are improving. I know this because their behaviors in their cell environments are improving. I know this because many

are making decisions to pursue a relationship with Christ. I know this because their self-esteem and ability to forgive themselves is improving... I believe that many of these adults are suffering from childhood trauma that has gone untreated, and if left untreated will only continue to result in life long incarcerations. I am requesting your permission to use your book for this research project, as well as any guidance and leadership that you might have time to offer...

I first met you at AACC and I have always made sure to take any class you have taught at the conferences. There is rarely a day that goes by that I am not drawing on my white board the model on page 41 for a client, and just so you know, I began living the model myself a few years back and it has changed my life. I know you are busy, but I sure hope you may be able to help with this in some way. I believe with the right research, especially in the prison system, your book could become the one evidence-based treatment that could make all the difference for these inmates.

Could It Be This Simple? is now available in:

- English
- Spanish
- Portuguese
- German
- Bulgarian
- Soon to be released in Polish
- Prison Ministries Workbook

And in the last two weeks I received this email:

I first learned about Come and Reason Ministries in 2015. It was during my year of EM fellowship in Memphis, TN. I had decided for some reason to go to the GC session that year. While there, I visited a number of booths and as I passed the CRM booth, a bag with free dvds was given to me. At the time, I wasnt terribly interested in the booth itself and dont even remember who the person was who handed me that bag. The DVDs lay unopened in my apartment for months. Finally, one day when I was bored (I was alone and far from family and had no cable tv to watch or radio to listen to), I finally picked up one of the dvds and decided to play it...I had nothing else to do that day. As I listened, I think my mouth dropped open a number of times. I learned things I had never heard before. I began to realize that there just might be something wrong with how I viewed God and a number of things in my experience. I had grown up SDA and remember frequently feeling guilty, sad, and maybe afraid as well, especially when I did something wrong, which invariably would happen. Over the past few years, I have listened to those 3 seminars a few times, found your website, and have begun listening to the Bible study every week...sometimes replaying it several times to try to understand points that I hadn't thought of before. I am SO GRATEFUL that God led me to that booth that day and for those DVDs which have set me on a course to learn and

grow closer to this God, my Father, my Abba, that I am growing to love more and more now. My mother listens to these studies with me and whenever I have an opportunity, at work or at church, I try to refer people to this website to find out for themselves. At church, I at times have the opportunity to speak for the sermon and will try to bring in some of these concepts before the small church I attend in Maryland. The purpose of this email is to express my extreme gratitude for this ministry and to encourage those working in this ministry to keep spreading the truth far and wide. If there is anything I can do to help further this message, I would love to do so.

We want to thank all of you who support this ministry—it is because of your volunteering, sharing resources, prayers, encouragement, donations, that we are able to create such materials and reach people with this life-changing message.

The Book of Acts

In the introduction to the study guide it points out that the book of Acts and Luke were written by Luke, which constitutes 27% of the NT, more than any other New Testament writer—and Luke was a physician who was not Jewish and not one of the 12 Apostles.

What does this fact reveal? That the Holy Spirit is not restricted by race, or academic degree, or organizational affiliation, or theological training of the person. What is it that does restrict the Holy Spirit? The hardness of human hearts, which means what? Two aspects, selfishness and a lack of tenderness toward the truth—in other words, when there is no openness for new truth to change old ideas. As Jesus said you can't put new wine in old wineskins.

But, for people who have tender hearts, who love others and love to grow in the truth the Holy Spirit is not restricted, but poured out and those people grow, advance, are transformed and become God's witnesses or lights in the world.

SABBATH

Read memory text: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

What power would they receive? The power:

- To heal people?
- To speak other languages?
- To resist viper bites?
- To understand and speak the truth?
- To love their enemies?
- To overcome temptations to be selfish?
- To lose self-control or to acquire self-control?

Which of these can be counterfeited by false spirits?

What type of power is the type of power that is subject to counterfeit? Is it not the power of might, of physical things, of miracles and signs? Such as:

- A serpent speaks
- Magicians turn staffs into serpents
- An angel of light appears to Christ
- Satan transports Christ to the pinnacle of the temple

Are signs, wonders, miracles the types of evidence we should rely upon to differentiate the work of God from the work of Satan?

What is necessary in order to perform a miracle? What does one need, what type of power? Some physical power over the elements, materials, or organisms involved. Has Satan, by his deception of Adam, gained access to the physical world? Is there any evidence in Scripture that Satan can manipulate nature? Book of Job...

So, miracles are based on physical power.

Is the question between good and evil who has the most physical power?

Or is it, how one wields physical power? I found this comment in the book *Acts of the Apostles*, which is a commentary on the book of Acts.

"Whereunto," asked Christ, "shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?" Mark 4:30. He could not employ the kingdoms of the world as a similitude. In society He found nothing with which to compare it. **Earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power; but from Christ's kingdom every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion, is banished.** This kingdom is to uplift and ennoble humanity. **God's church is the court of holy life, filled with varied gifts and endowed with the Holy Spirit.** The members are to **find their happiness in the happiness of those whom they help and bless.** {AA 12.2}

Do you agree?

Then, what is the power of the Holy Spirit that is the hallmark of God's presence and activity, that is always necessary in order for God's kingdom to move forward?

After the descent of the Holy Spirit, **the disciples were so filled with love for Him and for those for whom He died,** that hearts were melted by the words they spoke and the prayers they offered. **They spoke in the power of the Spirit;** and under the influence of that power, thousands were converted. {AA 22.2}

What was the power that filled the disciples? The power of love, which was combined with the truth that they spoke.

This is the power of the Spirit of truth and love.

Can Satan wield truth, pure, unadulterated combined with pure godly love?

What about the presentation of some truth divorced from love? Can those who are not on Christ's side present a truth, but have it divorced from love and thereby misrepresent God?

- What about the truth that Jesus is our Savior—is that true? Can it be presented without love, such that if people refuse to accept Jesus some might torture and kill those who refuse to accept Him?

While I don't know of any Christians today who would actually kill people who refuse to accept Jesus, can we find this same motive manifested in other ways?

- Christian who abuse their family members because they break some religious rule?
- Church organizations that enforce some rule to the loss of individual members?
- Enforced creeds or belief systems?

What do you think of these comments from a book called *Gospel Worker*?

A great and solemn truth has been intrusted to us, for which we are responsible. **Too often this truth is presented in cold theory.** Sermon after sermon upon doctrinal points is delivered to people who come and go, some of whom will never have another as favorable opportunity of being convicted and converted to Christ... **A theory of the truth without vital godliness cannot remove the moral darkness which envelops the soul.** {GW92 39.2}

Most precious gems of truth are often rendered powerless by the wisdom of words in which they are clothed, while the power of the Spirit of God is lacking. Christ presented the truth in its simplicity; and he reached not only the most elevated, but the lowliest men of earth. The minister who is God's ambassador and Christ's representative on the earth, who humbles himself that God may be exalted, will possess the genuine quality of eloquence. True piety, a close connection with God, and a daily, living experience in the knowledge of Christ, will make eloquent even the stammering tongue. {GW92 39.3}

Is it enough to have the right definitions of doctrines? Why not?

Did those who crucified Christ have the wrong Sabbath, the wrong diet, the wrong Sanctuary service, the wrong Commandments, the wrong Scriptures—what did they not have? Love!

What about the Good Samaritan? What did he have?

As we prepare for the coming of Christ, what is most important that we possess—a correct knowledge of the right doctrines, or a Christlike character?

Can a person have a Christlike character and not believe the doctrine of the Trinity, or baptism by immersion, or footwashing, or communion ceremony, or which day is the Sabbath?

Consider this quote:

The five foolish virgins had lamps (this means a knowledge of Scripture truth), but they had not the grace of Christ. Day by day they went through a round of ceremonies and external duties, but their **service was lifeless, devoid of the righteousness of Christ.** The Sun of Righteousness did not shine in their hearts and minds, and **they had not the love of the truth which conforms to the life and character,** the image and superscription, of Christ. The oil of grace was not mingled with their endeavors. **Their religion was a dry husk** without the true kernel. **They held fast to forms of doctrines, but they were deceived in their Christian life,** full of self-righteousness, and failing to learn lessons in the school of Christ, which, if practiced, would have made them wise unto salvation.-- Review and Herald, March 27, 1894.

Is it enough to have the truth?

What about love divorced from truth?

One **cannot** have love divorced from the *love* OF truth, but one can have love divorced from the awareness of truth. The person who genuinely loves, loves the truth and loves to grow in and advance in the truth yet such a one may not comprehend, know, understand, realize, appreciate or be aware of various truths, but when they do become aware of new truth they embrace and assimilate the truth and grow in it.

Thus, a loving character is a more accurate barometer of whether a person is a genuine follower of Christ than the doctrines they hold!

Evidence for this:

- “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:34,35
- “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’
³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or



thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’
⁴⁰ “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’ Mt 25:34-40

Do you agree that a loving character is more important than the correct doctrines, and that one can have correct doctrines without a loving character and thus crucify the Savior?

What is the most important requirement in your church organization to hold office—is it character or correct doctrine? Does that risk anything?

Read first paragraph, “Jesus’ mission on earth...” When Jesus’ mission on earth was finished, was Jesus’ mission to save humanity and eliminate sin from the universe finished?

Was the atonement complete at the Cross?

One of the big arguments in Christianity is whether the atonement was complete at the cross or not.

The confusion is rooted in, as almost all the confusion is, the view of law one holds. If one holds the idea that God’s law functions like human law, then the sin problem is a legal one that needs legal a solution and the atonement is viewed in some legal aspect.

When one realizes God’s law is design law and that sin is a problem of the actual condition of the sinner, then one realizes atonement is providing what is necessary to remove sin from the sinner and restore the sinner to God’s perfection—i.e. back to at-one-ment with God.

In the legal model, Martin Luther, developed the idea of penal substitution because he wanted to eliminate the doctrine of purgatory. Purgatory was idea that sins can be purged after death to make people fit for heaven, which gave the church coercive power over people as it was taught the church held the keys to heaven and hell. People could pay money or do other things to get their loved ones moved from purgatory to heaven.

To eliminate this power from the church Martin Luther taught that all sins, from all people, from all time, past, present, future, were placed on Christ at the Cross and legally punished by God there, and thus no further need for punishment, or purging of sin was necessary. In this view, it was all complete at the cross.

The problem of course is that this entire construct is based on a lie, a false diagnosis, that the sin problem is legal, based on law that functions like human law and thus requires punishment. That is Satan’s view and it is pagan.

The truth is that God’s law is design law and when mankind sinned, the condition of humankind was

changed to be out of harmony with God and God's design (law) for life. Thus, God, "made him who knew no sin to become sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God." This is substitution, but notice, not for penal reasons, for restoring us to actual righteousness reasons.

Thus, in this view we understand that the perfect and complete REMEDY for sin was procured by Christ at the Cross, but that Remedy still needs to be applied into individual believers for their healing and restoration.

Thus, the species human was saved in the person (humanity) of Jesus, and the species was perfected by Jesus in His own assumed humanity, but for each individual sinner we must receive, partake, of Jesus in order to be transformed or healed. This is the application phase of the atonement, which was not complete at the Cross.

What do you think of this quote?

In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. **The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail.** The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature.** Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. {DA 671.2}

Do you agree or disagree with this position?

Do you see how the design law view brings perfect harmony and understanding to the atonement question resolving all the apparent contradictions that persist within Christianity because of the false legal model?

It is true that the efforts of the Apostles were accompanied by many miracles, does that mean when we see miracles we can know with 100% certainty that we are seeing the work of God?

What is it that is the best evidence that God's Spirit is at work? Transformation to Christlike character, which means Christlike methods are being practiced.

So, what would a Christlike approach be to a group of Christians who wanted to come to a city and have a free medical clinic for the indigent on Saturday?

What would be revealed if a group of potential sponsors told the volunteer healthcare workers that they should not hold a free clinic for the poor on Saturday because Saturday is the Sabbath and if they won't change it to another day the sponsors will pull their funds?

Consider this description:

Jesus had come to "magnify the law, and make it honorable." He was not to lessen its dignity, but to exalt it... He had come to free the Sabbath from those burdensome requirements that had made it a curse instead of a blessing. {DA 206.1}

For this reason He had chosen the Sabbath upon which to perform the act of healing at Bethesda. He could have healed the sick man as well on any other day of the week; or He might simply have cured him, without bidding him bear away his bed. But this would not have given Him the opportunity He desired. A wise purpose underlay every act of Christ's life on earth. Everything He did was important in itself and in its teaching. Among the afflicted ones at the pool He selected the worst case upon whom to exercise His healing power, and bade the man carry his bed through the city in order to publish the great work that had been wrought upon him. This would raise the question of what it was lawful to do on the Sabbath, and would open the way for Him to denounce the restrictions of the Jews in regard to the Lord's day, and to declare their traditions void. {DA 206.2}

Jesus stated to them that the work of relieving the afflicted was in harmony with the Sabbath law. It was in harmony with the work of God's angels, who are ever descending and ascending between heaven and earth to minister to suffering humanity. Jesus declared, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." All days are God's, in which to carry out His plans for the human race. If the Jews' interpretation of the law was correct, then Jehovah was at fault, whose work has quickened and upheld every living thing since first He laid the foundations of the earth; then He who pronounced His work good, and instituted the Sabbath to commemorate its completion, must put a period to His labor, and stop the never-ending routine of the universe. {DA 206.3}

Should God forbid the sun to perform its office upon the Sabbath, cut off its genial rays from warming the earth and nourishing vegetation? Must the system of worlds stand still through that holy day? Should He command the brooks to stay from watering the fields and forests, and bid the waves of the sea still their ceaseless ebbing and flowing? Must the wheat and corn stop growing, and the ripening cluster defer its purple bloom? Must the trees and flowers put forth no bud nor blossom on the Sabbath? [Notice all of these are design laws, as are the laws of health, and so is the Sabbath, thus activity moving people into harmony with God's design is always lawful on the Sabbath. But the imposed law view, makes rules that undermine the design laws of God and injures and harms people] {DA 206.4}

In such a case, men would miss the fruits of the earth, and the blessings that make life

desirable. Nature must continue her unvarying course. God could not for a moment stay His hand, or man would faint and die. **And man also has a work to perform on this day. The necessities of life must be attended to, the sick must be cared for, the wants of the needy must be supplied. He will not be held guiltless who neglects to relieve suffering on the Sabbath.** God's holy rest day was made for man, **and acts of mercy are in perfect harmony with its intent.** God does not desire His creatures to suffer an hour's pain that may be relieved upon the Sabbath or any other day. {DA 207.1}

But what about hiring someone to do work for you on Sabbath? Well this is an interesting note from E.G. White one of the founders of the SDA church:

Yesterday (Sabbath) morning, Willie spoke to the church in Ashfield. **At 3 p.m. we hired a horse and carriage** to take me to Newtown, four miles from Ashfield. We met in a small hall upstairs where a goodly number were assembled. I spoke to them on the prayer of Daniel, his contrition of soul, and his deep sorrow as he witnessed the desolation of Jerusalem. {18MR 14.2}

The legal minded, imposed law view, has difficulty with such activity. The design law view realizes there is no problem at all because it is all about spreading God's healing remedy and the Sabbath was created for man, not man for the Sabbath.

Why was it the Spirit wasn't poured out until Christ physically left the earth? Wasn't the Holy Spirit working on hearts and minds throughout human history?

How does the Holy Spirit work—truth and love. Does the Holy Spirit force His way into hearts? So for the Holy Spirit to have more power on earth, i.e. to do more in humanity, the Holy Spirit needs more access to human hearts, yes or no?

Is there a connection between Christ returning to heaven and the Holy Spirit gaining more access to human hearts?

What would have happened, in the hearts, minds of humans, if Christ stayed physically on earth? Would people be opening their minds and hearts for God to indwell, or would they be seeking a personal audience with Jesus?

SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, "At first, the disciples..." What caused the disciples bickering?

What caused their confusion and discouragement?

Do we have certain expectations that if they fail to transpire will result in our confusion and discouragement? Or do we have a perspective keeps us grounded?

For instance:

- What happens if the time of trouble comes and there is no secret rapture beforehand, will those who have expected a secret rapture be okay?
- What happens if there is a secret rapture, will those who didn't expect one be okay?
- What about those who expect Israel to become central and a physical battle to take place in Palestine and it doesn't happen?
- What about those who don't expect Israel to be central and it does?
- What about those who expect Sunday laws to be passed worldwide, but it doesn't happen?
- What about those who don't expect Sunday laws, but it does happen?

Could our expectations set us up for confusion?

Could some expectations actually set us up to side with Satan instead of Christ?

- What about those who expect Jesus to come back to punish the wicked—what is going to happen?
- Who does the Bible describe as using methods of coercion?

Do we have expectations that could make it hard for us?

How do we protect ourselves?

- By not locking into a specific sequence, but instead locking into God's design laws and principles
- God will never violate His design laws of love and liberty!

The lesson asks in the bottom green section "Why is it easy to believe what we want to believe, as opposed to what the Bible really teaches? How can we avoid this trap?"

- Because we have been indoctrinated into certain beliefs rather than learning how to think and discern reality for ourselves
- Because we have been taught to take the Bible alone, divorced from God's other books—nature and experience. When we harmonize all three then many of the distortions and false ideas are removed.
 - **The great storehouse of truth is the word of God—the written word, the book of nature, and the book of experience in God's dealing with human life.** Here are the treasures from which Christ's workers are to draw. In the search after truth they are to depend upon God, not upon human intelligences, the great men whose wisdom is foolishness with God. Through His own appointed channels the Lord will impart a knowledge of Himself to every seeker. – {COL 125.2}
 - **Jesus followed the divine plan of education.** The schools of His time, with their magnifying of things small and their belittling of things great, He did not seek. **His education was gained directly from the Heaven-appointed sources; from useful work, from the study of the Scriptures and of nature, and from the experiences**



of life--God's lesson books, full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart. {Ed 77.2}

- Because we have read the Bible through the wrong law lens, falsely believing God's laws works like human laws, imposed rules!
- Because we have viewed God the Father and Jesus as different in character
- Others?

How do we avoid the trap?

- Think for yourself, develop by practice the ability to discern right from wrong
- Use the Integrative Evidence-Based approach
- Reject imposed law and view through design law
- Realize Jesus and the Father are one!

MONDAY

What was the mission Jesus assigned to the Apostles?

How did they approach it? What methods did they use?

How well did they do?

What happened to their work?

Did their methods get replaced with different methods?

Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. 2Thes 2:3,4

What is being described? Did the methods of God get replaced with different methods?

What methods do the majority of the Christians churches teach today?

The bottom paragraph tells that Jesus spent 40 days with his disciples after his resurrection—if you were there during those 40 days what questions would you have asked Jesus?

TUESDAY

Do you believe Jesus will come again?

Upon what do you base this belief?



Why do you think He has not come?

Is there anything we can do to hasten the day of His return?

THURSDAY

How did they pick the twelfth apostle? What do you think of this method?

Why was it not a problem? Who were the two from whom they were selecting?

What qualifications were necessary to be in the selection process?

How do we select leaders today?

What qualifications do we require in church leaders today?

Do we require leaders reach at least level five development or, do we allow level four leaders to dominate our organizations?

Read bottom green section, "If someone were..."

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph:

"The Saviour's commission to the disciples included all the believers. It includes all believers in Christ to the end of time. [Would this be only men or women too?] It is a fatal mistake to suppose that the work of saving souls depends alone on the ordained minister. All to whom the heavenly inspiration has come are put in trust with the gospel. All who receive the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. For this work the church was established, and all who take upon themselves its sacred vows are thereby pledged to be co-workers with Christ." {DA 822.2}

Does this mean all, men AND women, who receive Christ are ordained gospel ministers?

Read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Watch Each Tuesday our new TV Program—The Dr. Tim Jennings Show on WBTN.TV Network. Go to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

New Video Blogs—If you don't follow us on Facebook, then be sure to visit our website we are posting new blogs again, the go up every Thursday.

September 14,15, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be Keynote Speaker at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown, Delaware.

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

September 30-Oct 2, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at NAD of SDA Mental Health Education retreat for pastors at Kettering, OH.

October 20, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar at Camelback SDA church, in Phoenix, AZ.

November 9,10 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Houston, TX, in conjunction with the AACC

In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church
Mental Health Matters Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

The Aging Brain Thursday, August 13, 2018

What happens to the brain as we age? This presentation will examine the evidence-based lifestyle and non-pharmacological interventions which will protect your brain and diminish your risk of dementia.

Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family.

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!

The Book of Acts Lesson 2 3Q 2018

Pentecost

by Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

I recently received the following email:

I am a Pastor of 34 years and have read 100s if not thousands of books through the years but none that have blessed me as your books. I have read them all, the most recent being The God-Shaped Heart and The Journal of the Watcher. I am also delighting in daily reading in the Remedy, absolutely wonderful. I have found in you one that I find deep harmony in so many biblical truths that are not a part of the acceptable evangelical legal theological outlook.

Thank you so much for your passion for God's truth and your courage to speak out against much that is counted as untouchable orthodoxy and is yet so deficient and distortive of God's actual intention and redundant revelation.

SABBATH

What is Pentecost? What happened on that day the year Christ was crucified and why did it happen?

In Christianity, Pentecost refers to the commemoration of the day when the Holy Spirit came upon the followers of Jesus with new power, enabling and equipping them to spread the healing remedy procured by Jesus.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "In obedience to Jesus'..." What lessons are there for us in this?

Do we have within ourselves the ability to fulfill God's purposes?

Do we need equipping, educating, enlightening, ennobling, empowering by God's Spirit in order to be successful agents in God's plan?

Is there a strategy the devil might use to tempt good people to forgo this equipping?

- Not realizing we need it?
- Replacing the working of the true Spirit with a false spirit
 - How can you tell the work of the Holy Spirit from false spirits?
 - The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth and Love thus the work of the Holy Spirit will always be in harmony with and bring forth more truth and love. Does that reality provide a tool we can use to differentiate the work of God's Spirit from false spirits?
 - False spirits will not be concerned with truth, will not want to move forward



- in truth, or will use a fact/truth in an unloving way.
- Or false spirits will use love to avoid the truth—not wanting to hurt someone’s feelings etc. or not allow natural divisions to occur because of the truth.
- The false spirits will use their so-called adherence to truth to enforce orthodoxy, rules, doctrines in such a way as to injure and divide—particularly by requiring others to conform to their viewpoint. The true Spirit presents the truth in love and leaves others free to leave if they choose. The false spirit would urge compromising principles in order to prevent someone from leaving. The true Spirit would lovingly present persuasive evidence to convert but allow someone the freedom to leave. The false spirit would punish those who leave.
- Evaluate the fruits of the Spirit described in Scripture and compare what is being observed
- Evaluate the message being taught about God and God’s methods—will God empower people to lie about Him?
- What about a person being so enthused, happy, on fire for the Lord, that they are so excited about sharing what they have experienced that they could be tempted to go out on their own without pausing to experience God’s equipping?
 - In other words, could we ever get ahead of the Lord’s timing?

I struggle with this. I have such a strong desire to see this message spread, to see hearts change, to see the world enlightened, to see Christ come that sometimes I get impatient and I want to push this or that and then I have to go to God in prayer and surrender to Him and trust His timing, His providence, His opening of doors and stay patient.

Have you ever struggled with this?

How do we balance waiting on the Lord’s equipping and timing, with simply waiting and never moving out in faith?

There was a song by a Christian group named Petra, the lyrics were based on the story of Israel and the Ark of the Covenant, and the lyrics said:

“The waters never part until your feet get wet.”

There is an aspect of God’s action in our lives to open the way that requires our action, our movement forward. How do we know where the balance is?

At Pentecost what would you say was the primary purpose of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit? In other words, what did the Holy Spirit want to accomplish?



- Excitement over miracles?
- Awed rapture to shut down minds into humble acceptance?
- Healing of hearts and minds and restoration of God's design within?
 - If this was the goal, do you see all the activities of the Spirit working toward that goal?
 - The speaking in languages **is** to remove barriers so truth can go forward
 - The healing of people **is** to bring attention to the messengers and demonstrate God's plan to heal the soul
 - The transformation of character from bickering disagreeable selfish people vying for supremacy to selfless other-centered people willing to die for others **is** to fulfill God's purpose of removing selfishness and sin
 - The enlightening of minds with eternal truths **is** to heal and restore trust in God

What about today? What is the Spirit's goal today? Same, to heal people and restore to unity with God!

What are the barriers to the work of the Spirit today?

- Lies –what lies are most devastating
 - God doesn't exist
 - The methods of God are like the methods of the world, thus using force, coercion for "righteous" causes is godly
 - God as source of pain, suffering, who needs appeasement
 - Spiritual discernment is a feeling not intelligent comprehension
 - Faith is believing without evidence, or believing what is not sensible—and ultimately makes God out to be either incompetent cruel, or a sadistic puppet-master:
 - Our loved ones who are lost will be suffering in the most horrible torments of hell for all eternity, but we will be euphorically happy in heaven
 - Our loved ones who die and are in a saved relationship with Jesus are in heaven and are conscious and aware of everything happening on earth. Mothers see their children put in foster care, molested, abused, kidnapped, murdered, sex-trafficked, and yet are happy.
- What about creeds, rules, organizational affiliation? Could membership in a church institution be an obstacle to the work of the Holy Spirit? Could a person have the idea that their salvation, their security with God depends upon membership in the organization? Could such an idea actually cause a person to resist the leading of the Holy Spirit?

Consider the story of the man born blind, recorded in John chapter 9. The church leaders investigated and didn't like what they found, so they called the blind man's parents and asked them if this was their son and what happened. Listen to what is described:

We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. ²¹ But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." ²² **His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already**



the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ That was why his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.” John 9:20-23

Was their membership in a church organization—even an organization which was established by God—interfering with the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives?

Why? Why did their concern for the organizational church and their good standing in it, undermine their willingness to allow the Holy Spirit to lead them to speak the truth?

I found this quote in the book *The Desire of Ages* quite interesting, commenting on the history of Christianity—what do you think?

As the light and life of men was rejected by the ecclesiastical authorities in the days of Christ, so it has been rejected in every succeeding generation. [Who are ecclesiastical authorities? Church leaders, do we have evidence that leaders of organized churches throughout history have repeatedly rejected truth? Is this a concern today?] Again and again the history of Christ's withdrawal from Judea has been repeated. When the Reformers preached the word of God, they had no thought of separating themselves from the established church; but the religious leaders would not tolerate the light, and those that bore it were forced to seek another class, who were longing for the truth. In our day few of the professed followers of the Reformers are actuated by their spirit. Few are listening for the voice of God, and ready to accept truth in whatever guise it may be presented. Often those who follow in the steps of the Reformers are forced to turn away from the churches they love, in order to declare the plain teaching of the word of God. And many times those who are seeking for light are by the same teaching obliged to leave the church of their fathers, that they may render obedience. {DA 232.2}

Where are we to place our trust in God or in the church institution? Even if we are convinced the church institution was established by God? Did God select, establish, equip and bless, in Bible times the nation of Israel? Did that mean when Jesus came it was better to stay loyal to the priests who led the nation, or to the truth as God revealed it?

What makes people vulnerable to choosing loyalty to the institution rather than following the truth?

- Fear of being wrong
- Long patterns of trusting others to think for them which results in...
- Not developing the ability for themselves of discerning truth from error
- A desire to feel secure—which results from group support and acceptance, even if it acceptance into a lie
 - This is where the church has failed the LGBT community and why the LGBT community has such power with those struggling with sexual identity issues
 - The LGBT community accepts them and loves them the church too often condemns them and hates them



Read fourth and fifth paragraph, “The Spirit always...” What do you think about this? What about this idea of intercession as described here? What does it mean?

What is intercession? It is interceding with or for someone who is in trouble, often by a plea or request.

Who is in trouble? Human beings—what kind of trouble? What is the problem that sin caused that the plan of salvation is designed to fix?

Is our problem with God? Does God have something in His character, in His attitude, in His being that needs adjusting? Does God’s law need fixing? Does the condition of humans need fixing?

Hmmm.... Then how is Christ interceding before God?

Does God need to be persuaded to give us His blessings, His Spirit, His love?

If Jesus were not to plead with the Father would that mean the Father would not bless us?

What does this mean in the context of God giving gifts to us?

- For God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son...

What about Jesus saying:

“Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. ²⁶ In that day you will ask in my name. **I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf.** ²⁷ No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸ I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”

²⁹ Then Jesus’ disciples said, “Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. John 16:24-29

Hmmm—Jesus says He will not ask the Father for us, because the Father Himself loves us. Jesus said this was plain truth, no more figures of speech, and the disciples agreed this was the way reality actually works.

If this is so, then what is meant by John 14:16, when Jesus said this:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—

From the SDA Bible Commentary on John 14:16 we read:

Comforter. Gr. *paraklētos*, a word used in the NT only by John (here; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2:1). It is made up of the preposition *para*, meaning, “beside,” and the adjective *klētos*, “called,” or “one called.” Hence the literal meaning is “one called to the side of.” However, in Scripture usage the word seems to reflect more of an active sense such as is found in the corresponding verb *parakaleō*, “to exhort,” “to comfort,” hence, “one who exhorts” (see John 16:8). The Latin Fathers translated *paraklētos* by *advocatus*, but the technical meaning, “advocate,” or “lawyer,” applies to only a few of the rare occurrences of the word in pre-Christian and non-Christian literature. The word “advocate” is not entirely appropriate to describe the work of either the Holy Spirit or Christ. **The Father and Son work in the fullest cooperation for the salvation of man (ch. 10:30). It is Satan’s work to present the Father as stern and harsh and unwilling to forgive the sinner, and as willing to forgive only upon the intercession of the Son.** It is true that the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ made forgiveness possible. But both the Father and the Son love the sinner and work in unison for his salvation. **An advocate in the human sense of the term is not needed to induce the Father to have mercy on the sinner.** He who desires to learn of the love and compassion of the Father need but look at the Son (see on ch. 1:18). Elsewhere in pre-Christian and non-Christian literature *paraklētos* retains the more general meaning of “one who stands up in behalf of another,” “a mediator,” “an intercessor,” “a helper.” See on Matt. 5:4.¹

Do we have ideas that interpret Jesus’ intercession as Jesus pleading to the Father for us?

How do we harmonize the texts about Jesus asking the Father for something and yet not interceding to the Father for us?

Let’s read Romans 8 starting in verse 26 from *The Remedy*:

²⁶This is exactly what the Spirit is doing: He is interceding in our minds, bringing the truth, convicting of right and wrong, and leading us to a higher plane of existence. Even when we don’t know what to pray, the Spirit is there, leading our minds and turning our thoughts in a higher and nobler direction.²⁷And he who knows how the infection of selfishness has invaded the deepest levels of our hearts, also knows the mind and desire of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for us by bringing his healing power, and cleansing and restoring the saints in accordance with the will of God.

²⁸And we know that in all things, at all times, in all circumstances, God works for the good of his creation and for the good of all who love him. Those who have accepted God’s call—to work with him according to his purpose—experience the good things that God has for them.²⁹For God foreknew who would accept and value his methods of love, and who would

¹ Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1980). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 5, p. 1037). Review and Herald Publishing Association.



reject him and his methods of love. And God predetermined that all who accept the truth about him and trust in him would be fully healed and transformed in character to be like his Son, so that Jesus would be the prototype of all who are fashioned in his likeness.³⁰ And he called all humanity—whom he predetermined should be healed and restored—to repentance and reconciliation. Those who accept the truth and respond to the call, he sets right with himself and trust is restored; and those whom he sets right in trust, he also transforms in character to his glorious ideal as revealed in Jesus.

³¹What, then, can we possibly say in response to this? Don't you realize that God is on our side? And **if God is for us**, who can be against us? God does not need convincing to be good to us; No! It is we who need convincing that God is good to us!³²If he did not withhold his own Son—but gave him up for us all—don't you realize that he will withhold nothing good from us? But along with his Son, he will give us all things that are for our good!³³Who is it, then, that brings charges against those whom God has chosen? Stop believing Satan's lies about God—it is not God who brings charges against us! It is God who sets us right with himself. It is God who heals and transforms us.³⁴Then who condemns? It is not Jesus, oh no! Christ Jesus, who died—and more importantly, who was raised from death to life—is sitting at God's right hand and is working hand in hand with his Father. Together they are interceding with the malignancy of sin in our minds and holding in check the power of the evil one, while providing the Remedy for our deliverance, healing and restoration.³⁵Who, then, shall ever separate us from the love of Christ? Shall problems, or hardships, or criticism, or persecution, or hunger, or disease, or homelessness, or nakedness, or imprisonment, or financial ruin, or terrorists, or war?³⁶As it is written: "For no matter what we face, including death, we will not doubt you; even if we are treated as sheep led to the slaughter—our confidence in you will not waver."

Who is interceding for us? God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit all three.

Then what does it mean, Christ is interceding in heaven for us? With whom is Christ interceding?

- Who needs persuading, God or you and me?
- Who needs recreating in righteousness, God or you and me?
- Who needs enlightening with the truth, God or you and me?
- Who needs the law of love restored in their hearts, God or you and me?

Then, with whom does Christ need to intercede, with God or with you and me?

Then, why ask the Father? For the same reason a surgeon sticks his hand out to a scrub nurse and asks for a scalpel, because it was time in the salvation process for Christ to wield the power of the Holy Spirit in this way and God the Father is the source of all and Christ is the agent through whom God's purposes are carried out and the Spirit is the agency to make effectual what Christ has accomplished.

So, Jesus returns to heaven and says, to the Father, “Father, I have completed the work you have given me to do. I have made you known, I have exposed Satan as a liar and fraud, I have destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness and developed a perfect sinless human character. Now, Father it’s time to wield the power of the Spirit to complete our plan; it is time to dispense the Spirit to take what I have achieved and apply it within the hearts and minds of all those who trust me.” And the Father says, “Right you are. Well done Son! Let’s free our children from Satan’s power, heal them and bring them home!”

What do you think about this quotation from a book called *Amazing Grace* by the same author as quoted in the lesson. I am going to read it straight through, let you consider the meaning, how do you hear it, what filters are in your mind that you process these words through. What ideas come to mind. Then I will go through it in sections and unpack what I understand it to mean and see if you agree:

God's appointments and grants in our behalf are without limit. The throne of grace is itself the highest attraction because occupied by One who permits us to call Him Father. But God did not deem the principle of salvation complete while invested only with His own love. By His appointment He has placed at His altar an Advocate clothed with our nature. As our Intercessor, His office work is to introduce us to God as His sons and daughters. Christ intercedes in behalf of those who have received Him. To them He gives power, by virtue of His own merits, to become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. And the Father demonstrates His infinite love for Christ, who paid our ransom with His blood, by receiving and welcoming Christ's friends as His friends. He is satisfied with the atonement made. He is glorified by the incarnation, the life, death, and mediation of His Son... {AG 68.3}

What do you hear in this description? Do you hear a beautiful healing message, or do you hear something legal?

Let’s unpack it point by point:

God's appointments and grants in our behalf are without limit. [What is a grant? Is a grant different than a loan?] The throne of grace is itself the highest attraction because occupied by One who permits us to call Him Father. But God did not deem the **principle of salvation** complete while invested only with His own love. [what is a principle? A design protocol, and the protocol, saving, healing, restoring to God’s design i.e. salvation is not complete with love only. Something else was needed besides love—what? What is the Spirit the Spirit of? TRUTH and love! Is truth necessary as a principle in the plan of salvation? Why? Lies believed break the circle of love and trust resulting in fear and selfishness, i.e. the carnal drive of survival of the fittest. Thus, truth is necessary to destroy lies and win back to trust so that love can do its work in the heart. See if this idea helps you understand what comes next in the quote.] By His appointment He has placed at His altar an Advocate clothed with our nature. **As our Intercessor, His office work is to introduce us to God as His sons and**

daughters. [What is Christ interceding to do? To bring information about us to the Father that the Father doesn't already know, or to bring to us the knowledge of the Father that we don't know? Who is it that doesn't know the other? Who then needs to be introduced to whom? Thus, Jesus said, "if you have seen me you have seen the Father." God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son... The plan of salvation needed the truth of God poured out in love in order to accomplish God's purpose. Thus love alone was not enough, the truth about God, as Jesus reveals was required. And where then does Christ intercede, where is the focus of Christ's activity? Where is Jesus' energy being applied? Notice where the power of Christ goes.] Christ intercedes in behalf of those who have received Him. **To them He gives power, by virtue of His own merits, to become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King.** [What does this mean? What are merits? Attributes, traits of character. Thus, those who respond to truth and love and choose to trust Him receive from Him a new heart and right spirit, the power of truth and love transforms them back into God's original ideal as they are indwelt with the Holy Spirit. All of this comes from Christ!] And the Father demonstrates His infinite love for Christ, **who paid our ransom with His blood, by receiving and welcoming Christ's friends as His friends.** [What does this mean? What is a ransom? The price necessary to set one free from bondage, what holds us in bondage, lies we believe and our own carnal nature. Then what is the ransom price, the truth to destroy lies and a new nature. How did Jesus pay this price? To whom was it paid? And why does the Father welcome us as friends? Because we have been transformed by the work of Christ into actual friends of God John 15:15) **He is satisfied with the atonement made.** He is glorified by the incarnation, the life, death, and mediation of His Son...[Why is God satisfied? For the same reason a parent is satisfied with a remedy that cures their child's leukemia—because it heals and saves us. Why is God glorified, because the lies have been exposed and the truth about God's character, methods, designs, principles have not only been comprehended, but have resulted in healing those who have been damaged by sin!] {Amazing Grace 68.3}

Bottom green question asks, "What evidence do you have of the Spirit's working in your life?"

- Ever increasing maturing in Christlike character
- Increasing insight and understanding of reality
- More love and compassion
- More opportunities to share what God has done

MONDAY

What do you understand the gifts of tongues to be as described in Acts on Pentecost?

It was the ability to speak in new known languages that the person didn't previously know.

What was the purpose of this gift?

I sure would like this gift—but evidently God doesn't think it is necessary for me.

TUESDAY

Let's read the beginning of Peter's sermon, Acts 2:16-21 from *The Remedy*:

No! This is what God's spokesperson Joel said would happen:

¹⁷" 'God says, In the last days I will pour my Spirit out on all people. Your sons and daughters will be spokespersons for me, telling the world of my Remedy; your young people will have a vision of my character of love that will motivate them to action; your elders will dream dreams of my kingdom of love.¹⁸ And in those days, I will pour out my Spirit upon my spokespersons, both men and women, and they will tell the world the truth about me in the setting of the cosmic conflict over my methods of love.¹⁹ I will grant wonders to appear in the sky, and evidences of change in the earth resulting in devastation, disaster, blood and smoke.²⁰ The sun will not give its usual light, and the moonlight will be seen as the color of blood before the day the Lord returns—that great and glorious day.²¹ And everyone who relies upon the character of the Lord, partaking the Remedy he provided, will be healed.'

Do we see people today having a vision of God's true character and methods, being motivated by love to take a message that transforms hearts to the world?

Has the gospel that has gone to the world primarily been one of healing hearts and minds, removing selfishness, restoring love, or one of getting our sins paid and avoiding punishment from God?

Is that the gospel, or does such a message actually prevent the message God wants to go to the world from going?

WEDNESDAY

Read memory text, "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Acts 2:33

Does being at the right hand of the Father speak of a physical location or a position of authority and power?

Read second paragraph, "The right hand of God is..." Do you agree? Was this the Father's recognition—or was it every other intelligent being's in heaven recognition?

Let's read Revelation chapter 5:

Then I saw **in the right hand** of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. ² And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "**Who is worthy** to break the seals and open the scroll?" ³ But no one in



heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. ⁴ I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. ⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! **See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed.** He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

⁶ **Then I saw a Lamb**, looking as if it had been slain, **standing in the center of the throne**, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ He came and took the **scroll from the right hand** of him who sat on the throne. ⁸ And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song:

“**You are worthy** to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased men for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation.
¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,
and they will reign on the earth.”

¹¹ **Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels**, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. ¹² In a loud voice they sang:

“**Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!**”

¹³ **Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:**

“**To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power for ever and ever!**”

¹⁴ The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.
NIV84

So, was this exaltation God’s recognition or the recognition of every intelligence other than God—because God always recognized it to be so?



Why is it important that the other intelligences recognize the supremacy of Christ?

The last paragraph states, “So, when Christ’s self-sacrifice was authenticated in heaven, Satan had received a decisive blow, and the Spirit was being poured out to prepare a people for the coming of Christ.”

What does the lesson mean by the authentication of Christ’s self-sacrifice? They mean God recognizing and validating it—but is that what was needed, or is that the wrong conclusion people draw when they try to understand things through imposed law lens, thus they misconstrue the true meaning and present God as authoritarian?

Consider not only Revelation 5 above, but the following from John 12:31-32:

Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.
³² But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”

What is being described?

From *The Remedy*:

Now is the time for the infection of selfishness and sin in this world to be fully diagnosed and revealed as destructive; now, Satan—the prince of this selfish world—will be driven out into the open, out of the shadows, out from behind his lies and distortions about God and God's methods, out where all can see him as the murderer he truly is, and thus out of the hearts of all who love me.³² When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all intelligences throughout the universe to me."

So, did Satan receive a decisive blow, yes, but what kind of blow? A blow to his power, and his power is the power of lies and selfishness, which infects other minds. Thus, the blow was the blow of truth and love which drove Satan and his lies out of the hearts and minds of all who value truth and love.

THURSDAY

When those who heard Peter’s speech and were convicted by the Holy Spirit asked what should they do, what were they told?

“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”²

² *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. (1984). (Ac 2:38–39). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.



What does this mean? In practical, real life terms, what is being described? How does a person do this?

From *The Remedy*:

Peter answered, "Turn away from fear and selfishness and be immersed in the Remedy—in the character of Jesus Christ—in order to be healed from sin and selfishness and be restored in heart and mind to love and unity with God. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.³⁹ This promise of healing and restoration is for you and your children, and for all humanity, no matter how far off, for God invites everyone to be healed."

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Watch “The Dr. Tim Jennings Show” on WBTN.TV Network Every Tuesday at 8pm eastern. Go to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

New Video Blogs—If you don’t follow us on Facebook, then be sure to visit our website we are posting new blogs again, the go up every Thursday.

September 14,15, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be Keynote Speaker at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown, Delaware.

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

September 30-Oct 2, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at NAD of SDA Mental Health Education retreat for pastors at Kettering, OH.

October 19, 20, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar at Camelback SDA church, in Phoenix, AZ.

November 9,10 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Houston, TX, in conjunction with the AACC

In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church
Mental Health Matters Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

The Aging Brain Thursday, August 13, 2018

What happens to the brain as we age? This presentation will examine the evidence-based lifestyle and non-pharmacological interventions which will protect your brain and diminish your risk of dementia.

Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family.

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!

The Book of Acts Lesson 3 3Q 2018

Life in the Early Church

I received this email this week:

Hi Everyone, my wife and I joined the SDA church about 8 years ago from our own personal studies. Even though we felt where we we're was correct we couldn't quite put our finger on something that's wasn't quite right. Simple questions that couldn't be answered or answers that made no sense. Since discovering come and reason it's now starting to fall more in place and make sense for us. As before our idea of a God of love was at times in conflict with what was being taught and preached. We are more settled now and encouraged. Kindest regards and God's blessing—Australia

SABBATH

Have you ever heard people talk about getting back to basics, to practicing Christianity like the early church did?

Do you think we, as Christians today, in any denomination, practice church like the Early Church did?

Which do you think has had a bigger impact on how we do church today, the Bible and the Apostles of the first century or paganism?

Frank Viola and George Barna in their book *Pagan Christianity* write:

As Christians, we are taught by our leaders to believe certain ideas and behave in certain ways. We are also encouraged to read our Bibles. But we are conditioned to read the Bible with the lens handed to us by the Christian tradition to which we belong. We are taught to obey our denomination (or movement) and never to challenge what it teaches...

Strikingly, contemporary church thought and practice have been influenced far more by postbiblical historical events than by the New Testament imperatives and examples. Yet most Christians are not conscious of the influence. Nor are they aware that it has created a slew of cherished, calcified, humanly devised traditions—all of which are routinely passed off to us as “Christian.” p. 4,5

Do you agree?

Now, SDAs will jump immediately on one of these human traditions that is passed off as Christian and which is post-biblical and for which most Christians never question—and that is? Sunday as a

day of worship.

And since that issue has been explored, written about, debated, researched, documented extensively we are not going to focus on that change. All scholars and theologians from every denomination agree that the Sabbath of the Bible is Saturday and that Sunday as a day of Christian worship began after the first century.

Let's focus on the other elements of contemporary church that also find their roots, not in the Bible, but in human and pagan traditions.

Can you think of any others?

In the lesson it points out that the early Christians sold their possessions in order to provide for each other and help spread the gospel message. If this is so, what does that suggest they did not have or do?

Did the early church build church buildings, temples, cathedrals or places of worship?

Philp Schaff, 19th Century American Church Historian writes:

That the Christians of the apostolic age erected special houses of worship is out of the question.... As the Saviour of the world was born in a stable, and ascended to heaven from a mountain, so his apostles and their successors down to the third century, preached in the streets, the markets, on mountains, in ships, sepulchers, eaves, and deserts, and in the homes of their converts. But how many thousands of costly churches and chapels have since been built and are constantly being built in all parts of the world to the honor of the crucified Redeemer, who in the days of his humiliation had no place to rest his own head! Quoted from *Pagan Christianity* p. 9

Do you think the work of spreading the gospel has been helped or hindered by the billions of dollars spent on erecting and maintain cathedrals, churches and chapels?

SDAs, because of our understanding of the heavenly sanctuary message, should be at the forefront of this truth. Viola and Barnes continue:

Ancient Judaism was centered on three elements: the Temple, the priesthood, and the sacrifices. When Jesus came, He ended all three, fulfilling them in Himself. He is the temple who embodies the new and living house made of living stones—"without hands." He is the priest who has established a new priesthood. And He is the perfect finished sacrifice. Consequently, the Temple, the professional priesthood, and the sacrifices of Judaism all passed away with the coming of Jesus Christ. Christ is the fulfillment and reality of it all. p. 10

Do you agree? Consider the next paragraph:

In Greco-Roman paganism, these three elements were also present: Pagans had their temples, their priests, and their sacrifices. It was only the Christians who did away with all of these elements. It can be rightly said that Christianity was the first non-temple-based religion ever to emerge. In the minds of the early Christians, the people—not the architecture—constituted a sacred space. The early Christians understood that they themselves—corporately—were the temple of God and the house of God. p. 11

Do you agree or disagree? Does this shed any light on the 2300-day prophecy that it will be 2300 years until the sanctuary will be cleansed?

Can you see how Satan would want people to forget that in Christianity the temple is made out of people and want them to think it is a building? Then even when the prophecy about cleansing the sanctuary is discovered, the people would misapply its meaning to inanimate material, bricks, mortar, gold, silver, and never really consider the cleansing of the sanctuary is the cleansing of their own hearts and minds!

I have read many times in the past a quote from one of the founders of the SDA church, EG White, about the temple in heaven must be made, not out of dead substance, but living souls, so I will not read that quote again. But here is a different quote, I don't remember reading in class before. Consider it in light of what we are talking about this morning:

Your faculties are separate and distinct, yet each is dependent for its success upon the other. **So each day God works with His building, stroke upon stroke, to perfect the structure, which thus grows into a holy temple for the Lord.** One stone mislaid affects the whole building. **This figure represents human character, which is to be wrought upon, point by point. There is not to be a flaw in it, for it is the Lord's building.** Every stone must be perfectly laid, that it may endure the pressure placed upon it. God warns you and every worker to take heed how you build, **so that your building may bear the test of storm and tempest because it is riveted to the eternal Rock.** Take heed how you build. Every hour may be spent in placing the stone on the sure foundation, ready for the day **of test and revelation, when we shall be seen just as we are.** [What do you think that is, the day of test and revelation? Isn't it when we find ourselves in a situation that our true character is revealed?] This warning God presents to me as essential in your case. He loves you with a love that is immeasurable. He loves your brethren in the faith, and He works with them to the same end that He works with you. **His church upon the earth is to assume divine proportions before the world, as a temple composed of living stones, every stone emitting light. This building is to be the light of the world, a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid. It is composed of stones laid close together, stone fitting to stone, making a solid building. All the stones are not of the same form or shape. Some are large, some are small, but each has its own crevice to fill. And the value of each stone is determined by the light it reflects to the world.** This is God's plan, and He would have all who profess

to believe His word fill their respective places in the great, grand work for this time...

The Lord's church is composed of His living, working agencies who derive their power to act from the Author and Finisher of their faith. The great work resting upon God's individual workers is to be carried forward in symmetrical harmony.

Manuscript Releases, Volume 2 [Nos. 97-161, 1958-1964]. 1993; 2002 (339). Ellen G. White Estate.

- Do we understand that the temple of the Lord, the heavenly sanctuary, is composed of living beings, not dead substance?
- Do we understand that the cleansing of the sanctuary is not happening in books in heaven, but in the hearts and minds of people on earth?
- Do we realize that sin is not erased out of record books but out of the hearts, minds, characters of people?
- Do we realize that those people who present messages of God's temple being a building in heaven made out of non-living matter and the investigative judgment is removing sins from books and not from people are promoting paganism, they are not promoting the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Are we practicing Christianity as the early church did?

We just took a brief look at modern church buildings, versus the true temple made of living souls—and how the mission of the true church is undermined by diverting resources into extravagant structures. This is not to say that organizations shouldn't have buildings—we need buildings for meetings, health-care, publishing, community services, education centers. The point is, do we build primarily for function—or for pride and ego, for extravagance?

Are there other elements we accept as orthodoxy that are not Biblical and have their origins in paganism?

The Pastor and Clergy as having some hierarchical authority and holding appointed position over the rest of the church membership.

The role of the pastor in the New Testament was merely a member with no more authority than anyone else, who arose organically to minister and help foster spiritual growth within the community of believers.

The role of pastor today is instead that of the pagan priest—an office set apart and instilled with arbitrary authority to, all too often, rule over the members of the church.

It was early in the second century, when the Apostles and the first missionary/evangelists were dying off that the pagan ideas of the pastor's authoritative role began to infect Christianity.

Ignatius of Antioch (35-107) was instrumental in this shift. He was the first figure in church history to take a step down the slippery slope toward a single leader in the church. We can trace the origin of the contemporary pastor and church hierarchy to him. Ignatius elevated one of the elders in each church above all the others. the elevated elder was now called the bishop. All the responsibilities that belonged to the college of elders were exercised by the bishop

In AD 107, Ignatius wrote a series of letters on his way to be martyred in Rome. Six out of seven of these letters strikes the same chord. They exalt the authority and importance of the bishop's office.

According to Ignatius, the bishop had ultimate power and should be obeyed absolutely. Consider the following excerpts from his letters: "Plainly therefore we ought to regard the bishop as the Lord Himself.... All of you follow the bishop as Jesus Christ follows the Father....Wherever the bishop shall appear, there will the people be; even as where Jesus may be.... It is not lawful apart from the bishop either to baptize or to hold a love feast; but whatever he shall approve, this is well-pleasing also to God..." *Pagan Christianity* 110,111

Do you think we have these ideas infecting Christianity today—including the SDA church? A few years ago, when I had the opportunity to discuss some of what we teach with a group of local pastors. One of the pastors said to me, in regard to questioning what the senior pastor was teaching. "You can't question what he is teaching. He is the Lord's anointed. He's the head pastor and you are not supposed to question him."

Do we have these pagan ideas within Christianity?

Do we believe only ordained pastors can baptize, conduct weddings, lead the celebration of the Lord's Supper, be in leadership within a church group?

What about ordination? Is it Biblical?

In the Bible the method was that leadership arose organically, from the obvious gifting of the Holy Spirit as people with the gifts took upon themselves the servant leadership roles. Those with the gift of healing became healers, those with the gift of hospitality invited people to their homes, those with the gift of teaching, taught and people gathered to listen. Thus, there was no board, counsel, conference, committee that gathered to nominate and select people for these offices.

The only exception was the replacing of Judas but, that selection didn't create a procedure, a hierarchy even for Apostolic selection, as the Apostle Paul was organically selected and elevated to be an Apostle by the Holy Spirit, not by a committee.

In the Early Church, there was no such thing as ordination, as in placing someone in office by a

person or committee.

Elders were acknowledged as leaders by the Apostles in Galatia (Acts 14:23), Ephesus (1Tim 3:1), and Crete (Titus 1:5). The word translated as *ordain* in the KJV in these passages does not mean placing in office, or giving authority, but simply one of acknowledging, affirming or agreeing with what has already been happening. It meant adding a blessing to those already in the office, but not placing a person into the office.

It was only later that ordination shifted and became an installation and granting of authority and giving special status of elevating a person above others in the church.

From where did Christians get their pattern of ordination? They patterned their ordination ceremony after the Roman custom of appointing men to civil office. The entire process, down to the very words, came straight from the Roman civic world.

By the fourth century, the terms used for appointment to Roman office and for Christian ordination became synonymous. When Constantine made Christianity the religion of choice, church leadership structures were buttressed by political sanction. The forms of the Old Testament priesthood were combined with Greek hierarchy. Sadly, the church was secure in this new form—just as it is today...

Christian ordination, then, came to be understood as that which constitutes the essential difference between clergy and laity. *Pagan Christianity* p. 125

Is this Biblical?

Did the Reformation change this? No, Luther held that those who preach needed to be specially trained and be ordained by the system. Sadly, Protestant Christianity continues with this pagan idea.

That brings us to the sermon—is the sermon Biblical?

Contrast today's sermon with what we find in the Bible from God's spokespersons who did give messages, like Peter on Pentecost:

Today's Sermons:

- Regularly scheduled event
- Delivered by the same person
- Delivered to a passive audience—monologue
- Cultivated form of professional speech—predetermined structure

Bible Preaching:

- Sporadic as occasion arose and opportunity presented

- Addressed special needs or situations
- Was impromptu, without a predetermined structure
- Most often included interruptions and interaction with the audience

The modern form of weekly sermonizing didn't arise in Christianity until late in the second century. So where did the modern sermon arise?

From the sophists, who were professional speakers who required payment to speak to passive audiences.

The sophists were expert debaters. They were masters at using emotional appeals, physical appearance, and clever language to “sell” their arguments. In time, the style, form, and oratorical skills of the sophists became more prized than their accuracy. This spawned a class of men who became masters of fine phrases... The truths they preached were abstract rather than truths that were practiced in their own lives...

The sophists identified themselves by the special clothing they wore. Some had fixed residence where they gave regular sermons to the same audience.

How did the Greek sermon find its way into the Christian church? Around the third century a vacuum was created when the mutual ministry faded from the body of Christ... To fill their absence, the clergy began to emerge. Open meetings began to die out, and church gatherings became more and more liturgical...

As a hierarchical structure began to take root, the idea of a “religious specialist” emerged. In the face of these changes, the functioning Christians had trouble fitting into this evolving ecclesiastical structure. There was no place for them to exercise their gifts. By the fourth century, the church had become fully institutionalized.” *ibid.* p. 89,91

There is a lot more—but the point is, do we read the Scripture for what it says, or do we have certain blinders on, from paganism, from tradition, so we think we are reading something that isn't even there?

The greatest infection of Christian thought by paganism, isn't the forms, styles, titles, liturgies, dress, but the way we have come to view God's law as functioning no different than human law, and therefore God's character as the enforcer of His law is presented to be no different than any human dictator. Penal legal theologies are pagan in origin.

And the mission of God's remnant people is to worship the Designer, Him who made all reality, and return to functioning in harmony with God and His designs. We must free ourselves from the multitude of ideas that keep us captive and experience genuine healing of our minds, hearts and characters to be like Jesus. This will only happen when we come back to the truth of God as our Creator and Healer—and whose laws are design laws!

SUNDAY

The lesson suggests that the Apostles did their *teaching* at the Temple, and *fellowshipped* in homes. Are they suggesting that Christianity was a system of church services, going to edifices, and that they did not teach in homes?

Is this accurate, or this again evidence of the infection of paganism, with its imposed law construct, and its authoritarian rule. In other words, the authors are invested in introducing ideas to make one loyal to the building, the center of church commerce, the business of church, rather than the actual healing of hearts and minds?

The lesson state that the apostles teachings were authoritative—what does this mean?

What made the apostles teachings authoritative?

When Peter refused to socialize with the uncircumcised fellows, were his actions authoritative? Why not, he was an apostle wasn't he?

The lesson suggests that the early Christians still attended *daily* temple ceremonies—is this most likely true?

I have serious reservations about this—first of all the New Testament repeatedly points out that the temple ceremonies were not necessary any longer; second, the apostles traveled and were often not near the temple. Finally, if they went to the temple was it because they were seeking to participate in the ceremony, or because that was where the people were who would be open to their gospel message?

But the lesson authors may have a different view....Read first paragraph **MONDAY's** lesson: "In Acts 3:1, Peter and John..."

Let's read Acts 3:1 "One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon."

Does this say they went up daily? Does this say they were going up to participate in the Jewish worship? Or does this merely say they were going up at a particular time?

The lesson cites several other passages in Acts suggesting these indicate that the Apostles and the early church were committed to the Jewish religious traditions. Let's examine these texts:

Acts 20:16: "Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.?"

What does this text say and what conclusions can we draw? Was this about Judaism, or was Pentecost now a Christian day? In fact, if it were Jewish wouldn't they have said the Feast of Weeks?

From the SDA Bible commentary on Acts 20:16:

Just why Paul was so eager to be at Jerusalem for Pentecost is not recorded. Perhaps the gathering of Jewish Christians who would be there at that time from all over Palestine would make possible a more efficient distribution of the relief offering he was taking to Jerusalem. Or perhaps because of the outpouring of the Spirit at a previous Pentecost, this feast held a special place in Paul's emotions.¹

Doesn't sound terribly devoted to the Jewish traditions to me—in fact Paul was quite ardent in promoting Christ and not Jewish traditions.

Acts 21:17-26 is about Paul's attempt to reach the obstinate Jews by doing a purification ceremony at the temple—NOT because Paul thought it was necessary, but because he was hoping to placate the offended non-believing Jews. And how did this work out?

So, it seems the New Testament church was distinctly severing itself from Jewish traditions, not embracing them. However, the Apostles did try and help the Jews understand the true meaning of their ceremonies and transition the people away from ceremony to the reality in Jesus.

But, just because they sought to reach those in that tradition, doesn't mean they wanted to perpetuate the symbolic and traditional—they didn't! The Apostles wanted people to enter the reality of Jesus!

TUESDAY

When the Jews asked Peter by what authority he was preaching, what were they asking?

What kind of authority are the Jewish leaders asking about?

Aren't they asking about the authority of office, of position, of title?

Is that the type of authority God wants us to recognize?

For instance, when Martin Luther raised his questions, how did the church authority respond? Did all parties agree that the weight of evidence and truth should be authoritative, or that church committee, counsel, position should be authoritative?

¹ Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1980). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 6, p. 389). Review and Herald Publishing Association.

What about today—when we raise questions do church leaders typically respond by pursuing the authority of truth or by holding to the authority of position, office, and church tradition?

When we say the Bible is authoritative, what do we mean? Is it authoritative like a the Major League Baseball rule book is authoritative over baseball?

In Baseball what makes the rulebook authoritative—the rule itself—if it is in the rulebook, it has authority. Is this how the Bible works, if a directive is in the Bible it has authority because it is in the Bible, or is it in the Bible because it has authority? Is the Bible merely a code book, or is it a book of enlightenment, a book designed to teach us how reality works, so that we develop the ability to discern the right from the wrong (Heb 5:14).

"Young men should search the Scriptures for themselves. **They are not to feel that it is sufficient for those older in experience to find out the truth; that the younger ones can accept it from them as authority.** . . . (MYP 258)

"We must study the truth for ourselves. **No man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who he is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a criterion for us.** We are to counsel together, and to be subject one to another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us, in order to learn what is truth. **Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment.** We must individually develop a character that will stand the test in the day of God." *Testimonies to Ministers* 109,110; first published in *Gospel Workers*, 1892 ed., pp. 128,129; cf. 2RH 311:3:1 (RH, June 18, 1889); CW 45; ST, Feb. 6, 1893

"**Satan** is constantly endeavoring to attract attention to man in the place of God. **He leads the people to look to bishops, to pastors, to professors of theology, as their guides, instead of searching the Scriptures to learn their duty for themselves.** . . . (RC 369)

"**The people of God have educated themselves in such a way that they have come to look to those in positions of trust as guardians of truth, and have placed men where God should be.** When perplexities have come upon them, instead of seeking God, they have gone to human sources for help, and have received only such help as man can give. . . . **The president of the Conference is not to do the thinking for all the people. He has not an immortal brain, but has capabilities and powers like any other man. . . . When men place the president of the Conference in the place of God, . . . they are doing that which is exactly opposite to what Christ has told them to do.**" *Review and Herald*, Aug. 7, 1894 (3RH 173:1:1 - 3:2 and 174:1:1)

Do we believe, the SDA church the Bible is authoritative? Or, only those portions of the Bible that we can find an EGW quote to support?

Read bottom green section, "Think about the desire..." What would motivate people to use coercive

power, the authority of office over another person?

Is it not fear?

- Fear that they might lose power
- Fear that they might be wrong
- Fear of what others will think
- Fear of what will happen to the institution
- Fear of being condemned by God for not upholding the standards

WEDNESDAY

What do you think of the story of Ananias and Sapphira?

Does the Bible say God killed them?

Does the Bible say God punished them?

What does the Bible say? That they lied, they were confronted on their lies by Peter citing the authority of the Holy Spirit and that they died.

What are the possibilities?

- Some suggest that it was punishment for sin—why can we be 100% positive this was not the case?
 - What is the punishment for sin? Eternal death—did they die eternally or will they arise again?
 - Does the punishment for sin occur before the Great White Throne Judgment or after? Had that judgment happened yet?
 - Then, this cannot be punishment for sin—it must be something else
- It was natural causes—why should we doubt it was simply a case of dying of old age, or body wearing out?
 - Because the circumstances are inconsistent with a natural death
- Dying from shock—why is this a possibility?
 - Because it is documented through history that people can die when confronted with a sudden shock, or a powerful shaman. The source of the shock being the confrontation by Peter and the truth. But we cannot know for certain because we are not told.
- God acting to put them to sleep, why is this also possible?
 - Because God at times has acted to put people to sleep who were obstacles to His plan to save and heal the human race.
 - What might have happened had Ananias and Sapphira not died then? Might they have entered into some leadership position and the early church had been corrupted with greed? Might God have diagnosed, or judged, that a therapeutic excision of their influence was necessary for the health of the early church? If this is so, then recognize



such an action was an act of love, not anger, and was designed to heal, not destroy and was not a punishment for sin.

Here is commentary from a book entitled *The Acts of the Apostles* what do you think?

Ananias and Sapphira grieved the Holy Spirit by yielding to feelings of covetousness... They thought they had been too hasty, that they ought to reconsider their decision. They talked the matter over, and decided not to fulfill their pledge. **They saw, however, that those who parted with their possessions to supply the needs of their poorer brethren, were held in high esteem among the believers;** and ashamed to have their brethren know that their selfish souls grudged that which they had solemnly dedicated to God, they deliberately decided to sell their property and pretend to give all the proceeds into the general fund, but really to keep a large share for themselves. **Thus they would secure their living from the common store and at the same time gain the high esteem of their brethren.** {AA 72.1}

But God hates hypocrisy and falsehood. Ananias and Sapphira practiced fraud in their dealing with God; they lied to the Holy Spirit, **and their sin was visited with swift and terrible judgment...** [does this say punishment or judgment? And who judged them? Peter certainly did, and God did and was the judgment similar to a judgment you might have if you discovered your child smoking—would you make a judgment? And what would it be? Do we hear words like judgment only through the imposed law lens, or design law lens? God judged it unhealthy and judged it would hurt the early church, and judged that the most therapeutic thing to do would be nip it in the bud to protect the healing remedy!] {AA 72.2}

Infinite Wisdom saw that this signal manifestation of the wrath of God was necessary to guard the young church from becoming demoralized. [What is the wrath of God according to Scripture? God giving people up to reap what they have chosen. And what was the reason, to punish their sin or to protect the young church?] Their numbers were rapidly increasing. **The church would have been endangered if, in the rapid increase of converts, men and women had been added who, while professing to serve God, were worshiping mammon.** This judgment testified that men cannot deceive God, that He detects the hidden sin of the heart, and **that He will not be mocked.** It was designed as a warning to the church, to lead them to avoid pretense and hypocrisy, and to beware of robbing God. {AA 73.4}

God cannot be mocked, what Bible verse comes to mind and does it give a insight into why God cannot be mocked?

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.⁸ The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; Gal 6:7,8

Why is it God cannot be mocked? Because of design law, you reap what you sew. Was this true for Ananias and Sapphira?



What does one reap when one chooses to separate themselves from God? Death, why is it we don't all reap it instantly? Because God graciously intervenes to suspend such consequences giving us more time to reconsider. But, in Ananias and Sapphira's case, God let them have their choice.

THURSDAY

The story talks about the second arrest and Gamaliel's advice to the Sanhedrin—what do you think of his advice?

Read bottom pink section, "What does this story tell us about..." How can you tell whether the counsel you are getting is good counsel or not?

What about the counsel Rehoboam received?

So, how can you tell whether the counsel you are getting is good or not?

- By the office of the person giving the counsel—conference president, university president, pastor, priest, pope?
- By the education—theologian, doctor, lawyer?
- By their relationship, mother, father, sibling, spouse?
- By their church affiliation—member of your denomination?
- By their political leanings?
- How about by whether their counsel is in harmony with how reality works, with God's design laws, methods and principles, harmonized with Scripture and real experience—that you prayerfully study and comprehend?

How many church leaders want us to use the last one?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Francesca had her baby: For those who haven't heard, Francesca Brewster our Administrative Director, had her baby: Miles Joseph Brewster was born 6/11/2018 at 10:40pm. He was 7 lbs 14 oz; 20.5 inches. Mom and baby are healthy and happy.

The Remedy APP: Thanks to all of you, our supporters, The Remedy App is now available for free for Android and Apple devices. It is also available on the multi-Bible app, My Bible by Denys Dolganenko at mybible.zone

Each Tuesday watch our new TV Program—The Dr. Tim Jennings Show on WBTN.TV Network. Go to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

New Video Blogs—If you don't follow us on Facebook, then be sure to visit our website we are posting new blogs again, the go up every Thursday.

September 14,15, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be Keynote Speaker at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown, Delaware.

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

September 30-Oct 2, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at NAD of SDA Mental Health Education retreat for pastors at Kettering, OH.

October 19, 20, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar at Camelback SDA church, in Phoenix, AZ.

November 9,10 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Houston, TX, in conjunction with the AACC

In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church
Mental Health Matters Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

The Aging Brain Thursday, August 13, 2018

What happens to the brain as we age? This presentation will examine the evidence-based lifestyle and non-pharmacological interventions which will protect your brain and diminish your risk of dementia.

Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family.

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!



The Book of Acts Lesson 4 3Q 2018

The First Church Leaders

Before we get into the material for this lesson, given the title for this lesson, and the importance of the story I wanted to follow up from Wednesday of last week about Ananias and Sapphira:

What do you think of the story of Ananias and Sapphira?

It is often presented that God punished them for their sin, but does the Bible say God punished them?

What does the Bible say? That they lied and they were confronted on their lies by Peter, citing the authority of the Holy Spirit and that they died.

What are the possibilities?

- Some suggest that it was punishment for sin—why can we be 100% positive that what happened was not punishment from God?
 - What is the punishment for sin? Eternal death—did they die eternally or will they rise again?
 - Does the punishment for sin occur before the Great White Throne Judgment or after? Had that judgment happened yet?
 - Then, this cannot be punishment for sin—it must be something else!
- It was natural causes—why should we doubt that their death was simply a case of dying of old age, or the body wearing out?
 - Because the circumstances are inconsistent with a natural death
- Dying from shock—why is this a possibility?
 - Because it is documented through history that people can die when confronted with a sudden shock, or a powerful shaman. The source of the shock being the confrontation by Peter and the truth. But we cannot know for certain because we are not told.
- God acting to put them to sleep as a therapeutic measure to protect the infant church; why is this a possibility?
 - Because God at times has acted to put people to sleep who were obstacles to His plan to save and heal the human race.
 - What might have happened had Ananias and Sapphira not died then? Might they have entered into some leadership position and the early church have been corrupted with greedy leaders? Might God have diagnosed, or judged, that a therapeutic excision of their influence was necessary for the health of the early church? If this is so, then recognize such an action was an act of love, not anger, and was designed to heal, not destroy and was not punishment for sin.

Here is commentary from a book entitled *The Acts of the Apostles* what do you think?



Ananias and Sapphira grieved the Holy Spirit by yielding to feelings of covetousness... They thought they had been too hasty, that they ought to reconsider their decision. They talked the matter over, and decided not to fulfill their pledge. **They saw, however, that those who parted with their possessions to supply the needs of their poorer brethren, were held in high esteem among the believers;** and ashamed to have their brethren know that their selfish souls grudged that which they had solemnly dedicated to God, they deliberately decided to sell their property and pretend to give all the proceeds into the general fund, but really to keep a large share for themselves. **Thus they would secure their living from the common store and at the same time gain the high esteem of their brethren.** {AA 72.1}

But God hates hypocrisy and falsehood. Ananias and Sapphira practiced fraud in their dealing with God; they lied to the Holy Spirit, **and their sin was visited with swift and terrible judgment...** [does this say punishment or judgment? Do we hear words like judgment only through the imposed law lens? Does it mean something different through design law lens? God judged it unhealthy and judged it would hurt the early church, and judged that the most therapeutic thing to do would be nip it in the bud to protect the spread of the healing remedy!] {AA 72.2}

Infinite Wisdom saw that this signal manifestation of the wrath of God was necessary to guard the young church from becoming demoralized. [What is the wrath of God according to Scripture? God giving people up to reap what they have chosen. What is the reason, given by this author, for the wrath? To punish their sin or to protect the young church?] Their numbers were rapidly increasing. **The church would have been endangered if, in the rapid increase of converts, men and women had been added who, while professing to serve God, were worshipping mammon.** This judgment testified that men cannot deceive God, that He detects the hidden sin of the heart, and **that He will not be mocked.** It was designed as a **warning to the church,** to lead them to avoid pretense and hypocrisy, and to beware of robbing God. {AA 73.4} [Is a warning to the living the same as punishment to the dead?]

God cannot be mocked, what Bible verse does this idea bring mind and does it give any insight into why God cannot be mocked?

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.⁸ The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; Gal 6:7,8

Why is it God cannot be mocked? Because of design law, you reap what you sow. You cannot pretend to give up cigarette smoking, yet keep smoking, and still experience good health—why not? What laws determine the outcome? Who made the laws and sustains the operation of those laws?

Was this true for Ananias and Sapphira?

What does one reap when one chooses to separate themselves from God? Death, why is it we don't all reap death instantly? Because God graciously intervenes to suspend such consequences giving us more



time to reconsider. But, in Ananias and Sapphira's case, God let them have their choice.

SABBATH

Read the entire day's lesson: "Many converts at Pentecost..." What lesson do you gain from this?

Could the religious traditions of Judaism have been an obstacle to spreading the gospel?

Could people have been more interested in the forms of religion, carry out the ceremony in the right way, dressing in the right clothing, washing their hands in the right way—than actually experiencing renewal of heart and mind to be like Jesus?

What about today? Could the traditions of Christianity—the forms of religion, the way we practice Christianity be obstacles to actually spreading the gospel?

Could people be more interested in dressing the right way, not wearing jewelry, eating the right foods, going to church on the right day, the right method of baptism, than actually healing the hearts of people to be like Jesus?

Now, does this mean that there was no godly purpose or benefit to the religious ceremonies of Judaism? No, there was godly purpose in their institution—then what was the problem? When the object lesson, the ritual, the teaching tool **became more important than the reality** to which they were designed to lead people.

And in Christianity—does this mean there is no godly purpose to many of our traditions and rituals and forms? No, there is godly purpose to many of them, but the problem becomes when any of these elements, even when given by God, like the Sabbath, become more important than saving and healing people.

Why is it that the forms of religion, the rituals, ceremonies, traditions, practices can come to supersede the actual mission of bringing people to know Jesus as their Savior?

The motivation of fear—when we are afraid, where do our motives focus? On self, on not sinning, on not getting in trouble, on not having a demerit against our name. And if this is our motive what do we tend to focus upon? The right way to behave, keeping the rules. And is there a particular theology that harmonizes with the fear-based way of reading the Bible? The penal/legal systems of theology.

But when fear has been replaced with love for God and others—then what is the primary motive? Is it not to glorify God and help other people, even if it hurts us? Thus we don't focus on what we can't do, but our focus changes to finding all the opportunities to glorify God and reach other people with the saving truth about Jesus. This is design law theology!



SUNDAY

The lesson points us to Acts 6, when the Greek speaking Jews complained that their widows were being neglected in the distribution of resources.

How would you handle this?

How did the Apostles handle this?

Why were people selected to take charge of distributing the subsistence fund? Because the Apostles needed to focus on spreading the truth about Jesus. Could this conflict have been instigated by Satan to distract the Apostles away from their primary mission?

Was the selection of people to take care of this task, the setting up of a church hierarchy?

Were these seven people given some ecclesiastical authority to rule over the other members of the church?

What were they tasked with doing?

So, was this done to not only have improved equity in distribution but to take administrative burdens off the Apostles?

This is why our ministry has administrative support—some of you have send in emails that might not have gotten answered as quickly. This is because Francesca is on maternity leave and I am focused on many other responsibilities. Please be patient with us. Francesca is due back the beginning of August.

Read last paragraph, “The candidates were...” From where did the authority for these 7 originate? Who bestowed such authority on them?

Who selected them for this role?

Was this a top-down selection or was this a recognition from the community of people who possessed qualities to fulfill the role needed?

And the Apostles role in their selection—to select or to acknowledge, agree with, and give a blessing to those selected?

MONDAY

Read Acts 6:8-15:

Stephen, a man whose character radiated the grace and beauty of God and who was filled with power from heaven, performed many miracles and incredible wonders among the people.⁹ But



Jews from Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia and Asia, who were members of the Synagogue of Freeman, opposed him. They tried to debate with Stephen,¹⁰ but their arguments couldn't stand against his wisdom or the Spirit who empowered his words.

¹¹So they bribed some men to slander him. They said, "We heard Stephen teach lies about Moses and God."¹²By doing this, they agitated the people, church leaders, and theologians who preferred a legal theology. These people arrested Stephen and brought him before the Jewish High Court.¹³They brought in their bribed witnesses who perjured themselves by saying, "This man is always speaking against this temple and God's written law."¹⁴We even heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy this building, and do away with what Moses taught us."

¹⁵All those sitting in the courtroom turned and looked closely at Stephen, and they saw his face radiating light, like that of an angel. *The Remedy*

What was the basis of the allegations?

- Were they alleging Stephen was teaching things that caused people to become criminals?
- Were they alleging Stephen was teaching people that God did not exist?
- Were they alleging that Stephen was denying that Moses was called by God and a deliverer of Israel?

What were they accusing Stephen of?

Wasn't it that he was undermining their interpretation of the meaning of it all?

And how did they interpret it?

What was Stephen teaching they didn't like?

The opponents to Stephen held to an imposed law construct of legal application and Stephen was teaching that all the Old Testament ceremonies and teachings were metaphor of a larger reality found in Jesus and to applied in the hearts and minds of believers.

What about today, do we find similar conflicts in the church today?

What happens when we teach the 10 Commandments have not always existed but were added after humans sinned?

Do some people accuse us, just like Stephen was accused, of denying the law of God?

What is the truth—have the 10 Commandments always existed or were they added later?

What evidence do we have to be able to know?



- What kind of law is God's law? Is it imposed rules or design law?
 - "But in heaven, service is **not rendered in the spirit of legality**. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, **the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of.**" {Mar 79.7}
 - What kind of law can exist and be applied to the lives of intelligent beings without their awareness of it?
 - When Newton described and wrote down the law of gravity what do you think people might have said? "A law of gravity—wow, that never occurred to me, I never thought it was a law."
- Can design laws, like the laws of physics, be fully understood by studying them from a textbook, and seeing their formulas written out on paper?
- Can the law of love be fully comprehended or understood on stone?
- Where, according to Scripture, is God's law supposed to be written? Heb 8, in the heart—why? Because it is a living law, the law upon which life is founded!
- Why did God write it on stone? Because of sin the law was no longer on the heart.
- Did the angels in heaven, who followed Satan, sin? Does that mean they broke the law? What law? Was it the 10 Commandments?
- Did angels in heaven have a law not to commit adultery or to honor their mothers and fathers written down somewhere?
- Was there an ark in heaven made out of wood, covered in gold, containing pieces of stone with 10 rules on them for the angels to refer to?
- When was the Sabbath created? Were angels in existence before earth was created? Job 38

Are you confident, based on reasoning out the evidence, that the 10 Commandments were not always in existence, but added later?

One of the founders of the SDA church wrote:

The law of God existed before man was created. [Why might some jump on that very true statement and say, "See the 10 Commandments were always in existence? Because they don't understand the difference between design law and imposed law. And think the 10 Commandments are the eternal law of God, rather than a mere distilled down version written for sinful humans] The angels were governed by it. Satan fell because he transgressed **the principles of God's government**. After Adam and Eve were created, God made known to them His law. **It was not then written**, but was rehearsed to them by Jehovah. {SR 145.1}

The Sabbath of the fourth commandment was instituted in Eden. [What does instituted mean?] After God had made the world and created man upon the earth, He made the Sabbath for man. [What does made mean? So was the Sabbath in existence before it was made or instituted? Then could the Sabbath commandment exist before the Sabbath itself?] After Adam's sin and fall nothing was taken from the law of God. **The principles** of the Ten Commandments **existed before the fall** and were of a character suited to the condition of a



holy order of beings. After the fall the principles of those precepts were not changed, **but additional precepts were given to meet man in his fallen state.** {SR 145.2}

I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments... "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). In this scripture, **the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law.** {ISM 233, 234}

So what would it mean today, if we present the idea that God's law is design law, that humans are out of harmony with God's design and in a terminal condition and that God works through Christ to heal and restore; and in that understanding the 10 Commandments were added as a diagnostic instrument to help us realize our condition, but not as a remedy and when God has His way in our lives the purpose of the 10 Commandments becomes obsolete because we are restored to harmony with God's law; and then some stand up and accuse us of undermining the law?

Those who oppose what we teach oppose the Creator God and His design law of love and just like those who accused Stephen do so because they have accepted the lie of imposed law.

Some who oppose us may be like Saul of Tarsus, still seeking the truth, but so steeped in tradition they can't yet see it. So, we don't judge our opponents to be eternally lost, only that like Saul they are fighting against the true message of Jesus Christ!

Read the last paragraph, "Indeed, by Acts..." Do you hear Stephen acting as an attorney to legally prosecute the people?

Or is Stephen acting like a herald of truth to bring them to conviction for their healing and restoration?

It all depends on which law lens you read Scripture through.

WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph, "While Stephen stood before..." Can someone explain to me where they get this idea?

I actually have no idea where they have come up with the idea described here?

Is anyone aware of any Scripture to support this idea? I am not. Yes, we have Scripture that Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father—but we don't have any evidence that Jesus is in heaven acting in a judicial manner to condemn people on earth. This is the lie of imposed law. In fact, the evidence we have is just the opposite:



Hebrews 10:19-23:

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since Jesus died to bring us the truth about God and to eradicate selfishness from humanity, we no longer need to be afraid but can confidently enter the Most Holy Place—God's very presence—²⁰ because Christ's death revealed the truth about God and ripped open the veil of lies told by Satan that blinded our minds, and destroyed the infection of selfishness that separated us from him.²¹ And since we have this great ministering priest who ministers the truth to all,²² let the truth permeate us, cleansing, transforming and changing us as we draw near to God in heart, mind, purpose, method, principle and character,²³ so that we may have ultimate confidence and trust in him who has revealed himself to be completely trustworthy. *The Remedy*

Does the picture of God presented in the lesson, of Jesus standing in heaven to find fault in order to condemn and prosecute us make you trust God more? Does it increase your love? What impact does it have upon you? Does it make you more fearful, more distrusting, seek greater protection from God? Does it make you more self-focused, worried about what you are doing so you don't get in trouble?

Who wants your mind corrupted like this? This idea of Jesus and God as our prosecutors seeking to find fault in order to punish is Satan's lie from the beginning. Our role today as God's representatives is to present the truth to free people from such distortions—to call them back to worship the Designer who made the heavens and earth and seas.

Read fourth paragraph, "This explains why..." What do they mean by salvation being mediated through the nation of Israel?

How is this true and how is it not true?

- Salvation being through Jesus and Jesus being born to a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, then yes, as Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, "Salvation is of the Jews."
- But, if it means that one had to become a member of the nation of Israel to be saved, then no it didn't mean that.
- If they mean one had to have the Jewish religion presented to them to be saved, then no it didn't mean that.

Bottom paragraph points out that Stephen, when being stoned, prayed for those who were killing him, then the lesson states, "Only a person with a superior character and unwavering faith could do such a thing, a powerful manifestation of his faith and the reality of Christ in his life."

This is a powerful evidence of God's goal—to do what? To eradicate the survival of the fittest drive, the me-first drive, the kill or be killed drive from human heart and replace it with love for others such that we would give our lives for others. This is not natural, it is supernatural and a gift of God as we partake of the divine nature.

Do penal legal theologies in which we view God as the source of inflicted punishment reduce fear,



reduce the focus on self, reduced the survival drive, or do such theologies inflame the infection of fear and selfishness?

THURSDAY

Read fourth paragraph, “The unexpected conversion...” Do you remember Peter having a difficult time accepting non-Jews and his vision of all the animals?

What does this mean that the apostles had to be convinced that non-Jews were to be accepted as full members of the body of Christ?

Doesn't it mean that the apostles didn't know everything, that they still had errors in their understanding, that even after their time with Jesus, after their conversion, after the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, they still had ideas in their head, in their comprehension that were not correct?

Does the fact they had errors in their understanding mean that they were not inspired by God?

So a person can be inspired by God and have errors in their understanding?

What does this mean for us today?

What about any other human being who we believe has been inspired by the Holy Spirit, do we allow that they could have had errors and had to grow and give up some previously held ideas?

Many in the SDA church believe EGW was inspired by God with prophetic insights. Any evidence that she grew in her understanding of Bible truth over time?

- First vision was 1844
- Sabbath keeping came about between 1848-1850
- It wasn't until 1855 that Sabbath keeping was understood to begin at sunset on Friday
- The Great Controversy theme didn't happen until 1858
- Health reform vision 1863
- Righteousness by faith message 1888 followed by a move away from legal understanding of salvation writing:
 - *Steps to Christ* 1892 (which the church did not publish)
 - *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* 1896
 - *The Desire of Ages* 1898
 - *Christ's Object Lessons* 1900
 - *Education* 1903
 - *Ministry of Healing* 1905

What does all of this mean?



Only God is infinite, all other beings, including sinless angels, are finite and do not possess all truth, all understanding, all wisdom, all knowledge, and thus every person must think for themselves and not trust others to think for them.

When we read Scripture, or any other writing we find inspired, we must compare that with other Scripture and God's laws in science and nature, and real-life experience—i.e. through design law lenses to come to the healthiest understanding.

FRIDAY

read and discuss question 2

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Check our website for new chapters of *The Remedy* the Psalms will be going up slowly as they are completed and edited. When an entire book of the Old Testament is complete then it will be added to the app and when you update the app you will get the new book. Thank you for your prayers and support as I work on this project.

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Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family.

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum



understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!



The Book of Acts Lesson 5 3Q 2018

The Conversion of Paul

by Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

Last week I mentioned that the 10 Commandments were written on Sapphire, and I would give the basis for that idea this week:

10 Commandments Written on Sapphire:

Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up ¹⁰ and saw **the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself.** Exodus 24:9, 10

Note two verses later:

The Lord said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction.” Exodus 24:12

Literal reading, “**Tablets of THE stone...**”

What stone, *the* only stone referenced in the text, which was two verses before, the sapphire stone.

Now, note Numbers 15:37-39:

Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁸ “Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put **a blue thread in the tassels** of the corners. ³⁹ And you shall have **the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments** of the Lord and do them...

What was the thread to remind them of? God’s commandments! and Why blue thread? Because the 10 Commandments were written on Sapphire, blue stone!

The Harlot of Revelation:

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

³ So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast *which was* full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ **The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and**



pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.⁵ And on her forehead a name *was* written:

MYSTERY,
BABYLON THE GREAT,
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.
Rev 17:1-5

The Harlot of Revelation is adorned in Purple, Scarlet and Gold:

The High Priest of God wore four colors:

“They shall take the **gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread**, and the fine linen, and they shall make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, *and* scarlet *thread*, and fine woven linen, artistically worked. Exodus 28: 5,6

What color does the Harlot **not** have? Blue—which means the false church rejects the law of God, which means they reject the law of love, design law and have imposed law instead.

The High Priest wore a breast plate with 12 stones—what did that represent? The peoples of the earth tied to the High Priest’s heart—and what was used to tie this symbol of the people of the earth to the High Priest’s heart?

They shall bind the breastplate by means of its rings to the rings of the ephod, **using a blue cord**, so that it is above the intricately woven band of the ephod, and so that the breastplate does not come loose from the ephod. Exodus 28:28

And what does the blue cord represent? **The law of love!** God’s law of love is what binds us to Him, only His design does this.

From the book *Desire of Ages*:

The yoke that binds to service is the law of God. The great law of love revealed in Eden, **proclaimed upon Sinai**, and in the new covenant **written in the heart, is that which binds the human worker to the will of God**. If we were left to follow our own inclinations, to go just where our will would lead us, we should fall into Satan's ranks and become possessors of his attributes. Therefore God confines us to His will, which is high, and noble, and elevating. He desires that we shall patiently and wisely take up the duties of service. The yoke of service Christ Himself has borne in humanity. He said, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." John 6:38. Love for God, zeal for His glory, and love for fallen humanity, brought Jesus to earth to suffer and to die. This was the controlling power of His life. This principle He bids us adopt. {DA 329.3}



The false religions of the world, including false Christianity deny God's design law of love; they don't deny the 10 Commandments but they replace the 10 Commandments with an imposed view of the law—rules enacted and enforced by a ruling authority. Thus, they teach religious obligations, ceremonies, rituals, at the expense of loving people. Thus, they are represented by the Harlot with no blue thread.

SABBATH

Read last paragraph, "Paul's previous actions..." If you were to pick one Apostle—and we consider there were 13—the 12, minus Judas, plus Matthias who replaced Judas, and then Paul. If you were to pick one, based on the records we have, that you would say was the most active, most persistent, most determined, most aggressive in spreading the gospel which of the 13 would you suggest?

Do you think Paul's history of persecuting Christians before he was converted contributed to his passion as an Apostle? In other words, do you think that if Paul had merely converted like James or John, without having persecuted the church first, do you think he would have been just as aggressive in sharing the gospel? Or was his own disappointment with himself a motivator, something he might have felt he needed to "undo" "disprove" "overcome" "make up for" not to in some way earn salvation, but in a way that repaired or made up for the harm he caused others?

Might Paul have thought—"I know there is nothing I can do that will in any way earn my salvation, that is only through the free remedy given to me by Jesus. But, I know my previous actions turned people away from Jesus and I want to do everything I can to bring at least as many people back to Jesus as I drove away?"

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Paul was..." Measured by the standard of his day, what kind of education did Paul receive?

Would this be equivalent to going to seminary today? And did Paul go to a seminary that would have been considered pagan or orthodox?

Did Paul's seminary training prepare him to be an Apostle of Jesus, or put obstructions in his mind to becoming an Apostle of Jesus, or neither or both? Here is a commentary from the book *Desire of Ages* regarding the quality of the schools in Christ's day:

In the days of Christ the town or city that did not provide for the religious instruction of the young was regarded as under the curse of God. Yet the **teaching had become formal. Tradition had in a great degree supplanted the Scriptures.** True education would lead the youth to "seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him." Acts 17:27. But the Jewish teachers gave their attention to **matters of ceremony. The mind was crowded with**



material that was worthless to the learner, and that would not be recognized in the higher school of the courts above. The **experience** which is obtained **through a personal acceptance of God's word had no place** in the educational system. Absorbed in the **round of externals**, the students found no quiet hours to spend with God. They did not hear His voice speaking to the heart. In their search after knowledge, they turned away from the Source of wisdom. The great essentials of the service of God were neglected. The **principles of the law were obscured**. That which was regarded as superior education was the **greatest hindrance** to real development. Under the training of the rabbis the powers of the youth were repressed. Their minds became cramped and narrow. {DA 69.3}

And from Friday's lesson we read, quoting from a book *Life Sketches of Paul*:

Christ had commanded his disciples to go and teach all nations; **but the previous teachings which they had received from the Jews made it difficult for them to fully comprehend the words of their Master**, and therefore they were slow to act upon them. They called themselves the children of Abraham, and regarded themselves as the heirs of divine promise. **It was not until several years after the Lord's ascension that their minds were sufficiently expanded to clearly understand the intent of Christ's words**, that they were to labor for the conversion of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. p. 38

Did God lead Israel to set up the schools of the prophets? What happened? Consider this quote regarding the advent of Christ:

The angels from heaven did not come to the school of the prophets and sing their anthems over the Temple or synagogues, but they went to those who were humble enough to receive the message. They sang the glad tidings of a Saviour over Bethlehem's plains while the great, the rulers, and the honorable were left in darkness because they were perfectly satisfied with their position and felt no need of a piety greater than that which they possessed. **Teachers in the schools of the prophets, the scribes and priests and rulers, were the worst persecutors of Christ**. Those who made the highest pretensions to spiritual light were the very ones who slighted and rejected and crucified Christ. {Christ Triumphant 78.4}

What about our Christians schools today and our seminaries, is it possible they could fall into the same trap? Could our Christian schools today be indoctrinating minds into traditions and views of God that actually make it harder for the students, the graduates to hear the voice of God, to understand God's principles? Is it possible that today the "worst persecutors of Christ" are theologians and religious leaders?

Now, let's not be all-or-nothing thinkers. In Christ's day, there was in the Sanhedrin, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus—two godly men who were educated by the system. Yet, the majority of the leadership rejected Christ and instigated His crucifixion.



In Paul's case, after his conversion on the Damascus road was Paul immediately ready to be an Apostle for Jesus? What did Paul need first? He spent three years in the desert being re-educated by Jesus—why did Paul need this if he was already seminary trained? Here is one commentator's view:

Here, in the solitude of the desert, Paul had ample opportunity for quiet **study and meditation**. He calmly reviewed his past experience and made sure work of **repentance**. He sought God with all his heart, resting not until he knew for a certainty that his repentance was accepted and his sin pardoned. He longed for the assurance that Jesus would be with him in his coming ministry. **He emptied his soul of the prejudices and traditions** that had hitherto shaped his life, and **received instruction from the Source of truth. Jesus communed with him** and established him in the faith, bestowing upon him a rich measure of wisdom and grace. {*Acts of the Apostles* 125.3}

So, does this mean Christian education is a bad thing? NO! I am very thankful for my Christian education—however, it wasn't until I could throw off the false imposed law lens, the lie of penal substitution and see the truth of God as Creator and His laws as design laws that I was actually fit to write and teach. Then, with the new perspective, I have been able to access the database of Bible stories and facts and it all fell into place. So, my Christian education was a tremendous blessing, but at the same time the way it was taught to me hindered actually seeing the truth, just as Saul of Tarsus experienced.

Read second paragraph, "Paul says elsewhere..." Why is the gospel of Jesus a stumbling block to the Jews? What causes them to stumble? Is it a physical or metaphorical stumbling block? And what image does that bring to mind?

The lesson suggests the stumbling block was that Christ was hung on a tree, but didn't the Jewish leadership stumble before the crucifixion? What caused them to stumble, before the crucifixion and does Christ dying on a cross reinforce their obstacles to truth?

- How did they view Scripture?
- What law lens did they hold and practice?
- What was their understanding of sin? Do we have evidence that they believed sin was a condition of being that needed healing, or a legal problem of bad deeds that needed to be avoided, or otherwise punished?
 - Consider all their arguments with Christ about breaking the law, what was their focus?
 - What was the point of the discussion between Nicodemus and Jesus? Wasn't Nicodemus confused about the idea of being "reborn" which is describing what? A legal solution or a healing solution?
- So, what do we see in Jesus' life? Do we see legal solutions or healing ones?
- How did Jesus dying on a cross play into the Jews false understanding of reality and added to their inability to accept Christ?
 - They read the Bible declaratively instead of as evidence or a teaching too. They read it is a rule book, instead of a guide back to reality.
 - Thus the Scripture and take it as an absolute without thinking.



What do you think about the idea of someone hung on a tree being under the curse of God—does the Bible say this?

- for anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse. Dt 21:23

So, the Bible does say this—next question—is it true?

So, does this mean when people were lynched because of the color of their skin the ones being lynched were under God's curse?

So, was Jesus actually cursed by God?

Paul says the following:

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written:
“Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” Gal 3:13

So, is this the curse of God—or does Paul say it is the curse of the law?

What law and how is it a curse and what relationship does it have to hanging on a tree?

What kind of law do you understand God's law to be?

The lie is that God's law functions no differently than human law—now under this false model, what would the curse of the law be?

- It would be broken rules require the ruling authority to inflict punishment, in this case to kill
- Thus, under the imposed law view the curse would be of God, God actually becomes angry and uses His power to inflict death—God personally inflicts the penalty, the punishment, the curse.
- Thus, in this model God is against the person hanging on the tree

In the design law model we realize that God's laws are the laws upon which life is built, and any deviation from these laws result in ruin and death. Thus to break God's law results in a curse—the curse of the law of sin and death. Consider this commentary:

Oh, that men and women would consider what is to be gained by **transgressing God's law!**
Under any and every circumstance, transgression is a dishonor to God and a curse to man. 157 {Counsels for the Church 107.2}

Why is transgressing God's law a curse to man? Because it results in pain, suffering, damage, destruction, death:

- What is the curse for smoking?
- What is the curse for jabbing a pencil in your eye?



- What is the curse for cheating on your spouse—and your spouse never knows?
- What is the curse for stealing from your employer—yet not being caught?

The word curse has multiple definitions

1. the expression of a wish that misfortune, evil, doom, etc., befall a person, group, etc.
2. a formula or charm intended to cause such misfortune to another.
3. the act of reciting such a formula.
4. a profane oath; curse word.
5. an evil that has been invoked upon one.
6. the cause of evil, misfortune, or trouble.
7. something accursed.

Do you see how one's preconceived idea of law, either imposed or design law, will determine which definition they attach to the idea of a curse?

Under design law it is definition 6: the curse is the cause of evil, misfortune, or trouble. Those who hold the imposed law view say the cause is God who judicially inflicts it. We know however, the cause is the curse of the law, just as Paul says, which is pain, damage, destruction that naturally occurs when one breaks God's design law.

Thus, Christ, became sin though he knew no sin so that we might become the righteousness of God. 2Cor 5:21. It was in order to heal and restore, not for a legal need.

But because the Jews held to a false legal view of reality—the cross became a stumbling block to them.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “As Paul...” Did Jesus use coercion on Paul? Did Jesus force Paul, take away Paul's freedom, threaten Paul in some way?

No—He revealed truth to Paul that brought Paul to conviction and Paul freely chose to repent, change his heart, and accept the truth.

Do we have evidence for this?

- Did Pharaoh have miraculous evidence presented to him repeatedly, more so that Paul did? And what impact did it have on Pharaoh?
- Consider those who came to arrest Jesus, did they have the brilliance of Jesus flash before them, and also have the miracle of a restored ear? And what impact did it have on them?
- Did God use mighty power at Mt. Carmel—did the people stay loyal to God thereafter?

So, did Jesus take away Paul's freedom?



Do you see what we just did? We did not look for a declarative statement that says, “God did not take away Paul’s freedom” But we looked for evidence that after God uses such demonstrations to gain one’s attention, He still leaves people free.

This is evidence-based thinking and is much more reliable than the declarative thinking, such as “cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree” and then concluding if the Bible says it we must take it as an absolute applied in all circumstances without thought. This type of non-evidence-based thinking is foundational to the penal models of salvation.

Read third paragraph, “When speaking to Saul...” What is being described here?

Why is it hard to kick against thorns? It would be similar to saying it is hard to put your hand in fire—why?

What is the lesson? What kind of law is being taught?

How does this apply to spiritual things?

When one deviates from God’s design and experiences pain from that deviation is the pain a judicial enforcement to make someone pay for their crime or a redemptive consequence to lead to repentance?

What if someone we love makes decisions that are violations of design law and are about to experience some painful consequence and we step in to prevent them from experiencing the pain—would such actions be acts of grace and mercy, or acts of harm—perhaps even cruelty?

What about a loved one with an addiction who ends up homeless because they won’t pay their bills—do we help them by giving them money? why or why not?

What did the father of the prodigal son do when his son ended up living with pigs? Why didn’t the father send his agents to buy the boy good food and put him in a hotel?

Is there **an aspect** of pain that we experience in life that is a result of our own choices and that type of pain is designed to alert us and lead us back to healthier living?

Does this mean that all painful events in life are a result of bad choices on our part or some sin we are involved in? No! Absolutely not! We can experience pain from random events in a world of sin, from human and satanic enemies. Consider the life of Job and Jesus.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “When he realized...” Does the fact Paul asked the question indicate contrition, an expression of unconditional willingness to let Jesus guide in his life from then on?



hmmm... After Pharaoh was confronted with some of the miraculous plague that exposed the impotence of an Egyptian god, Pharaoh said to Moses:

“This time I have sinned; the Lord is in the right, and my people and I are in the wrong. ²⁸Pray to the Lord! We have had enough of this thunder and hail! I promise to let you go; you don’t have to stay here any longer.” Ex 9:27,28

Did Pharaoh’s statement “indicate contrition, an expression of unconditional willingness to let God guide in his life from then on?”

I don’t find Paul asking the question to be evidence of his contrition and trust in Jesus, but the application of the truth and doing what he was instructed to do after he asked the question that was the evidence.

WEDNESDAY

After Paul’s conversion did Paul become quickly accepted as a leader of the new church?

Did Paul have opposition within the church community to his leadership? Why?

Paul had a reputation—was Paul’s reputation of being an enemy of the church reasonable for church members to hold?

Did it take time for Paul to develop a new reputation, for his ministry to become accepted?

Why? Are there lessons for us today?

In addition to Paul’s need to be re-educated by Christ, could the need of the church to move past Paul’s bad reputation and have a cooling off period also be a reason for Paul’s 3 years in the desert?

If we have people who oppose us in the church, what lesson can we take from Paul?

Present the truth in love, leaving people free and go where God opens doors, trusting God with the outcomes!

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, “Such resistance...” Was faith in God ever supposed to be based upon ceremonies? Or were ceremonies designed to express faith, and to teach an object lesson of a larger reality?

What validity did the OT sacrificial system ever have?



What was it valid for?

Was the OT sacrificial system, instituted by God through angels and Moses, ever a valid means of salvation? In other words, could people be saved by the animal sacrifices?

This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.¹⁰ They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order. Heb 9:9-10

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.² If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins.³ But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins,⁴ because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Heb 10:1-4

So, were the ceremonies, the sacrifices ever a valid means of salvation? Then what were they valid to do? To teach the real plan of salvation.

What made them invalid? When they were used to teach paganism—which is what? The idea that blood sacrifice is necessary to pay a legal penalty or assuage wrath, or appease a god, or in any way to do something to the deity.

Read bottom paragraph, “During the fifteen days...” What kind of god does a person worship if they will kill people who don’t believe like they do?

Do you realize that the god worshipped by those Jews who were seeking to kill Christians is the same god worshipped by:

- the Taliban who kill people who don’t believe as they do
- the Catholics of the Dark Ages who burned people at the stake
- the Puritans who burned so-called witches
- the Protestants who murdered Catholics
- the Hindus who kill Muslims

Only the true God leads people to love your enemies and who leaves people free to have a different view. Why? Because of design law—we don’t need to kill people who refuse remedy for a terminal condition.

The bottom line lie in all these false systems is a god who has imposed law and that justice requires the infliction of death upon the wrongdoer.



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The Remedy APP: Thanks to all of you, our supporters, The Remedy App is now available for free for Android and Apple devices but *The Remedy* is now available on a multi-Bible app. My Bible App by developer Denys Dolganenko at mybible.zone This app has hundreds of resources available, can compare different Bible versions on the same screen and it is FREE! The Icon for the My Bible App at left.

NEW TV PROGRAM: Each Tuesday watch our new TV Program—The Dr. Tim Jennings Show on WBTN.TV Network. God to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

New Video Blogs—If you don't follow us on Facebook, then be sure to visit our website we are posting new blogs again, the go up every Thursday.

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Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family.



The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!



The Book of Acts Lesson 6 3Q 2018

The Ministry of Peter

By Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

Last we examined the evidence that the 10 Commandments were written on Sapphire (I recap that below):

10 Commandments Written on Sapphire:

Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up ¹⁰ and saw **the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself.** Exodus 24:9, 10

Note two verses later:

The Lord said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction.” Exodus 24:12

Literal reading, “**Tablets of THE stone...**”

What stone, *the* only stone referenced in the text, which was two verses before, the sapphire stone.

Now, note Numbers 15:37-39:

Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁸ “Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put **a blue thread in the tassels** of the corners. ³⁹ And you shall have **the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments** of the Lord and do them...

What was the thread to remind them of? God’s commandments! and Why blue thread? Because the 10 Commandments were written on Sapphire, blue stone!

The Harlot of Revelation:

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

³ So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast *which was* full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ **The**



woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.⁵ And on her forehead a name *was* written:

MYSTERY,
BABYLON THE GREAT,
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Rev 17:1-5

The Harlot of Revelation is adorned in Purple, Scarlet and Gold:

The High Priest of God:

Wore four colors:

“They shall take the **gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread**, and the fine linen, and they shall make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, *and* scarlet *thread*, and fine woven linen, artistically worked. Exodus 28: 5,6

What color does the Harlot **not** have? Blue—which means the false church rejects the law of God, which means they reject the law of love, design law and have imposed law instead.

The High Priest wore a breast plate with 12 stones—what did that represent? The peoples of the earth tied to the High Priest’s heart—and what was used to tie this symbol of the people of the earth to the High Priest’s heart?

They shall bind the breastplate by means of its rings to the rings of the ephod, **using a blue cord**, so that it is above the intricately woven band of the ephod, and so that the breastplate does not come loose from the ephod. Exodus 28:28

And what does the blue cord represent? **The law of love!** God’s law of love is what binds us to Him, only His design does this.

From the book *Desire of Ages*:

The yoke that binds to service is the law of God. The great law of love revealed in Eden, **proclaimed upon Sinai**, and in the new covenant **written in the heart, is that which binds the human worker to the will of God.** {DA 329.3}

The false religions of the world, including false Christianity deny God’s design law of love; they don’t deny the 10 Commandments but they replace the 10 Commandments with an imposed view of the law—rules enacted and enforced by a ruling authority. Thus, they teach religious obligations,



ceremonies, rituals, at the expense of loving people. Thus, they are represented by the Harlot with no blue thread.

After class last week Karin Covi told me she had a conversation with someone who told her that the woman with the long-standing bleeding problem who touched the hem of Christ's garment, that what she actually touched was the tassel on the hem with the blue thread in it.

We read earlier that the Israelites were to make tassels with blue thread in them to remind them of the law of God...interestingly, in the text in Matthew 9:20 that describes the woman with the issue of blood who touched the hem of Christ's garment and was healed—the Greek word is:

κράσπεδον kraspedon; of unc. or.; *a border, tassel*:—fringe(4), tassels(1).¹

So, it is likely that she touched the tassel with the blue thread, symbolic of God's law of love, which is the basis of life and was healed—as she symbolically connected back to the source of that life.

And I received an email from an online listener, Eric Sugaski who said he agrees the **first** set of the 10 Commandments were most likely written on sapphire, but Moses broke that set and God instructed Moses to chisel out stone for the second set:

The Lord said to Moses, "Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke..."⁴ **So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets** like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the Lord had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands. Ex 34:1,4

So, the second set were most likely not on sapphire. Was there anything else different about the second set of 10 commandments besides not being on sapphire?

The first set, on sapphire from God's throne, had the Sabbath as a memorial to creation—in other words, design law, worship Him who made the heavens sea and earth. Design law is the law that is the pure representation of God's government. The second set had the Sabbath as a memorial to deliverance from slavery—level one thinking, recognize I am powerful. It was written on a different stone—because power isn't the most pure representation of God's government.

God attempted to give them His law at level 7, design law thinking, thus written on sapphire. But they couldn't comprehend the truth about God and his law, so God met them where they were and allowed them to view him through their distorted human law lens and thus the law was written on stone cut by Moses, likely granite or something else similar.

¹ Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.



Not only was the stone not the stone from God's throne, but it was cut by Moses and not by God, symbolically demonstrating how they viewed God's law: they viewed it as God's directives combined with human effort, i.e. a system of imposed rules and human compliance. Thus they said, "All the Lord as said we will do."

Today, God is waiting for a group of people to take the true message of His character, law, and government to the world calling people back to worship Him who made the heavens, earth and waters.

SABBATH

The second paragraph states, "The conversion of Gentiles was the most controversial issue in the apostolic church."

What are your thoughts about this idea?

I think this is related to the most controversial issue, a consequence of the most controversial issue—or maybe just saying it differently. But I would say the most controversial issue was that the Jews, the genetic descendants of Abraham were in the same boat as the rest of the world, suffering with the same condition and in need of the same remedy. In other words, the Jews did not have a special path to heaven distinct from the rest of the world.

This remains a controversial issue today as many Christians think the genetic descendants of Abraham somehow don't suffer the same problem and don't need the same solution—or that they have another avenue of salvation than the rest of humanity.

The Jews always thought of themselves as have some special relationship with God because of genetics. Jesus confronted the leaders on this repeatedly. John 8:34-44:

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. ³⁵ Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷ I know you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word. ³⁸ I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you do what you have heard from your father."
³⁹ "Abraham is our father," they answered.

"If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did. ⁴⁰ As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. ⁴¹ You are doing the things your own father does."

"We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself."
⁴² Jesus said to them, **"If God were your Father, you would love me,** for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. ⁴³ Why is my language not clear



to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. ⁴⁴ **You belong to your father, the devil,** and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

What made someone a child of Abraham?

Paul puts this nicely in Romans 2:28,29:

A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. ²⁹ No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

The Apostles struggled with this bias as well.

This bias not only a genetic bias, but transcended into their belief systems, traditions and rituals causing them to form a mindset that living like a Jew was what constituting being right with God. Thus, conversion was about being physically circumcised, dressing differently, eating differently, etc. it became very behaviorally focused—still an outworking of the basic misunderstanding of God's law that they had right at Sinai.

So, the biggest controversy, in my view was to see reality as it is, that the entire human race suffers from the same condition of being out of harmony with God and His design law for life; and God, through Christ provides the remedy for all human beings. And that remedy would transform the minds and hearts of all who trust God by removing fear and selfishness and restoring love. The Jews were simply God's agents to help spread the truth about God, the sin problem and God's solution for it.

Do we struggle with similar problems today? First, do we as Christians think the genetic Jews have some different sin-problem and need a different sin-solution? Do we believe they have some different avenue for salvation?

Second, do we ever think we are special if we belong to the right denomination, perform the right rituals, avoid work on the right day? Do we ever think that our being set right with God is based on what we do?

Does this mean what we do has no bearing on being right with God?

Think about it this way—you ingested a poison that is slowly killing you, a physician gives you a free antidote that will cure you if you take it. You take the antidote, you experience a change, you feel better, the symptoms are going away...are you the one who developed and provided the antidote? Have your efforts or works healed yourself? But, having taking the antidote, does that mean your choices have no bearing on whether you re-ingest the poison or not?



SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Peter was visiting...” What do you understand the paragraph to be saying? What was Peter doing?

Let’s read Acts 2:42: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

Now the word doctrine can mean something that is taught, or teachings. So, in the most basic sense any teaching is doctrine. However, when you think about doctrine what kind of teaching comes to mind? Does this word, doctrine, lead us more to think of “indoctrination?”

Do you think of teaching doctrine in the following settings:

- A nutritionist is teaching a person how to make healthy meals, would you say the nutritionist is giving the person doctrinal instruction?
- A tennis instructor is teaching a student how to serve, would you say the instructor is giving the student doctrinal instructions?
- A physical therapist is teaching a patient the exercises to strengthen a muscle group would you say the therapist is giving doctrinal instructions?

The word *doctrine* in its purist definition, that of being any teaching, could be used this way, but is this how we typically think of doctrinal instruction?

How do we typically think of doctrinal instruction?

Don’t we typically think of teaching a system of creeds, religious rules, fundamental beliefs?

Do you think Peter was primarily teaching them a creed, a list of religious rules, or was Peter teaching them about reality and how God’s reality works?

Consider 1Peter 1:13-15:

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵ But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶ for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

Does this sound like memorizing the right fundamental beliefs, or instructions on how to actually live one’s life?

Why is this an important distinction to make? Because if our beliefs don’t have real world application that bring transformation to the life, there is something wrong with the belief.



I have many patients in marriages in which they struggle. Often there is marked fear and insecurity. Fear of rejection, fear of not being loved, fear of the spouse finding someone else more attractive. This fear is driven by a personal sense of inadequacy, but it often comes out in suspicion, accusation, monitoring. “You don’t think I am pretty, do you?” “You think I am fat” “You don’t really want to be married to me, do you?” “I saw you looking at that other person.”

It can even become violent, all the while the accusing attacking person claims to love the other person.

What is the root problem? Fear and selfishness in the heart have not been replaced by love and trust—which is known as what in Bible terms? Conversion!

Since we are talking about Peter today, let’s consider Peter in the upper room with Jesus. Jesus just told the disciples that they were all going to run away. What did Peter say? “Not me Lord!”

Was Peter lying? Or was Peter being 100% sincere and would have passed a lie detector at that moment?

Then, since he was not lying does that mean Jesus could trust Peter? Why not?

Did Peter love Jesus? Yes, but, and here is the critical issue—he still loved himself more! Thus, when Peter’s life was threatened he denied Jesus to protect himself. So, Jesus said to Peter:

But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren... Lk 22:32 KJV

The problem with doctrinal instructions today is that many people are given false doctrinal instruction. They are told that sin is doing bad deeds, which gets you in legal trouble with the heavenly administration, which puts you on death row, and conversion means to accept the legal payment of Jesus to the heavenly administration so in the record books of heaven your name can be moved from the rolls of the condemned to the rolls of the legally pardoned.

Many people pray the sinner’s prayer, asking Jesus to take their sins, accepting His payment, and claiming legal pardon and then claiming they are converted to Jesus—but what they have been converted to is a false ideology that doesn’t require the death to self. Therefore, fear and selfishness still live in the heart and they treat their spouses with the same self-centered approach.

Real conversion is what Peter experienced after his denial when he wept bitterly, and died to self. Just like David after Nathan confronted him, Jacob’s night wrestling with the angel, Saul after Damascus road.

This is the valley of the shadow of death that our heavenly Shepherd leads us through for the restoring of our soul and the magnification of His character/name. The valley where we face the infection of



selfishness in us and it feels as if we are going to die as we surrender completely to our Savior.

The lesson points out that the Apostles performed many miracles, yet it was God actually performing them, then asks the following in the green section at the bottom:

Some people think that if only they could see a real miracle, such as what happened here, then they would believe. And though at times miracles helped lead some people to faith, the Bible is filled with stories of those who saw miracles and still didn't believe. On what, then, should our faith be based?

What is faith and upon what should we base our faith?

Dictionary definition of faith:

1. confidence or trust in a person or thing:
2. belief that is not based on proof:
3. belief in God or in the doctrines or teachings of religion:
4. belief in anything, as a code of ethics, standards of merit, etc.: *to be of the same faith with someone concerning honesty.*
5. a system of religious belief: *the Christian faith; the Jewish faith.*
6. the obligation of loyalty or fidelity to a person, promise, engagement, etc.: *Failure to appear would be breaking faith.*
7. the observance of this obligation; fidelity to one's promise, oath, allegiance, etc.: *He was the only one who proved his faith during our recent troubles.*
8. *Christian Theology.* the trust in God and in His promises as made through Christ and the Scriptures by which humans are justified or saved.

When we speak of our faith in God do we mean all of these? Which apply?

Don't we mean #1 and that the one we trust is God and #8 is summing this up? The rest are not what the Bible means, #3 is just believing in God's existence, but the devils believe and tremble. This is not Biblical faith.

Do you know the most common way most people, including religious people, understand faith is number 2, belief not based on proof or evidence?

Is this Bible faith, to believe without evidence?

In the warfare between Christ and Satan how much truth is on God's side and how much truth is on Satan's side?

Satan has zero truth and all truth is on God's side. So, who in this war, wants us to believe, trust, have faith without evidence? The liar, the one with no truth.



Thus, the idea that faith in God is without evidence is a lie and leads people to believe all kinds of non-sense and does NOT lead them to an abiding love and trust relationship with God.

This is why the Bible says, “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” John 17:3

Notice, eternal life is knowing God, why? What is required for trust of a person? That they are trustworthy AND that you personally know them to know you can trust them.

Is trusting a trustworthy person you know with or without evidence?

So, upon what should our faith be based? The overwhelming and abundant evidence that God has given us of both His existence and His absolute trustworthiness. And where can we find this evidence?

- Scripture
- Science/Nature
- Experience

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “It is important...” How can we know that the vision wasn’t about removing the distinction between clean and unclean meats?

Because of design law—the laws of health. We are free to eat anything we want without ceremonial uncleanness, but we are not free to eat anything we want and experience the same health consequences.

Read third paragraph, “The vision was explicitly...” Was Peter fully converted when this event took place? Had Peter been filled with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost? What does it mean then, that an inspired follower of Jesus, especially empowered by the Holy Spirit could struggle with something like this?

Does it give insight into how God and the Holy Spirit work?

Did Peter have ideas, attitudes, and beliefs that he held for many years before coming to Jesus? Did accepting Jesus mean an immediate erasure of all false beliefs? Why not?

What would happen to a person’s individuality if they had their beliefs, memories, perspectives changed without their willful choice to change them?

So, the first point to learn from this is how God’s methods of healing people work. God’s methods require the freewill participation of the one being healed; errors are only removed as we evaluate the evidence, with the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and choose to replace false ideas with new ones.



This is the only method to change a sentient being while retaining their unique individuality. That is why Paul wrote, “let every person be fully persuaded in their own mind.” Rom 14:5

The second point to note from this is: Even God’s Apostles and prophets can hold wrong ideas and need correcting. Thus, we are never to surrender our thinking to any other person, including a prophet of God.

Third point: A prophet of God can grow and change their position on points of doctrine, like this one, and it is NOT evidence of lack of inspiration, but evidence of the Spirit of truth leading them into greater truth!

Thus many SDAs need to reevaluate their mindset, beliefs, approach, and attitude toward how they understand the writings of EG White.

TUESDAY

The first paragraph points out that many of the Jewish converts to Christianity thought that Gentiles had to first be converted to Judaism before they could become Christian.

Do we struggle with any such concerns today about what it means to be a Christian and that people have to do certain rituals, or join certain organizations before they can be considered a Christian?

What about being a Jew today—according to the New Testament what constitutes being a Jew today—a modern day descendant of Abraham?

¹³It was not because Abraham kept a certain set of rules or practiced certain rituals that he and his descendants (those who are like Abraham in character—not in genetics) were promised to inherit the earth, but because of Christlike motives and methods that are endowed to them through trust in God.¹⁴For if it were possible to develop perfect motives, methods and principles by performing rituals or following a certain code, then there would be no need to trust God for his healing power in our lives, and his promised inheritance would be meaningless.¹⁵The written law or code simply exposes the extent of our sickness of mind and heart which, if not cured, results in death. If it weren't for the written law, we wouldn't even know how sick we are, for without some standard of health to measure by, no defect could be diagnosed.

¹⁶Therefore the restoration to a perfect state of being and the inheritance of eternal life on a renewed earth come by trusting the One who made the promise to do it. This transformation is accomplished by God's graciousness and is guaranteed to all the children of Abraham—not only his genetic descendants who were given the written diagnostic code, but also to his spiritual descendants, who—just like him—trust God. Abraham is the father of all who trust God.¹⁷As it is written: "I have made you the father of many different ethnic groups." The God in whom Abraham trusted—the Creator God who is the source of all life and who calls things into



existence from nothingness—considers all of us who trust him to be descendants of Abraham.
Roman 4:13-17 *The Remedy*

WEDNESDAY

The lesson points out that it was at Antioch that followers of Jesus were first called Christians, and likely as a derogatory name, but they quickly adopted it.

Then the lesson asks at the bottom of the page, “What does it mean to you to be called a ‘Christian’? What about your life is truly Christian? That is, how differently do you live from non-Christians in the things that really matter?”

What do you say?

- Don’t smoke or use illegal drugs?
- No alcohol or just no drunkenness?
- Vegetarian diet or Kosher or eat anything because we are free in Christ?
- How about dress—any dress requirements to being Christian?
- What about going to church? Is church attendance what it means? And if so, does the denomination matter? How about regularly fellowship with believers in someone’s home?
- What about observing religious holidays or weekly Sabbath, is this what it means to be a Christian?
- What about partaking communion, foot washing, or other ceremonies?
- What about being honest, kind, patient, loyal, faithful, forgiving, generous, helpful, refusing to slander, refusing to gossip, ministering to less fortunate?

When John Wesley was asked what made a Methodist he answered:

"What then is the mark? Who is a Methodist, according to your own account?" I answer: A Methodist is one who has "the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him;" one who "loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength. God is the joy of his heart, and the desire of his soul; which is constantly crying out, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee! My God and my all! Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever!"

If any man say, "Why, these are only the common fundamental principles of Christianity!" thou hast said; so I mean; this is the very truth; I know they are no other; and I would to God both thou and all men knew, that I, and all who follow my judgment, do vehemently refuse to be distinguished from other men, by any but the common principles of Christianity, -- the plain, old Christianity that I teach, renouncing and detesting all other marks of distinction. And whosoever is what I preach, (let him be called what he will, for names change not the nature of things,) **he is a Christian, not in name only,**



but in heart and in life. **He is inwardly and outwardly conformed to the will of God**, as revealed in the written word. He thinks, speaks, and lives, according to the method laid down in the revelation of Jesus Christ. **His soul is renewed after the image of God**, in righteousness and in all true holiness. And **having the mind that was in Christ, he so walks as Christ also walked.**

Wow—what do you think of what John Wesley wrote? A true Christian is one who is like Christ in heart and mind—renewed in the inner man. This is the healing remedy, design law, not imposed law legal adjustment.

Do you agree or disagree?

I have heard that many Muslims have a different view of what a Christian is—it has been reported many Muslims often think of a Christian as someone who claims the Bible, but:

- goes to church on Sunday
- eats pork
- drinks alcohol
- hates Muslims

Are these marks of a Christian? Are any of these marks that prove a person is not a Christian? Yes, hates Muslims—hating our fellow human beings is a mark of not being a Christian. The other three are not evidences either way.

But, I have heard some SDAs say that when talking with Muslims don't say you are a Christian, because they will put you in that category of not following the Bible drinking alcohol, eating pork and going to church on Sunday—instead, it is recommended that you tell them you are an Adventist who goes to church on Saturday, doesn't drink alcohol and doesn't eat pork and often they will say, "You are a follower of the book."

Even if this is true, why is it sad?

Can a person go to church on Saturday, not drink alcohol, not eat pork and still have such selfishness and evil in their hearts that they will crucify Jesus and want Him off the Cross by sunset?

Such external focus makes one vulnerable to miss what really matters and what really matters is character, being like Jesus in heart, just as Wesley said!

THURSDAY

The lesson talks about Herod's execution of James, read second paragraph, "The King Herod..." thoughts?



Why was James killed, was it merely theological or the mixture of theology and politics?

Read last paragraph, “Next, we find...” thoughts?

What do you hear? Are they saying that God used His power to kill Herod as punishment for sin?

Let’s read the Bible:

On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. ²² They shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not of a man.” ²³ Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. Acts 12:21-23

What are the problems with this view?

- What is the punishment for sin—sleep death or eternal death?
- When is the punishment for sin to be experienced, before or after the Great White Throne Judgment?

So, even if God did strike him down, was it punishment for sin, or putting him to sleep?

But the Bible said the angel of the Lord struck him down, so it must be this way right?

Saul said to his armor-bearer, “Draw your sword and run me through, or these uncircumcised fellows will come and abuse me.”

But his armor-bearer was terrified and would not do it; **so Saul took his own sword and fell on it.** ⁵ When the armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he too fell on his sword and died. ⁶ So Saul and his three sons died, and all his house died together. 1Chron 10:4-6

How did Saul die?

Notice, the same chapter a few verses later, what the Bible says:

Saul died **because he was unfaithful to the Lord**; he did not keep the word of the Lord and even consulted a medium for guidance, ¹⁴ and did not inquire of the Lord. **So the Lord put him to death** and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse. 1Chron 10:13,14

Could one read this and conclude, that because Saul was unfaithful to the Lord that he died because of divine judgment?

Is 1Chronicles that says “the Lord put him to death” inspired by the Holy Spirit? The same Holy Spirit that inspired the book of Acts?



Was there a certain convention of thought in the Jewish mind that if God permitted something to happen then it was considered an act of God or the will of God.

Could the writer of Acts use a similar convention?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Check our website for new chapters of *The Remedy* the Psalms will be going up slowly as they are completed and edited. When an entire book of the Old Testament is complete then it will be added to the app and when you update the app you will get the new book. Thank you for your prayers and support as I work on this project.

NEW TV PROGRAM: Each Tuesday watch our new TV Program—The Dr. Tim Jennings Show on WBTN.TV Network. God to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

New Video Blogs—If you don't follow us on Facebook, then be sure to visit our website we are posting new blogs again, the go up every Thursday.

September 14,15, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be Keynote Speaker at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown, Delaware.

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

September 30-Oct 2, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at NAD of SDA Mental Health Education retreat for pastors at Kettering, OH.

October 19, 20, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar at Camelback SDA church, in Phoenix, AZ.

November 9,10 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Houston, TX, in conjunction with the AACC

December 1, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing an Aging Brain seminar in Dallas, TX. Organized by the Arlington SDA church.

January 4-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking for the Florida Conference of SDA Women's Convention in Orlando, FL.

February 2-3, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking Christ's Church of Oronogo, MO.

In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church
Mental Health Matters Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

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In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.



The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!



The Book of Acts Lesson 7 3Q 2018

Paul's First Missionary Journey

By Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

Before we get into the lesson I wanted to follow up on Ananias and Sapphira.

I received several emails from people who were concerned that I made the case that their death was not one of God inflicting punishment for sin. They referenced several comments from EG White in the *Acts of the Apostles* later in the same chapter that I referenced that seemed to say otherwise.

A review of what I presented in lesson 3:

What are the possibilities?

- Some suggest that it was punishment for sin—why can we be 100% positive this was not the case?
 - What is the punishment for sin? Eternal death—did they die eternally or will they arise again?
 - Does the punishment for sin occur before the Great White Throne Judgment or after? Had that judgment happened yet?
 - Then, this cannot be punishment for sin—it must be something else
- It was natural causes—why should we doubt it was simply a case of dying of old age, or body wearing out?
 - Because the circumstances are inconsistent with a natural death
- Dying from shock—why is this a possibility?
 - Because it is documented through history that people can die when confronted with a sudden shock, or a powerful shaman. The source of the shock being the confrontation by Peter and the truth. But we cannot know for certain because we are not told.
- God acting to put them to sleep, why is this also possible?
 - Because God at times has acted to put people to sleep who were obstacles to His plan to save and heal the human race.
 - What might have happened had Ananias and Sapphira not died then? Might they have entered into some leadership position and the early church had been corrupted with greed? Might God have diagnosed, or judged, that a therapeutic excision of their influence was necessary for the health of the early church? If this is so, then recognize such an action was an act of love, not anger, and was designed to heal, not destroy and was not a punishment for sin.

Here is commentary from a book entitled *The Acts of the Apostles* what do you think?

Ananias and Sapphira grieved the Holy Spirit by yielding to feelings of covetousness... They thought they had been too hasty, that they ought to reconsider their decision. They talked the matter over, and decided not to fulfill their pledge. **They saw, however, that those who**



parted with their possessions to supply the needs of their poorer brethren, were held in high esteem among the believers; and ashamed to have their brethren know that their selfish souls grudged that which they had solemnly dedicated to God, they deliberately decided to sell their property and pretend to give all the proceeds into the general fund, but really to keep a large share for themselves. **Thus they would secure their living from the common store and at the same time gain the high esteem of their brethren.** {AA 72.1}

But God hates hypocrisy and falsehood. Ananias and Sapphira practiced fraud in their dealing with God; they lied to the Holy Spirit, **and their sin was visited with swift and terrible judgment...** [does this say punishment or judgment? And who judged them? Peter certainly did, and God did and was the judgment similar to a judgment you might have if you discovered your child smoking—would you make a judgment? And what would it be? Do we hear words like judgment only through the imposed law lens, or design law lens? God judged it unhealthy and judged it would hurt the early church, and judged that the most therapeutic thing to do would be nip it in the bud to protect the healing remedy!] {AA 72.2}

Infinite Wisdom saw that this signal manifestation of the wrath of God was necessary to guard the young church from becoming demoralized. [What is the wrath of God according to Scripture? God giving people up to reap what they have chosen. And what was the reason, to punish their sin or to protect the young church?] Their numbers were rapidly increasing. **The church would have been endangered if, in the rapid increase of converts, men and women had been added who, while professing to serve God, were worshiping mammon.** This judgment testified that men cannot deceive God, that He detects the hidden sin of the heart, and **that He will not be mocked.** It was designed as a warning to the church, to lead them to avoid pretense and hypocrisy, and to beware of robbing God. {AA 73.4}

God cannot be mocked, what Bible verse comes to mind and does it give a insight into why God cannot be mocked?

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; Gal 6:7,8

Why is it God cannot be mocked? Because of design law, you reap what you sew. Was this true for Ananias and Sapphira?

I received several emails referencing the following quotes, and as we explore this I want to point out there are two issues to address. One, whether God did inflict punishment for sin upon Ananias and Sapphira, and two, how I use EGW quotes. Some suggest I pick and choose the quotes I like and ignore other quotes. So, let's examine both concerns.

It is God who blesses men with property, and He does this that they may be able to give toward the advancement of His cause. **He sends the sunshine and the rain. He causes vegetation to flourish. He gives health and the ability to acquire means. All our blessings come from**



His bountiful hand... [what kind of law is being described here? In other words, what method does God use to bless? Do you think the mechanism for any negative consequence would be different?] {AA 75.1}

But the hearts of men become hardened through selfishness, and, like Ananias and Sapphira, they are tempted to withhold part of the price, while pretending to fulfill God's requirements. [How do hearts become hardened? What causes the hardening? What is the problem or result of hardening the heart? Is there a punishment in that? Remember we just read those who sew to the carnal nature from that nature reap destruction—what kind of law?] Many spend money lavishly in self-gratification. Men and women consult their pleasure and gratify their taste, while they bring to God, almost unwillingly, a stinted offering. **They forget that God will one day demand a strict account of how His goods have been used, and that He will no more accept the pittance they hand into the treasury than He accepted the offering of Ananias and Sapphira.** {AA 75.2} [How do you think this strict accounting will be demanded? Will it be like humans, counting pennies, or will it be by examining the character?]

From the stern punishment meted out to those perjurers, God would have us learn also how deep is His hatred and contempt for all hypocrisy and deception. [What is the purpose of this sentence? To whom might this sentence be aimed? To people who are close to God and know His methods, or people not so close?] In pretending that they had given all, Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit, and, as a result, they lost this life and the life that is to come. **The same God who punished them, today condemns all falsehood.** Lying lips are an abomination to Him. He declares that into the Holy City "there shall in no wise enter . . . anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." Revelation 21:27. Let truth telling be held with no loose hand or uncertain grasp. Let it become a part of the life. **Playing fast and loose with truth,** and dissembling to suit one's own selfish plans, **means shipwreck of faith.** [What is the problem with lying? It shipwrecks the faith, which means what? What does it do to the person? Is this an infliction? And why does God hate it? Does a parent hate a child who does drugs? Do they hate the child doing drugs?] "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth." Ephesians 6:14. He who utters untruths sells his soul in a cheap market. His falsehoods may seem to serve in emergencies; he may thus seem to make business advancement that he could not gain by fair dealing; **but he finally reaches the place where he can trust no one. Himself a falsifier, he has no confidence in the word of others.** [What is described here? Does something change inside the liar? How does that change happen? What kind of law is involved?] {AA 75.3}

In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, the sin of fraud against God **was speedily punished.** The same sin was often repeated in the after history of the church and is committed by many in our time. But though it may not be attended by the visible manifestation of God's displeasure, it is no less heinous in His sight now than in the apostles' time. The warning has been given; God has clearly manifested His abhorrence of this sin; and all who give **themselves up to hypocrisy and covetousness may be sure that they are destroying their own souls.** {AA



76.1} [Wait, who is destroying their souls? Then how is it a punishment from God?]

So, how do we understand this?

Is the punishment for sin the sleep death? Is it the death Samson died when he pulled down the pillars, or that Daniel died from old age?

Yet the word punishment is used, what do we understand this to mean? And why didn't I originally include this?

Human beings on earth are at different levels of moral development—does God love only the mature, or does God love the immature as well? Does God speak only to the mature or does He speak to the immature as well?

If a child is unruly and continues to put themselves in danger by playing on farm equipment or running into the street, what does a loving parent do?

Does the loving parent discipline, but in the child's mind might it be understood as punishment? Does the parent inflict interventions that are unpleasant to the child in order to motivate/teach the child not to do this anymore?

Is the real danger, the ultimate problem for the child from the parent or the damage when hit by a car? But, because the child cannot understand the larger reality the loving parent steps in and takes upon their reputation the role of inflictor of punishment. When the child finally grows up they realize the infliction of punishment was never truly coming from the parent, but from the disobedience and the parent's actions were to protect them.

During WWII a troop ship was hit by torpedo and sinking. Water was flooding in and the soldiers were in a panic. Officers on deck shouted for order, but the panic was too great and as one soldier jumped on the ladder to come up another would drag him off. Suddenly, shots rang out as an officer shot down into the hold killing several soldiers, order was restored and the rest got out.

- Did the officer who shot into the hold hate his soldiers?
- Did the officer hate his soldiers drowning?
- Did the officer hate the soldiers refusing to listen?
- Were the officer's actions cruel?
- Were those shot punished for their refusal to listen—or was the action taken to save the rest?

This is God throughout the Bible. This is what is happening to Ananias and Sapphira—for the benefit of the emerging church and throughout history. The immature look at that example and they realize the danger of lying, cheating, etc. and in their childlike understanding consider God the source of the inflicted punishment. But perhaps resist the temptation to lie and cheat. Hopefully they will grow up and understand God is not the source of inflicted punishment.



Ellen White grew up to understand this. The following quote was written by her in the 1890's, while exiled to Australia. She sent it to Uriah Smith, who at the time was editor of the Signs, and he couldn't make sense of it, most likely because he was too spiritually immature, so he filed it in the magazine's files, where it was found in the 1950's and published in the selected messages.

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. **By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.** {1SM 235.2}

What does this describe? What kind of law is this?

EG White grew in her faith and understanding of reality. Yet, God's spokespersons throughout history have always written to the entire human population, thus they write to the children, the spiritually immature who need the threats of punishment.

Why didn't I include the punishment quotes in lesson three when I presented the other quotes? Because I knew what was meant. I understand design law. I knew about the quote from 1SM and other places. I know God is not the source of inflicted punishment, but takes that role for the immature. And I don't want to perpetuate the view based on imposed law that has kept the church impotent and obstructed our ability to take the final message to the world.

Those who sent in the question—thank you! I think from time to time it is important to clarify quotes like this. But to those who think I don't use the entire body of evidence, I refute that allegation. When all the inspired record is harmonized it reveals God as Creator, His law as design law, sin as deviation from His design that causes pain, suffering and death, and God as our healer and Savior working in perfect harmony with Jesus and the Holy Spirit to eradicate sin in order to save the sinner.

SABBATH

Read memory text: "Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses." Acts 13:38,39, NIV

What does this text mean to you?

Was God able to forgive sins without the death of Jesus?

If Jesus didn't die for us, would that mean God is unforgiving toward us?

Did God become forgiving toward us only because Jesus died for us?



Was it Jesus' death and the presentation of His "blood" that influenced God to move from a position of unforgiveness to a position of forgiveness?

What of these Bible texts:

- If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Rom 8:31,32
- For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. John 3:16,17
- And God showed his love for us by sending his only Son into the world, so that we might have life through him. 1John 4:19 GNB
- God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them...2Cor 5:19
- But God has shown us how much he loves us—it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us! Rom 5:8 GNB

Do these text sound like God needed Christ to do something to God for God to forgive us?

Can we say that whatever Paul meant about "through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed" that it doesn't mean that through Jesus God has changed from unforgiving to forgiving. It doesn't mean God was either *unwilling* or *unable* to forgive due to some legal hindrance upon Him.

Do we understand Paul's words through design law or through human imposed law lenses?

Through the human imposed law people have construed some idea that Jesus' death was necessary to pay some legal penalty to get a legal pardon or forgiveness. This is not so. What evidence to we have to demonstrate this?

When Jesus healed the paralytic let down through the roof, right before he healed him Jesus said:

But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...." Then he said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home." Mt 9:6 NIV

Does Jesus have the authority to forgive sins? Did Jesus need His blood presented to Himself in order to do so?

Was this man's sins forgiven Him?

In the legal model, if God—the ruler of the universe—forgives someone their sins, that mean they are saved. In other words, there is a connection between forgiving of sins and salvation in the legal model that is linked. So, in the legal model the saved have their sins forgiven but the unsaved do not have their sins forgiven, isn't that how it is taught?



What about those who crucified Christ, the ones around the cross mocking, jeering, and taunting Him, were they saved? No, but were they forgiven by God?

Jesus said: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Luke 23:34

Were they forgiven? Were they saved? Hmmm, how do we understand this?

Under the legal lie, it is a contradiction, under design law it is simple reality.

A child disobeys a parent’s instruction to avoid the house cleaners under the sink and drinks some of the substances poisoning him or her.

Now—walk through the issue of forgiveness—if a parent refused to forgive this disobedience, might it result in the parent refusing to act to save the child?

If the parent did forgive, which I think almost every parent instantly would, would the forgiveness of the parent save the child? Or would there be actions necessary by the parent beyond their “not counting their trespass against them” in order to save the child? And if the parent offers an antidote but the child somehow refuses to take it—what then? Do they die? But do they die forgiven? This is the situation with the lost in the end.

Now, in relationships if someone does another wrong, betrays a person, what is necessary for reconciliation?

- Does the person offended have to forgive?
- Does the offender need to repent?
- Are both required for reconciliation?
- And if in committing the offense the offender actually introduced some destructive element into themselves, would a remedy also be necessary?
- What if the offender believes that the one they offended is angry with them and wants to punish them for their wrong? How might they act toward the one they offended? Would their guilt and shame increase or decrease trust? And if they didn’t trust the one they offended and the one they offended actually had the cure to save them, would that be a problem?

So, putting it all together, what does Paul mean in the text?

Acts 13:38,39 from *The Remedy*: "So, my dear friends, I want you to understand that it is through Jesus that sinfulness in our hearts remits and we are restored to God's original ideal. Through what he achieved, every person who trusts him is healed and set right from every defect of character that the diagnostic code, given through Moses, could not fix."

This is the true message of Scripture. We are out of harmony with God and His design for life, and God is working to save us. But, when people read the Bible with the false law lens they read into it the



distorted views of God that undermine trust and lead to the false legal interventions.

You know I am working on paraphrasing the Psalms, and through the design law lens they are so beautiful. In conjunction with this idea of healing from sin, the forgiveness of sins, I wanted to share my paraphrase of Psalm 31:

Psalm 31

¹ O Lord, I come to you for healing;
don't let guilt and shame destroy me;
restore me to your perfect design.

² Listen to me—listen closely,
and heal me—heal me quickly;
be my unfailing remedy,
a healing sanctuary to renew me.

³ Since you are my remedy and my sanctuary,
reveal your character of love by recreating me in your image.

⁴ Free me from fear and selfishness which has trapped me,
for you are my remedy.

⁵ I trust you! And I place my life in your hands;
you will cure me—no matter the price, O Creator—God of reality.

⁶ I hate the persistent use of false remedies;
my confidence is in the Lord.

⁷ I will celebrate and rejoice in your love—your healing design for life,
for you saw the misery of my terminal condition
and knew the cause of the sickness ravaging my inner self.

⁸ You have not surrendered me to be enslaved by fear and selfishness—the enemy of your design;
but have enabled me to stand free renewed in truth and love.

⁹ Pour your healing grace upon me, O Lord, lest I be crushed by guilt and shame;
my eyes are swollen from crying,
my heart is torn with sorry and regret.

¹⁰ My life is stuck, consumed with guilt—with reliving my mistakes,
years wasted bemoaning the past;
I'm exhausted, worn out with guilt,
I am getting weaker every day.

¹¹ My enemies—lies, fear and selfishness—have made me ashamed,
my neighbors are tired of my self-loathing;
My friends dread to hear more of my constant negativity—
when they see me coming, they avoid me.

¹² They have moved on, put me out of their minds as if I were dead.
I am considered broken beyond repair.

¹³ I hear criticism in the words of others—
I am terrified around people;



- they make plots to undermine me
they seek to crush my heart.
- 14 But I put my trust in you, O Lord;
You are my God!
- 15 My future is in your hands;
free me from fear and selfishness—my enemies
that constantly pursue me.
- 16 Immerse your servant in your life-giving glory;
heal me with your unfailing love.
- 17 Negate my shame, O Lord,
for I call upon you;
but let the unhealed be consumed by shame,
may they lie silent in the grave.
- 18 May the promotion of all false remedies be stopped,
for the self-sufficient deny reality,
they scorn God’s design for life.
- 19 Beyond counting are the benefits of your goodness,
the treasures you have built into reality for all who humbly follow you.
Those who trust you and follow your methods
reap your blessings for all the universe to see.
- 20 You eradicate their sin-sickness by your presence—your secret plan—
freeing them from the trap of the proud and selfishness;
in your sanctuary you defend them
from the words of the accuser.
- 21 All praise and honor to the Lord,
for the wonders of his unfailing love that rescued me
when I was besieged by worldliness.
- 22 Terrified, I cried,
“I have cut myself off from God!”
But you heard my plea for mercy
when I called out to you for help.
- 23 Love the Lord, all his faithful followers!
The Lord preserves those who live in harmony with his design,
but the arrogant who choose their own way, he leaves to reap their full reward.
- 24 Be strong and confident,
all you who hope in the Lord.

SUNDAY

The lesson states a very powerful point: “God can operate only when we willingly place ourselves in a position where He can use us.”

Do you agree or disagree?



Why? What are God's methods? What does He want to achieve?

God wants our trust, love, loyalty, friendship—can any of these be achieved by imposing power, by coercion, by force, without the consent of the intelligent being?

What methods must be used to achieve this outcome? Truth, presented in love and leaving people free.

So, all constructs that present God as inflicting punishment for those who refuse Him, ultimately deny God's character and law of love and incite rebellion.

This is why the penal substitution view of atonement is so corrupt, it teaches people to believe a system that simultaneously misrepresents God and undermines trust and genuine healing.

Read third paragraph, "A period of intercessory prayer..." What is the purpose of intercessory prayer?

Is the purpose to influence God to love more, to be kind, to get God to do something good that God would not want to do?

If God always wants to do good, always wants to heal and save, then why do we need to pray? What are God's methods? How does He achieve His goals?

Does God violate freewill? Does He force His way in?

Thus, one aspect of prayer is our freewill consent inviting God into a situation. But there is another aspect: Does the process of praying have an impact upon the one who prays? Is there an aspect in which our conversations with God are healing, transforming, maturing to us? Does prayer help us in our spiritual growth?

Additionally, is there an aspect of prayer that exercises our own individual mental energies focusing our beings toward the welfare of others?

Can prayer, not only bring God into the equation, but can it allow us as believers to join our energies together and focus our intentions on the healing of others.

In God's universe, can this directly exert a positive influence? Yes, if we understand quantum connection, our prayers when focused with love and good intention can have a direct positive healing physical impact on the one being prayed for, through the quantum connections that God built into His universe.

Just as a person can use their physical body through Newtonian physics to massage, put pressure on a wound, do CPR, set a bone, and our direct physical contact and intervention can be healing, so too our prayers through quantum connections can exert positive impact on others.



So, I want to thank all of you who regularly pray for me and this ministry!

Read bottom green section, “Think how...” What is present truth for today? 3 angel’s messages? And what is that message?

What makes it harder to reach those who are already churchied?

When people already believe they know the answer to a problem they are less open to a different answer.

When people are told one worldview, one way of thinking, one “present truth” they are often resistant to update unless life events don’t fit their view, or questions arise they can’t answer or people lead them to reconsider.

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “Acts 13:13 records...” What does this mean?

Does this mean John Mark lost his salvation or turned against God?

Could it be that John Mark engaged in a ministry, a mission, that he wasn’t well suited for and got exhausted and discouraged?

Do different people tolerate life experiences differently?

For instance, do some people get overwhelmed if they have to speak in public? Does that mean if they avoid this they are not working for God?

Should we expect every person to thrive in the same ministry or same duty?

Read last paragraph, “The climax of the sermon is...” What does it mean “the law has not been abrogated?”

Abrogate means to repeal or make void—why is it necessary for the lesson to make this point?

Would they need to say, “The passage does not say the law of gravity was abrogated?”

If we insert any design law in there do we see how silly the sentence is?

So, this sentence is further evidence of the infection of imposed law, the types of laws that can be changed or repealed. And this is how most Christians think of God’s law, so the authors want to make the point God did not repeal his IMPOSED law because that is how they understand law. But when we



understand reality we know His law hasn't changed and cannot change.

Read bottom green section, "What does it mean..."

- Does salvation only through Jesus mean a person has to verbally use the name of Jesus?
- Does it mean they have to be baptized in the name of Jesus?
- Does it mean they have to identify as a Christian?

Paul wrote:

For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) Rom 2:12-15

What is the new covenant? Having the law written on the heart—what does Paul say these people have experienced? But they haven't heard the Scripture story—how is this possible?

Paul already told us in Romans 1:20:

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

God's design law, which reveals His character and methods are revealed in nature so that people are without excuse. So, people who recognize the principles of love, kindness, honesty etc. respond to the Holy Spirit and are renewed and have the law, God's design for life written on their hearts.

Then, how are they coming through Christ?

Which member of the Godhead was the one through whom the earth was created, and thus wrote God's law into nature?

Colossians 1:15-17:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. NIV

So Jesus is the member of the Godhead who created nature, and thus this is the first reason that people who come to God through nature come through Christ. But there is another way—and that is when they find God trustworthy in nature, and open their hearts to this higher power, the Holy Spirit takes



the achievements of Christ, the divine nature that Christ restored into humanity, and reproduces it in them. Thus they are still saved by the same remedy as everyone else, even if they don't know the verbal name or mechanism yet.

One of the founders of the SDA church put it this way:

Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, **but they have cherished His principles.** [Which is what type of law? Design law, principles can be learned and appreciated from how reality works, but imposed rules cannot. Thus another strike against the penal substitution theology.] Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. **Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness;** before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. **Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required.** Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God. {DA 638.2}

How surprised and gladdened will be the lowly among the nations, and **among the heathen**, to hear from the lips of the Saviour, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me"! How glad will be the heart of Infinite Love as His followers look up with surprise and joy at His words of approval! {DA 638.3}

But not to any class is Christ's love restricted. He identifies Himself with every child of humanity. That we might become members of the heavenly family, He became a member of the earthly family. He is the Son of man, and thus a brother to every son and daughter of Adam. His followers are not to feel themselves detached from the perishing world around them. They are a part of the **great web of humanity; and Heaven looks upon them as brothers to sinners as well as to saints.** The fallen, the erring, and the sinful, Christ's love embraces; and every deed of kindness done to uplift a fallen soul, every act of mercy, is accepted as done to Him. {DA 638.4}

What about the second question, "How do you reconcile the necessity to keep God's moral law with the fact that the law is unable to justify?"

Simple, breaking the laws of health cause disease, but once in a terminal state, suddenly keeping the laws of health do not provide remedy. Smoking causes cancer, stop smoking doesn't cure the cancer.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Acts 13:38,39..." What is meant by "Even if the law could produce perfect obedience in us, that perfect obedience cannot atone for past sins (Rom 3:19; Gal 3:10,11).



Let's check out the referenced texts and see if they speak to the question:

- Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Rom 3:19 NKJV
- All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." ¹¹ Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." Gal 3:19,20 NIV

Does this say anything about atoning for past sins? Or do both texts speak of the inability of the law to resolve any sin, past, present or future?

What is the lesson trying to imply by "perfect obedience cannot atone for past sins"?

They are introducing a falsehood, a lie based on the lie about God's law, that sin is behavioral, bad deeds that are legally recorded and must be accounted for in some legal way. Thus, in their view even if we suddenly started keeping the law it doesn't resolve the legal guilt from the past.

In a sinful human world, with sinful human laws and courts this make sense. If someone murdered someone 10 years ago and since then never murdered again our legal justice system doesn't say since you are now living in harmony with the law you have no legal debt for your past murder. No, our system of imposed rules says they still must pay for their crime.

But, when we return to design law we realize that past sins are symptoms of a condition of being out of harmony with God and it isn't the record of the past that needs addressing but the condition of the heart. So, when a person is renewed and at one with God in heart/mind today the past deeds are not remembered, this is how they are dealt with.

If one were sick and vomited all over mother's new furniture when a child, such actions don't matter today as long as one isn't sick today. The issue isn't how gross the symptoms were back then, but whether one is still sick today.

Thus, the Bible says:

- Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, **it keeps no record of wrongs.** 1Cor 13:4,5 NIV
- God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, **not counting men's sins against them.** 2Cor 5:19

This doesn't make sense to the penal view which teaches God does count our sins against us.

But notice what Peter describes and how the past sins are dealt with:

- For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to



perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.

⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and **has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.** 1Pet 1:5-9

Does it say such a person has forgotten his record of past sins were erased, or forgotten that the record books were cleansed? No, Peter describes the healing of the mind, the writing into the being the law of God, the development of a godly character and if this hasn't happened then the past sins are not cleansed. In other words, the cleansing is the cleansing of the heart and mind, not a legal cleansing or a historical erasure.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Under the instigation..." Do we still have problems with religious leaders actually inciting opposition to the work of God?

How can we protect ourselves from being caught up in a mob and being misled by religious leaders?

By thinking for ourselves and examining the evidence and practicing God's methods, truth, love freedom!

THURSDAY

Read bottom green and discuss

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions 1 and 4



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Check our website for new chapters of *The Remedy* the Psalms will be going up slowly as they are completed and edited. When an entire book of the Old Testament is complete then it will be added to the app and when you update the app you will get the new book. Thank you for your prayers and support as I work on this project.

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The Book of Acts Lesson 8 3Q 2018

The Jerusalem Counsel

by Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

SABBATH

The memory verse is Acts 15:11, lets read verses 10 and 11: “Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.” Acts 15:10,11 NIV

Here is the New Living Translation: “So why are you now challenging God by burdening the Gentile believers with a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear? We believe that we are all saved the same way, by the undeserved grace of the Lord Jesus.”

What does this mean?

- We can't be saved by law keeping
- Can we be lost by law breaking?
- How do we explain that if law breaking can cause us to be lost that law keeping cannot save us?

Which law lens do we explain this through?

How is it explained through the false human law concept?

- That once the law is broken a penalty for law breaking is required in order to maintain either the integrity of the law or the authority of the sovereign. So, if a murderer committed murder 20 years ago, and hasn't committed murder since, i.e. kept the law, his law keeping still doesn't pay the penalty for his previous law breaking. Someone has to be executed to pay that penalty.
- Now think about that construct for a moment—how many of you think it is reasonable to punish an innocent person for the crimes of the guilty—even under our human law system?
- What would it say about God if He were to construct a system in which innocents were punished for the crimes of the guilty?
- Further—does anyone in the penal/legal camp teach that we can actually obey or keep the law? So, we are always piling up more crimes to be punished in that view, yet how do we ever stop?

How do we explain the reality that we cannot be saved by law keeping with the reality we can be lost by law breaking through the truth of God's design law?

- Breaking the laws of health will cause disease
- Keeping the laws of health once one has a terminal condition will not cure the condition—i.e. smoking will cause cancer—stopping smoking will not cure the cancer.
- Jesus came to provide a remedy to the cancer of sinfulness, the remedy is provided free, by God's grace



- How righteous is it for a healthy person to donate bone marrow to a terminal person with leukemia? So we see how righteous it is for an innocent to sacrifice themselves in the design law model to save those dying in sin.
- Partaking of the remedy will cure—i.e. transform us, our hearts and minds.
- However, taking of the remedy does not prevent future damage one could inflict on themselves by new breaks to God's design law. Smoking causes cancer, a remedy cures the cancer and then the person smokes again—what happens?

Do you see how perfectly and beautifully things fit when we reject the human imposed law lie and return to God's design law reality?

So, here are these verses from *The Remedy*:

So why are you trying to prove you know better than God by putting legal requirements and rituals on them, which will only enslave them like a yoke around their neck, and which neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? No way! Don't do it! We believe it is through the gracious Remedy of our Lord Jesus that we are healed, and so are they!"

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "From the beginning..." What happened in the Antioch church? Why did their harmony, peace, healthy group relations get shattered?

- The members of Antioch were vulnerable because they didn't think for themselves. They esteemed the group from Jerusalem in some way higher than themselves and allowed their understanding to be corrupted by the ideas and concepts of those from Jerusalem. In other words, when someone from the conference office showed up they deferred their thinking to what they perceived to be someone of a higher authority. But were they?
- The group from Jerusalem introduce a false legal and behavioral construct—i.e. they introduced religion—the do's and don'ts

Consider this quote from the book *The Desire of Ages*:

The ministry of Christ was in marked contrast to that of the Jewish elders. **Their regard for tradition and formalism had destroyed all real freedom of thought or action.** They lived in continual dread of defilement. To avoid contact with the "unclean," they kept aloof, not only from the Gentiles, but from the majority of their own people, **seeking neither to benefit them nor to win their friendship.** [notice the specific types of interactions they refused to do—acts of love and service. This is important to recognize when dealing with teens who want to engage in unhealthy activities with those who are not converted to Christ. They might say to a parent that the parent is being a Pharisee by not letting the child go to such and such an activity. However, while we do want to avoid engaging with people in unhealthy endeavors, we should not avoid interacting to bless others. The Pharisees had the motive of selfishness,



thinking about their salvation, their legal standing, and what would happen to them. Some SDAs do the same thing thinking about their legal status if they were to talk to someone on Sabbath who doesn't talk about Bible things.] By dwelling constantly on these matters, **they had dwarfed their minds and narrowed the orbit of their lives.** Their example encouraged egotism and intolerance among all classes of the people. {DA 150.2} [what is another name for egotism? Selfishness, pride, arrogance, self-centeredness]

Jesus began the work of reformation by coming into close sympathy with humanity. While He showed the greatest reverence for the law of God, **He rebuked the pretentious piety of the Pharisees, and tried to free the people from the senseless rules that bound them.** He was seeking to **break down the barriers which separated the different classes of society,** that He might bring men together as children of one family... {DA 150.3}

What kind of law were the Pharisees and Judaizers focusing upon?

When Jesus is seeking to build relationships, heal people, break down barriers between groups, what kind of law is He focusing upon?

Do we have any problems like this in the world today?

Do we focus on the reality that whether someone is a Christian, Jew, Muslim, Buddhist or atheist—that the laws of God don't differentiate?

- If they all jump off a bridge together gravity treats them the same
- If they all get infected with Ebola they all need the same remedy
- All humanity is infected with fear and selfishness and distrusts God and all humanity needs to the truth about God to restore trust and a renewed heart and mind to love others
- So, if a Buddhist, has discovered the truth of other-centered love and has experienced a renewed heart—how did that happen? Did it happen by the Buddhist's law keeping? Or does it happen by the grace of God applying the achievements of Christ into the heart and mind of the Buddhist?

So today, are we sharing a message that unifies all humanity, or are we like the Judaizers from Jerusalem sharing a message that cause division because we teach people that if they don't do this or do that they can't be part of God's family?

Read second paragraph, "Traditionally called Judaizers..." What does it mean that even the Apostles struggled with this issue?

That all people, including those in a genuine saving relationship with God, those who have been reborn, whose motives are right, who have been filled with the Holy Spirit and even those empowered with Spiritual gifts, such as the gift of prophecy, are still finite, that they don't know everything. It means that they still have things to learn, which means there can be wrong on certain issues. And that means that we are not to surrender our judgment to others, including prophets of God, but to be fully



persuaded in our own minds.

It also demonstrates beautifully how God works. That when we surrender ourselves to Him He does not use His power to overwrite our identity, but enlightens us with truth and love that we must assimilate by our own freewill choices.

This means that our personal transformation, growth, development, maturity AFTER we have accepted Jesus as our Savior is up to us! The rate of our growth is limited by our capacity and/or willingness to assimilate and apply the truths that God reveals to us and often times such moments of growth are real struggles.

Is it a struggle to:

- give up an addiction?
- give up a job on the day of worship?
- give up a certain food you have eaten your entire life?
- give up an belief, idea, theology you have either believed or taught your entire life?
- give up a wish, hope, longing to either punish your enemy or see God punish them?

Read fourth paragraph, “Their point was rather simple...” Were the Jews in OT times God’s agents to spread the gospel, as Christians are today?

Then, what is the difference between becoming part of the Jewish nation in OT times and becoming a Christian today?

Why was circumcision of the body necessary for someone to join the Jewish nation in OT times, but not necessary to become a Christian?

Because the Jewish nation were actors in a drama—their entire system was theatrical to act out a larger reality. There was nothing in any of their rituals that had saving ability—it was all designed to teach people of the true reality.

So, if you wanted to become part of the acting troupe, to get on stage and share the message through theatrical enactment—you could, but you had to follow the script, thus you had to wear the right costumes, bring the right sacrifices and get circumcised. If you wanted to act in the play, but didn’t want to follow the script you could not.

However, in Christianity it was not theatrical it was the reality to which the enactments were pointing. Thus, while one could not become a member of the Jewish nation without circumcision of the body, one could become a member of the bride of Christ—Christian church without bodily circumcision. But, could one become a Christian without circumcision of the heart? Why not? Because it simply is not possible, circumcision of the heart is part of what makes one a true Christian.



Circumcision of the body was merely a physical enactment or symbol of the reality, circumcision of the heart.

What causes division in Christianity today?

- form of baptism?
- day of worship?
- ordination of women?
- the meaning of communion/Eucharist
- foot washing as a ceremony or not
- foods authorized to eat
- smoking tobacco or not smoking tobacco

Why do these things cause division? Is there anything that will save a person if they get it right? Will any of these if a person does them “wrong” that automatically disqualifies for salvation?

If these can neither save, nor cause one to be lost, then why do they divide the body of Christ?

Is it because they are all understood through the legal law lie, which leads people to falsely believe it does matter in some salvation way?

What contributes to unity?

- Love—loving others more than self
- Truth—understand how reality works, the truth about God, His laws, the nature of sin, God’s solution for it
- Freedom—presenting truth in love and leaving others free to make their own choice, and only setting boundaries of division based on design law—i.e. quarantine. Why do we separate people under the laws of health? This is the principle to be used and then the mature, the health-care workers, still go into the quarantine zone to provide care. Mature Christians still go out into the diseased world to take the remedy!

MONDAY

The entire day is about the question of circumcision—any further questions about it?

Read bottom green section, “What’s the danger of thinking that salvation comes from merely being a member of the right church?”

Can we be saved by being a member of the right church?

Does your church organization/denomination do evangelism?

What is the purpose of evangelism?



Is the purpose of evangelism by your church primarily to bring people to a saving relationship with Jesus or have them join your denomination?

If we can't be saved by denomination, why do we evangelize to get them to join a specific denomination rather than convert to Jesus?

Do we sometimes link salvation with joining a particular church?

Do we link salvation with doing certain rituals or behaviors or some form of law keeping?

I received an email recently from a woman who said she likes the teachings of the SDA church, and was thinking about joining, but the pastor said that before she could that she had to stop wearing earrings and her wedding ring. She doesn't want to do this—is salvation based or lost on wearing earrings and wedding rings?

So, a private club can set rules for membership, such as no jewelry if you want to join—but we shouldn't mistake private clubs for the body of Jesus Christ. Jesus never told someone who wanted to follow him that they had to stop wearing jewelry in order to do so.

What did someone have to do in order for Jesus to accept them as His follower? Put Him first in their lives!

So, some humans come along later, and in their personal journey they realized for them, in their heart, they coveted jewelry and they realized to be a true follower of Jesus, they had to leave their jewelry behind. And after doing so, they then set up their own personal struggle and experiences as a test for others—if you really loved Jesus supreme you would give up your jewelry, to people who have never coveted jewelry and from whom jewelry is nothing more than wearing purple or red. So, when people tell them, if you really love Jesus you will stop wearing jewelry, they hear it like you would if someone told you to be a Christian you cannot wear purple or red. It would sound silly and make God out to be trivial and small.

Many things have been done like this in Christianity.

When we come back to love and practice what Paul taught in Romans 14, “let every person be fully persuaded in their own mind” then we move toward unity based on design law!

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “In his speech, Peter addressed....” What is the point being made?

Is Peter making the point that if God gifted the uncircumcised Gentiles with the Holy Spirit, then we have no right to overrule God and exclude them from the church?



Would that mean if God gifted a woman with the gift of prophecy, or the gift of teaching or the gift of pastoring that we, as a church, should not overrule God and exclude her from leadership in the church?

Read next paragraph, "In His divine providence..." Did the Old Covenant purify in reality? Or did it only purify in symbol?

Was there any cleansing from sin from observing the rituals of the Old Covenant?

What does it mean that some of the Jewish converts believed that there was cleansing from sin from the rituals?

Do we have any problems like this today where people think that some ritual actually cleanses from sin?

Are people cleansed from sin by water baptism, or is water baptism a public statement of the cleansing that has happened when they let Jesus into their lives?

Are people cleansed from sin by partaking communion or the Eucharist? Or are these ceremonies merely symbols of what actually cleanses?

And what actually cleanses?

What do you think of this quotation from the book *The Desire of Ages*:

The Comforter is called "the Spirit of truth." **His work is to define and maintain the truth.** He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. **It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind.** [What does this mean? How does Satan gain power?] **By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character.** [What is a standard? A unit used to measure against—and what would be a false standard, a false measure—and what is the false standard Satan uses? The imposed law construct which focuses on behavior] **Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. {DA 671.1} [what does the Holy Spirit use to cleanse the mind? Truth!]**

In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. **The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail.**



[Why? Wasn't the problem legal? Weren't all the sins of all people of all time placed on Jesus and punished in Jesus so we can have legal pardon if we ask? So, why would the sacrifice be of no avail without the Holy Spirit? Because it wasn't ever a legal problem it was a problem of our condition of being. Jesus procured the remedy which will cure us, but it still must be applied within the heart and mind of the sinner, and this is what the Holy Spirit does.] The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead**, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. **It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure.** [This is not legal, it is healing and transformational. This is the true gospel message] **Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature.** Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. {DA 671.2}

So the question, what actually cleanses, is it partaking of piece of symbolic bread or partaking of what the bread and wine represent? And what do they represent?

Jesus is the Word made flesh, thus when we partake of the bread we are symbolically saying we are partaking of the living Word, the truth that dispels lies and restores us to trust and reshapes us internally. Further, when we are restored to trust by partaking of the Word of truth, we then open the heart and the Spirit comes in and takes the wine/blood i.e. the life of Christ and reproduces it us—we become the partakers of the divine nature.

This is the reality and if we don't move past symbols to reality we stay stuck in sin, just like the Judaizers infecting Antioch.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson focuses on the conclusions of the Jerusalem counsel for Gentiles, let's read Acts 15:28,29:

The Holy Spirit and we have agreed not to put any other burden on you besides these necessary rules: eat no food that has been offered to idols; eat no blood; eat no animal that has been strangled; and keep yourselves from sexual immorality. You will do well if you take care not to do these things. With our best wishes." GNB

How would you describe their conclusions?

What is the underlying basis or reason for these particular guidelines, instructions, rules?

Is this ritual?

Is it based on imposed law?



Is it based on design law?

What design laws?

- The law of worship—by beholding we become changed, so don't give any value or credence to idols. And don't participate in activities that remind you of, or relive in you the pagan life.
- The laws of health—don't drink blood and don't eat meat from strangled animals.
- The law of love, worship and health: don't break God's design for relationships and injure your marriage, don't damage your mind, don't relive pagan practices and warp your character, and don't get diseases and damage your body by sexual immorality.

Read fourth paragraph, "In the context of Leviticus..." Why were all of these things, drinking blood, eating strangled animals, sexual fertility practices, idols and images all part of pagan practices?

Because Satan understands design law and he understands that if he can get us to participate in such practices the acts themselves don't cause us legal problems with God, but actually destroy within us the image of God. Such practices damage the mind, sear the conscience, warp the character, harden the heart. This is why these practices are included in pagan worship and why we should avoid activities that violate God's design laws!

THURSDAY

The lesson points out again how the Apostles struggled to accept and fellowship with the Gentile converts and then asks in the bottom green section: "Be honest with yourself: how difficult is it for you to have fellowship with believers from other races, cultures, and even social classes? How can you be purged of this decidedly anti-gospel attitude?"

When is it sin to not want to fellowship with others?

Is it ever not sin to not want to fellowship with other Christians?

If a person doesn't like a certain type of music, say contemporary and thus they don't want to go to a contemporary worship service is that sin?

If a person doesn't like a certain style of preaching and thus they don't want to attend a church with that style of preaching is that sin?

So, is it okay to have differences based on our personalities that are not sin?

When is it sin?

When we don't love those who have differences in their style and preference of worship and we judge them as less than us spiritually, or look down on them?



How about, if we believe some Christians are actually doing destructive practices?

In my book, *The Aging Brain* I recount an off-shoot group that refuses to use any medicines and they have the highest infant mortality rate in their state, several parents have been imprisoned for refusing to give their children antibiotics for meningitis and those children died.

Are we to make judgments about what is actually healthy and not healthy?

Does it go beyond laws of health?

What about a person whose child dies in a car wreck when they were on their way to a friend's house for their birthday party—but it happened on Sabbath and other church members told them that because they were going to a birthday party on Sabbath either God was punishing them or the angels were not allowed to protect the child?

Can we make judgments about this?

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions 1 and 2



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The Book of Acts Lesson 9 3Q 2018

The Second Missionary Journey

By Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

What was the purpose of Paul's missionary journeys? What was Paul trying to accomplish?

Was Paul trying to convert people to a denomination?

Was Paul trying to set up a new religion that would dominate the world?

Wasn't Paul trying to teach people the truth about their condition, the reality of the world, the situation we are in, the truth about God, what sin is, God's solution for it, so that people could choose to cooperate with God for their healing and ultimately so that Christ will come again and eradicate sin?

What about us as Christians today—what is our purpose?

Are we focused on eradicating sin? Preparing the world for Christ's return?

Do we understand reality or are we stuck in a fantasy—a false narrative originated by Satan that prevents us, even as Christians, from effectively taking the final message of mercy to the world?

What is that false narrative? I came across a quote in an old magazine, Signs of the Times, 1889, written by one of the founders of the SDA church.

When Christ came, it was to engage in the conflict with the enemy of God and man, on this earth, **in the sight of the universe of heaven**. But why was it necessary to wage the warfare in the sight of other worlds?—[Is this idea that there are other worlds and this conflict is being observed, studied even by them, Biblical or made up by EG White? What is the Biblical evidence for this idea? Job 1 “sons of God” gathered before God and then Luke 3:37 Adam “son of God” so sons of God is a reference to the leaders of each world. “Angels long to look into these things” 1Pet 1:12 “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the **worlds**...” Heb 1:1,2 NKJV. Is it important in our understand our situation here, to understand what has happened beyond earth?] It was because Satan had been an exalted angel, and when he fell, he induced many angels to join him in his **revolt against God's government**. [How? What did Satan do? Where did Satan focus his efforts to have impact?] **He worked in the minds of the angels as he works in the minds of men** today. [What does Satan seek to get into our minds? What are the core ideas of Satan's false narrative, the lie of the father of lies? Is it not an attack on God's law—i.e. that God's law are merely imposed rules?] He made a pretension of loyalty to God, and yet he argued **that angels should not be under law**. [Think for a moment—what type of law would be necessary to promote for this lie to have any deceptive power? For instance, if



Satan were to tell people today, whose minds are already corrupt, that they should not be under the law of respiration, or under the law of gravity—what would sinful people say? Thus, what type of law was Satan suggesting of God's government to get sinless angels to believe his lies?] He inculcated his ideas, his rebellion and enmity, and hatred of God's law originated in the minds of the angels in heaven through his influence. **He caused the fall of man through the same temptations with which he had caused the fall of angels;** [Which is in what way? By changing how we view God's law from design law to arbitrary, imperial, imposed rules. Did God say you will die? No you won't, now I am not saying God won't kill you, but there isn't anything wrong with sin, God's laws are design laws that hurt you if you break them. They are just mere rules. And, you know God, He is too good to kill you, so you don't have to worry about dying if you eat the fruit.] and in the world where he proposed to work out his principles of rebellion, the battle had to be fought, that all might behold the **real nature and results of disobedience to God's great moral standard.** [What are the real nature and results of disobedience to God's great moral standard? The lie, Satan's view, the false narrative which keeps the world hostage to Satan, is that the results are legal, and God is required to inflict punishment for disobedience.] **He represented God in a false light, clothing him with his own attributes.** Christ came to represent the **Father in his true character. He showed that he was not an arbitrary judge, ready to bring judgments upon men, and delighting in condemning and punishing them for their evil deeds.** [Wow, did you hear that? The truth is just the opposite of what Christianity is telling the world. It is no wonder we have been ineffective in preparing the world to meet Christ. We are missionaries today as Paul 2000 years ago, to tell the world the true story, the reality of God. His kingdom of love, His design law, in order to free people from this false world view that enslaves the mind.] The Lord proclaimed his character to Moses in the mount. "And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." {ST, November 18, 1889 par. 6}

Some may wonder why I emphasize so much design law versus arbitrary rules that are enforced by authority. Not only is it true that we are ineffective in presenting the true gospel to the world to prepare the world for Christ's return. But the true gospel is the narrative of reality, of how God built reality to work, and thus has real life consequences. I came across this quote this week. See if any of you can relate to it and notice the impact of practicing the imposed law construct:

Parents who exercise a spirit of dominion [domination] and authority, transmitted to them from their own parents, which leads them to be exacting in their discipline and instruction, will not train their children aright. By their severity in dealing with their errors, they stir up the worst passions of the human heart and **leave their children with a sense of injustice and wrong.** They meet in their children the very disposition that they themselves have imparted to them. {CG 286.1}

Such parents drive their children away from God, by talking to them on religious



subjects; for the Christian religion is made unattractive and even repulsive by this misrepresentation of truth. Children will say, "Well, if that is religion, I do not want anything of it." It is thus that enmity is often created in the heart against religion; and because of an arbitrary enforcement of authority, children are led to despise the law and the government of heaven. [What is being described? The practice of arbitrary laws, imposed rules in the practice of our worship of God, and this is violation of design law—the law of liberty, which always results in rebellion—which is Satan’s goal and what Satan achieves when we accept the false narrative.] Parents have fixed the eternal destiny of their children by their own misrule. {CG 286.2}

Or consider this quote—again the impact of design law on real life health here and now:

There is a divinely appointed connection between sin and disease. [What is that divinely appointed connection, that if you sin God uses His power to ruin your health? Or, if you sin you deviate from the laws of health and the result is ruined health?] No physician can practice for a month without seeing this illustrated. He may ignore the fact; his mind may be so occupied with other matters that his attention will not be called to it; but if he will be observing and honest, he cannot help acknowledging that sin and disease bear to each other the relationship of cause and effect. [What kind of law is this?] The physician should be quick to see this and to act accordingly... God loves His creatures with a love that is both tender and strong. He has established the laws of nature; but His laws are not arbitrary exactions. [If they are not arbitrary exactions, what are they?] Every "Thou shalt not," whether in physical or moral law, contains or implies a promise. [Is there a difference in the way the physical and moral laws work in our lives, i.e. is one cause and effect and the other simply legal rules that get us in trouble with the ruling authority?] If it is obeyed, blessings will attend our steps; if it is disobeyed, the result is danger and unhappiness. [Why? This is how life is built to operate!] The laws of God are designed to bring His people closer to Himself. He will save them from the evil and lead them to the good, if they will be led; but force them He never will. . . . [Wow, why won't God force them? Law of liberty, which is design law, love only exists in atmosphere of freedom. And if He won't force them, then what will He NOT do if they refuse Him? He will not inflict punishment upon them! But does that mean there is no punishment for sin? No! Then from where does the punishment come? Just as the Bible says, "sin when full grown brings forth death."] {CH 325.2}

And I had to share just one more quote:

Representing the law of God in its true character arouses the enmity of Satan. [Do we experience this when presenting design law?] Those who love God with all the heart, will love the law of his kingdom. They will not only profess to be guided by its principles, but they will actually live them out, even in a world that is no more favorable to the development of Christian principles than were the inhabitants of the world before the flood, of whom it is written that the thoughts and imaginations of their hearts were evil, and only evil continually. A similar condition of society exists in our world today, and if those who claim to be God's



commandment-keeping people do not put in practice the principles of the law which Christ came to our world to vindicate, pronouncing it holy, just, and good, they misrepresent the character and mission of their professed Master. They mislead men in regard to the requirements of the law, and will be stumbling-blocks in the way of sinners. [So if we promote the Sabbath as an imposed rule that tests our loyalty to God and if we don't keep it God will punish us, what are we doing? We are misleading people and leading them away from God!] The Lord of hosts has warned us that we shall take heed not to misrepresent the law of his government by any **unmerciful action on our part toward our fellow-men... Not a thread of selfishness is to be woven into their practices. **The law of God is to be lived out. Thus in the character of God's people a living testimony will be borne that will contradict the fallacy of Satan, who has declared that the law of Jehovah is arbitrary, and holds its subjects under a cruel bondage.** {RH, August 13, 1895 par. 6}**

Where would the world be today if we as Christians were to live out the law? If we as Christians would preach and teach the message of God our Creator and His laws are design laws? We would be in an earth made new for Christ would have already returned!

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “Back in Antioch...” What lessons for us in this? Any evidence that Paul or Barnabas were lost because they had this disagreement and didn’t work together anymore? Or just the opposite, they both stayed in good relationship with God?

Is it possible today for people who love and trust God to disagree and not work together? Does that necessarily mean that either one of them is eternally lost?

This is one of the reasons why this ministry never seeks to silence another person, or tell another person they cannot share the message that they believe God has put on their hearts to share, even if we believe they are wrong.

We take the approach of presenting truth in love and leaving others free—the idea that truth becomes self-evident over time, so there is no need to silence people from telling their view.

Sadly, many who take a view different from what we teach don’t practice this principle, some believe it is important to try and silence those who they disagree with—why?

The second paragraph points out that the separation of Paul and Barnabas turned out to be a blessing—have any of you experienced that a disagreement with a separation for some reason, later turned out to be a blessing?



SUNDAY

The lesson is about Paul and Timothy. Timothy was half Greek and half Jewish and Paul had Timothy circumcised.

The bottom green section reads, “Think about why Paul circumcised Timothy. What should this teach us about being willing to do certain things that we might not always agree with or deem necessary, but that will serve a greater cause?”

Was circumcising Timothy necessary for Timothy’s salvation?

Was it necessary for Timothy to experience the Holy Spirit?

Was it necessary for Timothy to be a pastor?

Why did Paul do it? What, perhaps, were Paul’s motives?

Didn’t Paul have a very heavy burden on his heart for the Jewish people and perhaps the Jewish leadership, of which he had been a part?

The lesson suggest what Paul did was for the greater good—but could it be in this one area—dealing with the Jews, particularly the leadership—that Paul was overly influenced by his feelings and didn’t actually follow the most helpful course?

Could it be Paul was following his own initiative, and was not be specifically directed by the Holy Spirit to do these things?

Is there another example of Paul doing something that was not necessary but to seem conciliatory to the Jews?

He went through a purification ritual—how did that turn out for Paul?

So I would ask another question—what happens when we compromise our values, our beliefs, (notice I didn’t say the truth) in order not to offend people we care about?

From the book *Acts of the Apostles* we read the following:

As a precautionary measure, **Paul wisely advised Timothy to be circumcised—not that God required it, but in order to remove from the minds of the Jews that which might be an objection to Timothy's ministration.** In his work Paul was to journey from city to city, in many lands, and often he would have opportunity to preach Christ in Jewish synagogues, as well as in other places of assembly. **If it should be known that one of his companions in labor was uncircumcised, his work might be greatly hindered by the prejudice and**



bigotry of the Jews. Everywhere the apostle met determined opposition and severe persecution. He desired to bring to his Jewish brethren, as well as to the Gentiles, a knowledge of the gospel, and therefore he sought, so far as was consistent with the faith, to remove every pretext for opposition. Yet while he conceded this much to Jewish prejudice, he believed and taught circumcision or uncircumcision to be nothing and the gospel of Christ everything. {AA 204.1}

This author thought it was wise on Paul's part to advise Timothy to be circumcised, even though it was not required by God. And we have the history of what transpired in their lives in the aftermath of Timothy being circumcised.

We don't have the history of what would have transpired if Timothy had not been circumcised. It is possible that the circumcision of Timothy was used by the opponents of Paul to fuel more calls for circumcision of converts. It is possible that had Timothy not been circumcised it would have been a powerful object lesson that it wasn't needed. We simply don't know because that is not what happened.

I get emails from time to time from people who were raised to believe that Christians should not wear jewelry—there are a variety of rationales and reasons given from person to person, but they believe it is wrong to wear jewelry. And they will question, why do I wear a wedding ring. Some have suggested, that while it isn't wrong to wear one, it would be wise to not wear one so that I don't offend the people who believe it is wrong to wear one.

What do you think?

My approach is the opposite—while I don't seek to offend anyone, I wear the wedding ring first and foremost because I am married and want people to know it. But, secondarily, in regard to some Christians struggling with the question of jewelry, I want to be a witness that a person can have a saving relationship with Christ and communicate the gospel message while wearing a wedding ring. In other words, reality is demonstrating there is no linkage or connection with wearing a wedding ring and salvation. Hopefully, this will stimulate people to think for themselves and grow in their understanding.

But, I know some have just the opposite position and don't wear a wedding ring because they don't want to confuse others—wonderful. Rom 14:5 let every person be fully persuaded in their own mind—because we are not saved or lost by wedding rings.

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, "Whenever Paul arrived..." Do you think Paul was a scheduled speaker?

So, evidently their culture and meetings allowed for Paul to eventually speak.

Did Paul have an agenda in going to such meetings?

What was Paul's agenda?

Wasn't it to use their Scriptures, rituals, symbolism to reveal the truth about Jesus and God's real plan of salvation?

Do we have similar opportunities today to visit various Sunday schools and Sabbath schools and use the Bible and their lessons to introduce truths designed to lead minds to the larger reality of God's design law and character of love?

But, how was Paul often treated when he did this?

How might we be treated when we do this? Why?

Because if we merely present the truth of God's design law, what does that automatically do in regard to the false view? It exposes it—and if the audience is filled with people who prefer the false view, how will they respond when the truth is presented?

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who **does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.** John 3:19,20 NIV

Have any of you experienced being attacked for presenting the truth?

Jesus said that one of the reasons people opposed the light of truth is they fear their deeds will be exposed—there is one gentleman who has spent an inordinate amount of time and energy working to misrepresent me and this ministry. He has written blogs, he has spoken in various groups, he has handed out cards all attacking what we teach. And do you know what is primary objection is? He asked me, “Do you believe that when we confess our sins that God erases them from the books of heaven so that in the future there will be no record of our sins?”

Do you see it, he doesn't want the light of truth because he is afraid his deeds will be exposed.

Read third paragraph, “Paul and Silas's answer...” Jump to Friday and question #1, “In the context of the last paragraph...”

What do you think the lesson is suggesting before baptism? When you hear “proper doctrinal” instruction—what are you understanding to be communicated with those words?

Do you understand that the lesson is suggesting that when someone accepts Jesus as their Savior that they are to go through baptismal classes to be indoctrinated into the right doctrines, i.e. fundamental beliefs before they can be baptized?



Do you think the quotation from Friday's lesson is supportive of this idea?

What is the Biblical model?

What is the New Testament model for baptism?

First with John the Baptists baptism—how much preparation did the people who wanted to be baptized receive?

Then later when the Apostles baptized, how much preparation did the baptismal candidates receive?

So, what is being suggested? What is the danger of having no preparation? What is the danger of having too much preparation?

What is the balance?

Is water baptism necessary for salvation?

What baptism is necessary for salvation?

Then what preparation is necessary for the baptism by the Spirit?

Then what is the purpose of the guidance for more preparation before the ceremonial water baptism?

Read bottom green section, "Read Acts 16:31-34..."

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." ³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. ³³ At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. ³⁴ The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family. NIV

First, does it sound like a lot of pre-baptism preparation was done?

Why not?

There was no organization with its codified system of beliefs and behavioral expectations to which the person had to be indoctrinated, educated, and habituated BEFORE they would be permitted to join the group.

So, do we have tension between the Biblical model and the quotation from the EG White in Friday's lesson? No! The authors have a view that is not consistent with Scripture, and they used a partial quote



from EGW to support their view. Let's read a little larger quote and see what you think:

The preparation for baptism is a matter that needs to be carefully considered. The new converts to the truth should be faithfully instructed in the plain "Thus saith the Lord." The Word of the Lord is to be read and explained to them point by point. {Ev 308.1}

All who enter upon the new life should understand, prior to their baptism, **that the Lord requires the undivided affections.** . . . The practicing of the truth is essential. The bearing of fruit testifies to the character of the tree. **A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit.** The line of demarcation will be plain and distinct between those who love God and keep His commandments and those who love Him not and disregard His precepts. **There is need of a thorough conversion to the truth.**--Manuscript 56, 1900. {Ev 308.2}

There is need of a more thorough preparation on the part of candidates for baptism. They are in need of more faithful instruction than has usually been given them. **The principles of the Christian life should be made plain** to those who have newly come to the truth. **None can depend upon their profession of faith** as proof that they have a saving connection with Christ. **We are not only to say, "I believe," but to practice the truth.** It is by conformity to the will of God in our words, **our deportment, our character,** that we prove our connection with Him. Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 91, 92. (1900) {Ev 308.4}

What do you hear? Is she suggesting doctrinal instruction to cognitively accept a certain creed or fundamental beliefs, or is she suggesting that a person must be genuinely converted in their heart such that their affections for Christ are supreme and they have experienced baptism of the Holy Spirit such that they have a new heart and right spirit, understanding that they are to live differently, in harmony with God and His design laws i.e. principles? This is exactly what Scripture teaches, that water baptism is done AFTER the heart is converted to Christ and it is not a cognitive indoctrination into a certain religious order, but an intelligent understanding of reality and the God of reality with a heart humbly submitted and willing to live in harmony with our Creator God.

But, when we live under the false law model, we misconstrue what is supposed to happen, and instead substitute a legal checklist of proper doctrines one must attest to before one can be baptized, regardless of whether one's heart is changed.

What is meant by Christ's righteousness covering us?

Here is one commentator's view:

Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. "I counsel thee," He says, "to buy of Me . . . white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Revelation 3:18. {COL 311.3}



This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. **Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. "... When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

What does it mean to be covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness?

Is this a legal event or a transformational event?

What law system is this occurring under or through? Design law, actually restoring the heart, mind, character of the sinner back to God's design.

Do we see again why the penal/legal model is so **effective at obstructing the work of the Holy Spirit and delaying the final work and the second coming of Christ?**

TUESDAY

The lesson contrast two groups of listeners—those in Thessalonica and Berea—what is the highlighted difference between the two?

Those in Thessalonica didn't like what they heard and rioted in order to silence and stop what Paul was teaching. Those in Berea studied out what they heard comparing it to evidence and coming to their own conclusion.

Which method do you prefer and why?

Do you see these methods used in society today to greater or lesser degrees? For instance, it isn't always a full riot, instead some people will incite an emotional sense of outrage or fear or intolerance that shuts down thinking or inquiry and shout down those with opposing views, or get people to be afraid to hear an opposing view.

And sometimes we still see full riots in society when ideas we disagree with are presented.

What does it say about a person or group who would refuse to evaluate evidence and instead participate in hysterical or emotional protests to silence those with whom they disagree?

Which groups are more likely to get emotional and start hysterical outcries to silence those with whom they disagree?



Extreme groups whose positions do not rest on facts, truth or evidence—thus extreme left and extreme right groups do this.

Why is it that we don't need to do this?

I read the follow quote many years ago and it became a guideline in how I developed my thinking and approach to questions.

There is no excuse for any one in **taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error.** The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. **Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation.** We are living in perilous times, and it does not become us to accept everything claimed to be truth without examining it thoroughly; neither can we afford to reject anything that bears the fruits of the Spirit of God; but we should be teachable, meek and lowly of heart. There are those who oppose everything that is not in accordance with their own ideas, and by so doing they endanger their eternal interest as verily as did the Jewish nation in their rejection of Christ. The Lord designs that our opinions shall be put to the test, that we may see the necessity of closely examining the living oracles to see whether or not we are in the faith. Many who claim to believe the truth have settled down at their ease, saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." But Jesus says to these self-complacent ones, Thou "knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Let us individually inquire, Do these words describe my case? If so, the True Witness counsels us, saying, "Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." {RH, December 20, 1892 par. 1}

WEDNESDAY

What method did Paul use in Athens?

Did Paul quote the Bible to the Athenians? Why not?

What did Paul use as evidence of his position? He quoted a pagan poet and also used their own monument to an unknown god to open an opportunity to speak about the true God.

The lesson asks, "What should this teach us about how we can use different methods to reach different people?"

- What might be a way to speak to a person who says they don't believe in God?
- How might you approach a Jewish person about Jesus?
- What might you say to a Buddhist or Hindu?



THURSDAY

The lesson discusses Paul's stay in Corinth—what is noteworthy?

Did Paul have an easy time or was he opposed?

And who was against him? Why were the Jews so insistent on attacking Paul?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Check our website for new chapters of *The Remedy* the Psalms will be going up slowly as they are completed and edited. When an entire book of the Old Testament is complete then it will be added to the app and when you update the app you will get the new book. Thank you for your prayers and support as I work on this project.

Each Tuesday watch *The Dr. Tim Jennings Show* on WBTN.TV Network. Go to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

New Video Blogs—If you don't follow us on Facebook, then be sure to visit our website we are posting new blogs again, the go up every Thursday.

September 14,15, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be Keynote Speaker at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown, Delaware.

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

September 30-Oct 2, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at NAD of SDA Mental Health Education retreat for pastors at Kettering, OH.

October 19, 20, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar at Camelback SDA church, in Phoenix, AZ.

November 9,10 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Houston, TX, in conjunction with the AACC

December 1, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing an Aging Brain seminar in Dallas, TX. Organized by the Arlington SDA church.

January 4-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking for the Florida Conference of SDA Women's Convention in Orlando, FL.

February 2-3, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking Christ's Church of Oronogo, MO.

In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church
Mental Health Matters Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family.

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even



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which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!

Lesson #10: The Third Missionary Journey

by Dr. Wendell Moses

1. Text for the week: Acts 18:24 - 28, 19, 20, 21:1-15
2. Memory Text: "I do not count my life of any value to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the good news of God's grace." (Acts 20:24, NRSV).
3. Paul: what is in it for him?
 - a. We are made complete.
 - b. We are who we should be when we are serving others.
 - c. This world has as its template: self, #1,
 - d. God's kingdom, whole being, principle law/design construct is serving others.
 - i. Matthew 20:25-28 (GNT with Deuterocanon) So Jesus called them all together and said, "You know that the rulers of the heathen have power over them, and the leaders have complete authority. This, however, is not the way it shall be among you. If one of you wants to be great, you must be the servant of the rest; and if one of you wants to be first, you must be the slave of the others— like the Son of Man, who did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life to redeem many people."
4. **Sabbath Afternoon**

 - a. What is a journey?
 - b. How long does that last?
 - i. Chelsea & Emily
 - c. With 3 years in Ephesus, this "journey" lasted probably 4 or 5 years.
 - i. This is what we would call a long term mission trip / assignment.
5. This is really a completion of his second journey
 - a. Acts 18:18
 - i. Left Corinth (there a year and a half) and took Priscilla and Aquilla (fellow tent makers)
 - (1) sat in the synagogue together as tradesmen
 - ii. Left them in Ephesus
 - iii. Reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue
 - (1) they asked him to stay but he needed to go to Jerusalem to take the donation for the poor, famine stricken church
 - iv. "I will return"
 - b. Paul's 3rd trip / extended evangelistic campaign is a fulfillment of his promise to return.

- c. Over view of 3rd journey
 - i. Northern Turkey
 - ii. Apollo's ministry
 - iii. Ephesus - 3 years
 - (1) meeting the 12 disciples
 - (2) sons of Sceva
 - (3) miracles
 - (4) Burning of books
 - (5) Riot
 - iv. Trip to Greece
 - v. Return trip
 - (1) Eutychus fall/death/resurrection
 - vi. Return trip to Antioch & Jerusalem

6. **Sunday: Ephesus: Part 1**

- 7. Which is more important: the message or the method by which a message is given?
- 8. Apollos (Acts 18:24 - 28)
 - a. Taught accurately, but incompletely about Jesus Christ
 - i. What he had heard from John the Baptist
 - b. AA Chapter 26
 - c. #20, 33, 34, 35, 36
- 9. Paul's arrival in Ephesus
 - a. Met 12 disciples
 - i. - no, not those 12 disciples
 - ii. Locals
 - iii. What did they believe
 - iv. They had been baptized
 - (1) baptism of John: repentance
 - (2) believers in God
 - (3) It is interesting that these 12 people were described as believers and the other attendees of the synagogue were not.
 - v. Immediately baptized into the belief of "the Lord Jesus"
 - b. Do you find it interesting that Paul's approach was a question about the Holy Spirit, not Christ?
 - i. Is he asking about effects rather than initial info?
 - c. How do you know what you believe in?
 - i. Manifestations of the Holy Spirit?
 - ii. A unified foundation of scripture?
 - iii. I have met many individuals who have been converted to the biblically sound teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist church, who apparently do not know Christ.

10. Baptism of the 12 Ephesians
 - a. Already believers about Christ (based on John's instruction)
 - b. What was so distinctive that they felt compelled to be baptized when they accepted Christ and the Holy Spirit?
 - c. They experienced a like phenomenon
 - i. Why is this important? Why did it happen?
11. **Monday: Ephesus: Part 2** Chapter 19

12. Vs: 9
 - a. "Some became hardened"
 - i. What hardened their hearts / opposition?
 - ii. Did God harden their hearts?
 - iii. Did Paul harden their hearts?
 - iv. What is the process of hardening your heart?
 - (1) Is there other terms for this same process?
 - (2) Can this be used in a positive way?
13. When the apostle took up his work in Corinth, he realized that he must introduce most carefully the great truths he wished to teach. He knew that among his hearers would be proud believers in human theories, and exponents of false systems of worship, who were groping with blind eyes, hoping to find in the book of nature theories that would contradict the reality of the spiritual and immortal life as revealed in the Scriptures. He also knew that critics would endeavor to controvert the Christian interpretation of the revealed word, and that skeptics would treat the gospel of Christ with scoffing and derision. {AA 272.1}
14. He longed to see the light of the gospel of Christ piercing the darkness of their minds, that they might see how offensive in the sight of God were their immoral practices. Therefore the burden of his teaching among them was Christ and Him crucified. He sought to show them that their most earnest study and their greatest joy must be the wonderful truth of salvation through repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. {AA 272.2}
 - a. Why are the immoral practices offensive to God?
 - b. Compare to a parent who considers drug addiction or a cancer diagnosis offensive.
 - i. God's children are not offensive, the things that are destroying them are.
15. The philosopher turns aside from the light of salvation, because it puts his proud theories to shame; the worldling refuses to receive it, because it would separate him from his earthly idols. Paul saw that the character of Christ must be understood before men could love Him or view the cross with the eye of faith. Here must begin that study which shall be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. In the light of the cross alone can the true value of the human soul be estimated. {AA 273.1}

16. It is not human, but divine power, that works transformation of character. Those who plant and those who water do not cause the growth of the seed; they work under God, as His appointed agencies, co-operating with Him in His work. To the Master Worker belongs the honor and glory that comes with success. {AA 274.1}
17. Men will be converted, not to the human instrumentality, but to Christ. Self will be kept in the background; Jesus only, the Man of Calvary, will appear. {AA 278.2}
18. The Sons of Sceva
 - a. Evil spirit beat up 7 brothers trying to use the name of Christ as a talisman.
19. Public confessions and burning of \$50,000 of books of magic
 - a. When (if ever) is it appropriate to burn books?
 - b. Fad in the 60's & early 70's to burn things.
 - i. Prayers, confessions, books, etc
 - c. What would the equivalent practice be today?
 - d. Is it appropriate to participate in mass destruction of materials found to be offensive?
 - e. Read "Mental Inebriates" section of EGW quotes in notes.
 - i. Comments:???
20. Paul and Apollos were in perfect harmony. The latter was disappointed and grieved because of the dissension in the church at Corinth; he took no advantage of the preference shown to himself, nor did he encourage it, but hastily left the field of strife. When Paul afterward urged him to revisit Corinth, he declined and did not again labor there until long afterward when the church had reached a better spiritual state. {AA 280.2}
 - a. Jesus knew that they would spare no effort to create a division between His own disciples and those of John. He knew that the storm was gathering which would sweep away one of the greatest prophets ever given to the world. Wishing to avoid all occasion for misunderstanding or dissension, He quietly ceased His labors, and withdrew to Galilee. We also, while loyal to truth, should try to avoid all that may lead to discord and misapprehension. For whenever these arise, they result in the loss of souls. Whenever circumstances occur that threaten to cause division, we should follow the example of Jesus and of John the Baptist. {DA 181.4}

21. Second paragraph
 - a. Talks about a “few miracle stories”
 - b. Handkerchiefs and aprons
 - i. Paul’s sweat rags
 - ii. Miraculous healings
 - iii. Verse 19:11 - “extraordinary” miracles
 - c. Who are miracles for?
 - i. The great in faith or the least in faith?
 - ii. Other stories of miracles
 - (1) Do you know of any miracle that was done for the great in faith?
 - (a) Elijah being fed by the ravens?
 - (i) If God could provide food by ravens, why did he not provide water in a similar way?
-
22. **Tuesday: Troas** (The story of Eutychus)
-
23. Read the first paragraph
 - a. Does God protect you when you are doing His work?
 - b. Why did Paul alter his travel plans?
 - c. What about the Devil’s temptation of Christ and quoting of scripture about “striking your foot against a stone”?
 - i. Psalms 91:12
 - ii. Read the 91st Psalm
 - iii. We should not unnecessarily place ourselves at risk.
 - (1) Christ’s response: Deut 6:16
 - (a) “you shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as tested Him at Massah.”
 - (i) Massah & Meribah - where the COI forced God with their complaints and accusations about His character.
-
24. Eutychus
 - a. Even the most inspired preachers can put someone to sleep . . .
 - b. What can we do so that we do not miss the message?
-
25. The Sabbath question (did the early church have worship services on Sunday or Saturday?):
 - a. “Me thinks you protest too much.”
 - b. Romans 14:5 “Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.”
 - i. Our job is not to convict someone of their duty, that is the job for the Holy

- ii. Spirit.
 - Our job is to “do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God. (GNT)
 - iii. 1 Peter 3:15, 16 “But have reverence for Christ in your hearts, and honor him as Lord. Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you, but do it with gentleness and respect.” (GNT)

26. Wednesday: Melitus

27. Read the 3rd paragraph
- a. Have you ever known anyone who was maligned for their public ministry?
 - b. Anyone who has had bad stories told about them which were poorly investigated and believed without full investigation?
 - c. Anyone who may have been asked to leave positions of leadership due to differences in opinion and understanding of the grace of God?
28. The 5th paragraph: “No question, Paul had a lot of things on his mind, a lot of concerns; and yet, his faithfulness and his diligence never wavered.
- a. May I be an example of faithfulness - regardless.
29. Paragraphs from EGW discussing “withdraw”
- a. Paragraphs 32 and onward at end of study notes.

30. Thursday: Thursday

- a. Read the last two sentences of the first paragraph: “Paul himself . . .”
 - i. What about divine guidance?
 - ii. How are we to know what we are doing is correct?
- b. Read the third paragraph: “Those who were with Paul . . .”
 - i. What is the difference between a warning by God and a prophecy?

31. Friday

- a. Read the last paragraph of Friday’s “Further Thought” section.
 - i. What are we to do when we hear reports about someone?

- ii. Options:
 - (1) Don't stir the pot?
 - (2) Discuss it with others so that you can to an opinion satisfactory for the devout members of the church?
 - (3) Independent investigation?
 - (a) If so, in what manner?
 - (b) Who are you going to question?
 - (c) Should you approach the individual in question, first?

Quotes

No man ever lived who was a more earnest, energetic, and self-sacrificing disciple of Christ than was Paul. He was one of the world's greatest teachers. He crossed the seas and traveled far and near, until a large portion of the world had learned from his lips the story of the cross of Christ. He possessed a burning desire to bring perishing man to a knowledge of the truth through a Saviour's love. His soul was wrapped up in the work of the ministry, and it was with feelings of pain that he withdrew from this work to toil for his own bodily necessities; but he seated himself to the drudgery of the craftsman that he might not be burdensome to the churches that were pressed with poverty. Although he had planted many churches he refused to be supported by them, fearing that his usefulness and success as a minister of the gospel might be interfered with by suspicions of his motives. He would remove all occasion for his enemies to misrepresent him and thus detract from the force of his message. {4T 409.2}

Paul appeals to his Corinthian brethren to understand that, as a laborer in the gospel, he might claim his support, instead of sustaining himself; but this right he was willing to forego, fearing that the acceptance of means for his support might possibly stand in the way of his usefulness. Although feeble in health, he labored during the day in serving the cause of Christ, and then toiled a large share of the night, and frequently all night, that he might make provision for his own and others' necessities. The apostle would also give an example to his brethren, thus dignifying and honoring industry. When our ministers feel that they are suffering hardships and privations in the cause of Christ, let them in imagination visit the workshop of the apostle Paul, bearing in mind that while this chosen man of God is fashioning the canvas, he is working for bread which he has justly earned by his labors as an apostle of Jesus Christ. At the call of duty this great apostle would lay aside his business to meet the most violent opponents and stop their proud boasting, and then he would resume his humble employment. His religious industry is a rebuke to the indolence of some of our ministers. When they have opportunity to labor to help sustain themselves they should do so with gladness. {4T 409.3}

We read of the experience of Christ that at one time when the Pharisees held a council together, how they might destroy Him, Jesus "withdrew Himself from thence: and great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all; and charged them that they should not make Him known: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold My Servant, whom I have chosen; My Beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased: I will put My Spirit upon

Him, and He shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory. And in His name shall the Gentiles trust.” {Lt316-1908.2}

Jesus offended the Pharisees by laying out before them the hollowness of their piety and the unscripturalness of their teachings. He often withdrew from the multitude to avoid an outbreak of hostility. On one occasion He withdrew to the borders of Tyre and Sidon. There He entered into a house and would have no man know it. But He could not be hid. A mother with a sick daughter came with an urgent appeal for aid, and He heeded her request and healed her daughter. Christ was the great Medical Missionary. His whole life was a representation of God. {Lt227-1905.10}

The voice of Christ was not heard in the street, in noisy contention with those who were opposed to his doctrine. Neither was his voice heard in the streets in prayer to his Father, to be heard of men. His voice was not heard in joyful mirth. His voice was not raised to exalt himself, and to gain the applause and flattery of men. When engaged in teaching, he withdrew his disciples away from the noise and confusion of the busy city to some retired place more in harmony with the lessons of humility, piety, and virtue, which he would impress upon their minds. He shunned human praise, and preferred solitude and peaceful retirement to the noise and confusion of mortal life. His voice was often heard in earnest, prevailing intercessions to his Father; yet for these exercises he chose the lonely mountain, and frequently spent whole nights in prayer for strength to sustain him under the temptations he should meet, and to accomplish the important work he came to do for the salvation of man. His petitions were earnest and powerful, mingled with strong cries and tears. And notwithstanding the labor of soul during the night, he ceased not his labor through the day. In the morning he would quietly resume his work of mercy and disinterested benevolence. The life of Christ was in marked contrast to that of the Jews, and for this very reason they wished to destroy him. {1Red 25.1}

The news that had been carried to John concerning the success of Jesus, was also borne to Jerusalem, and there created against him jealousy, envy, and hatred. Jesus knew the hard hearts and darkened minds of the Pharisees, and that they would spare no pains to create a division between his own disciples and those of John that would greatly injure the work, so he quietly ceased to baptize and withdrew to Galilee. He knew that the storm was gathering which was soon to sweep away the noblest prophet God had ever given to the world. He wished to avoid all division of feeling in the great work before him, and, for the time, removed from that region for the purpose of allaying all excitement detrimental to the cause of God. {2SP 139.1}

32. Teachers Comments: Page 135 in teachers edition

- a. The name “Jesus” is meaningless as a talisman or incantation.
 - i. Why do we say it at the end of prayers?
 - ii. Why is it not a common Protestant given name?
 - iii. Book: The Names of God

33. Mental Inebriates:

a. The mind that is occupied with exciting stories, loses all relish for solid reading that would improve the memory and strengthen the intellect. {RH October 9, 1883, par. 3} I am acquainted with many sad examples of the evil effects of this baneful practice. In youth, the persons of whom I speak had well-balanced minds. God had endowed them with mental powers of no ordinary character. But they took up the reading of romance, and the more they indulged the appetite for this food, the greater was the demand. The imagination constantly craved its accustomed stimulus, as the inebriate longs for his wine or tobacco. Their mental and moral powers were weakened and perverted. They lost their interest in the Scriptures and their relish for prayer; and they were as truly ruined, mentally and spiritually, as is the liquor-drinker or the tobacco devotee. Novel-readers are mental inebriates; and they need to sign a pledge of total abstinence as verily as does the victim of any other form of intemperance. {RH October 9, 1883, par. 4}

- i. Why?
- ii. Is it because they will be punished if they do not?
- iii. Is it possible for them to lose their hold on heaven?
- iv. What principle is being demonstrated here?
- v. 2 Corinth 3:18 “transforms us into his likeness in an ever greater degree of glory.” GNT
- vi. This is the same process described in other writings as being “sealed”
 - (1) You can be sealed into the truth or sealed away from it. (Hardened in heart)

b. Christ has promised, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” He will hear and answer our prayers, and faith appropriates the rich promises of God, believing they are for us. As we accept the promises of God, we grow stronger in faith, and find the word of the Lord fulfilled as he has spoken it. We may feel our weakness and unworthiness, and because of this, realize our dependence upon God. Every one of us can have a rich experience in the things of God if we will utterly forsake our sin and submit ourselves to God. O, how can we cherish impurity in the soul when Christ has died for us, that we may become partakers of the divine nature, and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust? We are to be sanctified through the truth, and this sanctification is not the work of a moment, but of a life-time. We must all learn to lean upon Jesus; for the time will come when we shall be scattered, and we cannot lean upon one another. Christ is ready to give us the help we need. The Bible is full of precious treasure, but we must dig for it as did the man who purchased the field of treasure. In this way we shall learn what it is to have living faith. Many are enfeebling the mind by the

reading of stories and novels, and are losing their relish for the word of God. They are becoming mental inebriates, and will be unable to look at the solemn questions of life and destiny in the right light, unless they put away this practice. Search the Scriptures, and know what is truth. Lean upon God, and know what is living faith, and live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. {RH April 14, 1891, par. 13}



The Book of Acts Lesson 11 3Q 2018

Arrest in Jerusalem

by Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

SABBATH

Paul was passionate to reach the Jewish people. He really longed for this to happen. As he wrote in Romans 9:3 “For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel.”

I thought a lot about Paul this week. Paul loved his Jewish people, his church—Paul was educated by his church. I was raised in the SDA church, and I was educated both in church and church schools. And like Paul, I love my church.

Paul was taught the Scripture from his church and church school education, as was I.

But could Paul hold to the interpretations of Scripture he was taught in his upbringing?

When Paul moved past the traditional interpretations of his church how did his church respond?

Now, was the problem primarily a problem that they disagreed on doctrinal points, circumcision or not circumcision—was that the real problem or merely a focal point of the problem?

They did disagree on certain doctrinal points, but why did anyone care about that?

What was the real problem between Paul and the Jewish leadership?

What method did Saul of Tarsus utilize when he was trying to turn people away from Christ back to Judaism?

What method did Paul use after his conversion?

What method did the Jewish leadership use on Paul and the other Apostles when they disagreed on points of doctrine?

We in the SDA church talk a lot about the beast of revelation—what constitutes being part of the beastly system?

Is it primarily about holding the wrong understanding of a doctrine—or about practicing the wrong methods in how one lives—in other words, character?

What methods does the beastly system utilize? –coercive pressure to force others to comply.



If one accepts the lie about God's law and believes God's law functions like human law, imperial rules requiring external enforcement, can you predict what methods will ultimately be employed?

Are there any church denominations that are free of the false law construct?

Are there any church denominations that are immune from using the methods of the beast—the methods of coercion?

It is with mixed feelings—sadness that this is true, but hope that it is being brought out into the open to discuss...

Some of you may have read the article that came out August 28, 2018 in Spectrum Magazine by George Knight, a well-respected SDA historian.

The title of the Article is *Adventism's Shocking Fulfillment of Prophecy*

Here's the link to the article:

<https://spectrummagazine.org/article/2018/08/28/adventism%E2%80%99s-shocking-fulfillment-prophecy>

Here's a short portion from the article for your thoughts:

For over 150 years the Seventh-day Adventist Church has faithfully preached the message of Revelation 13 that near the end of time “all the world marveled and followed the beast,” who had recovered from the deadly wound (13:3, NKJV). And at the heart of the Adventist concern was verse 7's prophecy that the beast would “make war with the saints” and “overcome them.”

What was not predicted by the Adventist evangelists was that the General Conference leadership would be joining the beast in its eschatological crusade, with the denomination's president leading the charge.

He goes on to document in quite meticulous detail the recent moves by the GC leadership to centralize power with a top-down authoritarian structure to enforce doctrinal orthodoxy on threat of punishment, firing from job, expulsion from membership, withholding funds etc.

He describes in accurate detail the same structure and method used by the Roman Catholic Church in its hierarchal design, then goes on to say:

One of the more interesting facts of history is that it took the bishops of Rome 600 years to develop an effective papacy with control over the worldwide church, while Silver Spring is on track to do so in a little more than 150.



I want to pause here and make some comments. It took the bishops of Rome 600 years because they were undermining the good fabric of God's design law of love established by Christ and the Apostles. Thus, it took 600 years to fully replace that understanding with the imperial lie. However, the SDA church has never fulfilled its purpose and fully thrown off the imperial view of God's law and stood solely on God's design law. Thus, it has only taken 150 years for the smoldering lie of imperialism to reignite and take over the church leadership.

When reading the comments from readers of Dr. Knight's article I noticed one person who has been a vocal critic of this class—and not surprisingly, he voiced his support for the central leadership to use authoritarian measures to enforce its rules. It was argued a vote was taken and the majority vote should be abided by and the GC should enforce it.

Dr. Knight observed that during the reformation the princes of Germany had to take a stand against the established church authority, he quoted from *The Great Controversy*:

- “‘Let us reject this decree,’ said the princes. *‘In matters of conscience the majority has no power’*” (p. 201, italics supplied).
- “‘We protest...before God, our only Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and Saviour, and who will one day be our Judge, as well as before all men and all creatures, that we...neither consent nor adhere in any manner whatsoever to the proposed decree, in anything that is contrary to God, to His holy word, to our right conscience, to the salvation of our souls’” (pp. 202-203).
- “‘A deep impression was made upon the Diet [by the protesting princes]. The majority were filled with amazement and alarm at the boldness of the protesters’” (p. 203).
- “‘The principles contained in this celebrated Protest...constitute the very essence of Protestantism. *Now this Protest opposes two abuses of man in matters of faith: the first is the intrusion of the civil magistrate, and the second the arbitrary authority of the church’*” (pp. 203-204, italics supplied).

Do we have a responsibility to think for ourselves in matters of conscience, to not submit to a church hierarchy, even if it is the church we love, if we are convinced they are wrong?

God's method is to present the truth in love and leave people free. This is the method God used in heaven with Lucifer started his rebellion.

The method of Satan is lies and coercion, threaten to punish if not followed.

Now, consider the functional difference in the ability to God's truth and love to spread throughout the hearts of human beings to prepare people to meet Jesus.

What method works best?

What happens to the ability of truth to spread if there is central power that coerces people if they should speak, teach or believe differently that the officially sanctioned view?



The spread of truth is undermined—look at the Dark Ages and the way the Roman church enforced their dogma.

This is why the SDA church was originally organized differently. The GC was set up to establish official positions of the organization, so that anyone who cared to know could find out what were the official positions of the church on any point the church took an official stance.

However, the SDA church was set up purposely so that the GC had no power to enforce its positions on anyone. The GC could not hire or fire pastors, it did not own church properties, it could not grant membership or disfellowship. The GC had no central authority—the authority rested with local congregations and local conferences.

Functionally, think of the beauty of this. How do new truths usually come forward in the world, in any line of study? Is it that all people throughout the world simultaneously come to the same understanding? Or is that a few individuals gain insight, share it with others in their community who study it, and when they understand and accept it share it with others and it slowly spreads?

Do you see that the top down enforcement of orthodoxy prevents this, it punishes expansion of truths that don't meet orthodoxy, and fires pastors who teach new truth, disfellowships members etc. But the local authority approach allows the organic growth and spread of truth and eventually when enough of the world church has come to the same insight the official position of the church will change in GC session.

Now recently, I received an email from someone who asked why I use the SDA study guide if I find so much fault with it. Why don't I just stop using it.

Some have thought that talking about these things is an attack, a negative, a method of undermining, injury, harming the church. I would counter, that in fact it is the opposite. When we love someone and we see them heading for a cliff we warn, we point out the danger, we contrast the healthy with the unhealthy so innocents will not be duped into following those bent on destruction.

This class is always about truth presented in love to bring people to a healing relationship with God—it is never about inciting harm or injury.

With all of this in mind, why am I not at the GC talking with them, why am I talking to you about this? Because truth expands from person to person, not from institutional top down methods.

Did Jesus try and convert the Sanhedrin? When confrontations arose between Jesus and the Jewish leadership, who initiated it?



SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, “In Acts 21:18-22, James and...” What is described here? What was Paul actually teaching?

- That circumcision of the body doesn’t save a person
- That circumcision of the body is a symbol of the true circumcision of the heart

Is teaching this the same thing as teaching that the Jews should not circumcise their children?

Why then, were the Jews alleging Paul was telling people not to circumcise their children, if Paul was not teaching this?

Because Paul was taking away a reason they falsely believed about circumcision—Paul was removing any special significance to the physical circumcision and thus, while he wasn’t telling the Jews they needed to stop, he was telling them it didn’t make any difference in salvation. They, therefore, having attributed a false meaning to circumcision, when that meaning was taken away misinterpreted what Paul was saying and falsely accused Paul.

This is exactly what we have experienced when we tell people that Jesus did not have to die in order to pay a legal penalty—those who hold the false legal view turn around and accuse us of saying that we don’t believe the death of Jesus was necessary for our salvation. This is a false allegation, but it occurs because those who make it don’t conceive of another reason for the death of Christ other than the false legal reason. Thus, when we take that reason away, they conclude we teach that the death of Christ was unnecessary.

Here is 1Corinthians 7:18-20 from *The Remedy*:

If a man was a circumcised Jew when he accepted the Remedy to sin and was called to be a member of God's treatment team, he should not deny who he is and try to become uncircumcised. If a man was an uncircumcised Gentile when he accepted the Remedy to sin and was called to be a member of God's treatment team, he should not deny who he is and become circumcised.¹⁹Nationality means nothing! What matters is whether one has partaken of the Remedy to selfishness and sin, has God's law of love written on the heart, and lives in harmony with God and his methods.²⁰God needs members of his treatment team in all walks of life, so minister the truth about God, and his Remedy to sin, in whatever station you are.

do you find this acceptable, reasonable, truthful, or offensive?

Do you think the Jews in Paul’s day would have found this acceptable or offensive?

What about Christians that you know who don’t currently agree with our class—do you think they would agree with this or find it offensive?



If a person found offensive what might that indicate?

Read the fourth and fifth paragraphs, “Paul was advised to be politically correct...”

Was this a good idea? Why or why not?

Was Paul’s *intention* to seek peace and reconciliation and to not offend others a good goal?

If his intention to not offend and seek peace was good, why was the action not good?

What about in society today—where do we draw the line between not offending others, being peacemakers, and compromising in such a way that we actually undermine truth and contribute to destruction?

In order to know what decision to make would it be important to understand what matters and what doesn’t matter?

For instance, if a person believes they must wear a certain hat or hairpiece in order to be right with God—would it be necessary for you to argue with them about any value in their headdress? No, because headdress doesn’t matter at all.

What kinds of things actually matter and what do not matter?

Any examples of taking stands that you know will offend, versus compromising so people won’t be offended?

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “A riot ensued...” Why did a riot ensue? What was the basis of the riot?

What methods did those who incited the riot use?

What does it say about those who would use such methods, even if something they believe to be sacred is profaned?

Do you remember years ago some artist put a cross in urine?

How did the Christians respond? They responded by being disgusted with the display—but they left the person free to do so.

What would happen if someone did that with a Koran? Why?

What does it say about those who would riot when something they value is profaned?



It reveals their characters, which reveals their beliefs and the type of god they worship—it is evidence they are not worshipping the true God. Why?

Because of the law of worship—by beholding we become changed. We actually become like the God we worship and admire. If we would use violence to injure, coerce, punish, inflict harm, kill those who offend us, we are not like Jesus who turned the other cheek and told us to love our enemies.

It is evidence that such people do not understand design law and operate on the false legal lie that God's law functions like human law. In their minds, they see such actions as crimes and crimes must be punished, thus it is right and just in their minds to stone or kill those who violate their religious laws.

However, when we grow up into the reality of God's kingdom, we realize that those who reject God, who prefer profanity to holiness, who prefer selfishness to love, lies to truth, vileness to purity are changed by their preferences. Their hearts are hardened, characters warped and they take themselves out of harmony with God and life itself and their end is ruin and death—thus we don't have to inflict punishment on them any more than we do the person who smokes two packs per day. Their destruction is unavoidable.

Do we see that a person's beliefs, biases, prejudices, pre-conceived ideas of right and wrong set that person up to react in certain ways?

Can we predict the reactions of people if we know their biases and beliefs?

TUESDAY

The lesson focuses our attention on Paul's address to the crowd, let's read that address, hear what Paul said to this mob, and then answer the question—what outraged them so about what Paul said:

"My fellow Jews, let me answer the charges brought against me."

²When they heard him speaking in Aramaic, they became silent and listened. Paul said,³"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but I grew up here in Jerusalem. I was one of Gamaliel's students, and received a doctorate in theology with special emphasis on the Law of Moses, and have been just as devoted to God as anyone here today.⁴I was ruthless in my attack against those who followed this way of salvation, willing to kill if needed. I arrested anyone who I thought was associated with this movement, men or women, and threw them in prison⁵(as the high priest or anyone of the High Court can confirm). I even got written authorization to take to the Jewish authorities in Damascus, and went there intent on arresting these people and bringing them back to Jerusalem to be punished.



⁶"As I approached Damascus, around noon, a blazing light from heaven shone all around me. ⁷As I fell to the ground, I heard a voice say to me, "Saul! Saul! Why are you attacking me?"

⁸I asked, "Who are you, Lord?" "The voice replied, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are warring against.'⁹My traveling companions saw the light, but they didn't understand what the voice said to me.

¹⁰"What do you want from me, Lord?" I asked." The Lord said, "Stand up and go on to Damascus. There, you will be told the assignment I have for you."¹¹But when I got up, I was blind, so instead of marching into Damascus, my friends led me, holding my hand.

¹²"Once there, Ananias came to see me. He is a devoted man of God, faithful in his observation of all the instructions given through Moses, and highly respected by the Jews living there. ¹³Standing next to me, he said, 'Brother Saul, see again!' And immediately I was able to see him.

¹⁴"Then he said, 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to understand his purpose, methods and principles, and to see the Perfect One and hear him speak. ¹⁵You will be his ambassador to all people, testifying to what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶So don't just sit there; get up and begin your new life of love, and be immersed in water to symbolize the washing away of selfishness and partaking of the Remedy—his perfect character of love.'

¹⁷"After returning to Jerusalem, I was talking with God at the temple when I was taken away in a vision¹⁸ and saw the Lord speak to me. He said, 'Get up now and leave Jerusalem. Don't delay, for they will not believe your testimony about me.'

¹⁹"I said to the Lord, 'But Lord, these men will take me seriously because they know I went from synagogue to synagogue imprisoning and beating anyone who believed in you.'²⁰ And when your martyr Stephen was killed, I stood there approving, and watching over the coats of those who murdered him.'

²¹"But the Lord simply said to me, 'Leave this place. I am sending you far away to take the Remedy to the non-Jewish people of the world.' "

²²The crowd was listening up to this point, but when they heard about God sending Paul with the Remedy to non-Jews, they became enraged and began shouting, "Kill him! Wipe him from the face of the earth! He doesn't deserve to live!"

What upset the Jews so much? That he was saying that God loves the Gentiles were included in the plan of salvation—the promises to Abraham.

Why was this upsetting to them?



What is it evidence of?

How could this have happened to a group of people who had been blessed with the Bible and God's prophets?

Have such things happen in Christianity?

Are such things going on in Christianity today?

What is the underlying problem that causes such attitudes?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson focuses our attention on Paul before the Sanhedrin, which was the Jewish high court. Let's read Acts 23:1-5:

Paul, looking directly at the leaders of the Jewish High Court, said, "My fellow Israelites, all I have done I have done to honor God and have fulfilled my duties to him with a clear conscience."²Upon hearing this, the high priest Ananias ordered his aides to strike Paul on the mouth.³Paul blurted out, "I hope God strikes you down, you white-washed impediment to truth! You sit there pretending to follow the law in judgment of me, yet you command I be struck—in violation of the law!"

⁴Those standing near Paul gasped: "How dare you insult God's high priest like that!"

⁵Paul humbly said, "I'm sorry, brothers. I didn't know he was the high priest; for the Scripture says: 'Don't speak badly about the ruler of your people.'" *The Remedy*

What do you learn from this interaction?

What was Paul quick to point out? The lawlessness of those who claim to be law-keepers.

Do we see this in the history of Christianity—the violence and law-breaking of those who claim to be representatives of Christ?

Do we see that those who hold to the false law view always end up breaking God's design laws? Those who hold to the imposed law will always end up violating the law of love and liberty, coercing the conscience of others.

What about what came to light a couple of weeks ago in Pennsylvania—over 300 priests molesting more than 1000 children over 70 years, while the church institution worked to cover it up?

How could this happen?



I am not bringing this up to cast stones at another organization—but because it serves as an object lesson to discern the problems when we replace God’s design law with human imposed law.

So, how could this happen?

- Since Adam’s sin selfishness exists in the hearts of human beings and we are vulnerable to temptation and the exploitation of others if not for the grace of God.
- This organization rejected God’s design for human relationships and instituted its own, imposed, arbitrary rules on human relations—i.e. that priests must not be married.
- This, causes a selection bias. What is a selection bias? It is when we use some filter that eliminates some people from the potential pool of candidates and increases the concentration of others. For instance, if we say only men can be priests, we just eliminated all women and increased to 100% the concentration of men. In the case of the Catholic Church, their arbitrary rule on celibacy has reduced the likelihood of healthy heterosexual men becoming priests. Young college age men, as they consider career choices, when normal biological sexual desire is high are less likely to choose the priesthood if they cannot marry.
- However, people with sexual struggles and who also love God might be drawn to a career which purports to serve God thinking that if they dedicate their lives to God He will deliver them from their unhealthy desires. Thus, the arbitrary rule of celibacy for the priesthood, sets up a selection bias increasing the number of pedophiles likely to be found there.
- When instances of abuse do occur, does the institution examine itself and change or sacrifice innocents with coverups?

Returning to God’s design law in how we operate protects and heals and reduces the selection biases and puts the healing of people first.

THURSDAY

The Jews in Caesarea plotted to kill Paul, and the lesson asks, “What does this teach us about how passionate people can be for causes that are wrong?”

Can you think of any causes today in which people are passionately wrong?

And if we do identify people, perhaps family or friends that are passionately wrong, are they typically easy to reason with? Or does their passion shut down thinking and they become closed to truth?

- How can we tell whether a cause is right or wrong?
- Do the methods employed indicate anything about the cause, or at least the motives of those promoting the cause?
- What method did Peter use when the soldiers came to arrest Christ?
- Was Peter promoting the same cause as Jesus?
- If so, why did Jesus say to Peter shortly before, “get behind me Satan?”



- What cause was Peter promoting and what cause was Jesus promoting?
- Did it appear they were promoting the same cause?
- Why did Peter come down on the wrong side in what he was doing?
- Could Christians today be vulnerable to promoting the wrong cause under the banner of Jesus?
- What do we believe Revelation tells us will happen before Christ returns?
- Will people, who claim to believe in Jesus, actually be working against Jesus?
- How can we tell those who are for Jesus from those who are against Jesus?
- Can we tell by the day upon which they attend church? Or how they take communion, or how they are baptized?
- How can we tell?

‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’ Mt 25:40

Remember Rwanda—what differentiated those who participated in the genocide from those who protected others—it wasn’t denomination, method of baptism, day of worship—it was whether they worshipped an authoritarian or benevolent God.

Those with the legal/penal view of God who must inflict punishment participated in the genocide, those with a God of love protected others.

It always comes back to the God we worship, and our view of God is impacted by the type of law we believe His government is based upon.

FRIDAY

Read third paragraph, “Had the leaders...” What does this say about how God works? What method does God employ?

Read the fourth paragraph—“The same spirit...”

Do we struggle with these problems today?

What would you suggest we could do to overcome this problem?

read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Check our website for new chapters of *The Remedy* the Psalms as they are slowly added. When an entire book of the Old Testament is complete then it will be added to the app and when you update the app you will get the new book. Thank you for your prayers and support as I work on this project.

Watch *The Dr. Tim Jennings Show* on WBTN.TV Network. Go to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

New Video Blogs—If you don't follow us on Facebook, then be sure to visit our website we are posting new blogs again, the go up every Thursday.

September 14, 15, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be Keynote Speaker at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown, Delaware.

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

September 30-Oct 2, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at NAD of SDA Mental Health Education retreat for pastors at Kettering, OH.

October 19, 20, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar at Camelback SDA church, in Phoenix, AZ.

November 9,10 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Houston, TX, in conjunction with the AACC

December 1, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing an Aging Brain seminar in Dallas, TX. Organized by the Arlington SDA church.

January 4-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking for the Florida Conference of SDA Women's Convention in Orlando, FL.

February 2-3, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking Christ's Church of Oronogo, MO.

In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church
Mental Health Matters Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family.

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!



The Book of Acts Lesson 12 3Q 2018

Confinement in Caesarea

By Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

SABBATH

Read second paragraph, “In all the hearings...” Was Paul arrested because he did wrong?

Why was Paul arrested if he didn’t do anything wrong?

Paul was effective in promoting a message of truth that was threatening to change societal structure, which threatened certain people’s power-base.

What is your assessment of how Paul was treated?

Do you think this is likely to happen in society today?

How was Martin Luther King Jr. treated by many in our society? Why was he treated the way he was?

What would happen in the Middle East today if a person tried to convert Muslims to Christianity? Why?

What does it reveal when people respond with anger, hostility, violence to religious views that are different from their own?

If you were conference president how would you recommend handling a church member, who is not a church employee, that is teaching ideas which challenge the current orthodoxy?

Is it more important to ensure that there is no controversy, no dispute, that the membership is in a state of tranquil peace, or is it healthy to allow open debate, discussion, exploration of divergent ideas even if those ideas upset some of the members?

I found this quote in a book *Counsels to Writers and Editors* see if you agree or disagree with it:

Whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word. They will discern new light and beauty in its sacred truths. This has been true in the history of the church in all ages, and thus it will continue to the end. **But as real spiritual life declines, it has ever been the tendency to cease to advance in the knowledge of the truth. Men rest satisfied with the light already received from God's word, and discourage any further investigation of the Scriptures. They become conservative, and seek to avoid discussion.** {CW 38.3}



The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God's people, should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to **searching the Bible for themselves, to make sure that they have the truth, **there will be many now, as in ancient times, who will hold to tradition, and worship they know not what.** {CW 39.1}**

I have been shown that many who profess to have a knowledge of present truth, know not what they believe. They do not understand the evidences of their faith. They have no just appreciation of the work for the present time. When the time of trial shall come, **there are men now preaching to others, who will find, upon examining the positions they hold, that there are many things for which they can give no satisfactory reason. Until thus tested, they knew not their great ignorance.** {CW 39.2}

And there are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe, but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness. When separated from those of like faith, and compelled to stand singly and alone to explain their belief, they will be surprised to see how confused are their ideas of what they had accepted as truth. **Certain it is that there has been among us a departure from the living God, and a turning to men, putting human wisdom in place of divine.** {CW 39.3}

And what is human wisdom? Would it be the way humans consider right and wrong, justice, law—the imperial law concept and how this idea has infected our theology?

And thus, there are moves afoot in the church to silence controversy, voices which challenge the orthodox view—why? Because of human law construct, human tradition, believing falsely that it is right to use authoritarian measures to enforce compliance—such as compliance committees?

Yesterday Dr. George Graves sent me an article which was written in the aftermath of the 1888 Minneapolis GC and I want to share some of it with you and get your thoughts:

Do not any one think that..we have got all the truth we need; [that] we have got the main pillar of the faith, and if we are right there we have no need to trouble ourselves that we may understand the truth ourselves. One minister who has been in the work for years and years, says, “Now, Sister White, have we got to understand ourselves? There are reasons that are from the Bible in regard to the points of our faith; why can’t we take them, as others have prepared them, and then we need not take that time; and we proclaim it. [What is the minister asking? For someone to prepare Bible studies on point of doctrine that others can take and go out and present in a cookie-cutter like way, without themselves really understanding the reasons, just presenting what another has prepared.] We believe these to be men of God (and there was one man mentioned). Don’t you believe that he was inspired of God?” No, I do not. I do not believe any such thing. I believe that God has given him a



work to do. And if there is a man or a woman who is not consecrated and devoted to God every hour, I do not care who they are, the enemy will slip in some of self—weave it right in, his peculiar traits, his peculiar ideas—and the first thing, he is molding others, he is putting his fashion upon those who are around him. **It is dangerous business to exalt man, or to lean upon man, to make flesh our arm.** What we want is to lean upon the arm that has been stretched out for us to lean upon, and that is the Lord God of Israel, and in Him we may trust... MS56-1890 [This is one of the reasons I always say that I am not here to tell anyone what to think, or to do your thinking for you, but to challenge you to think for yourself and understand things for yourself]

Now, here you are in this school. Brother Waggoner may present the truth before you. You may say that the matter that he presents is truth. **But then what will you do? You must go to the Scriptures for yourselves.** You must search them with humble hearts. **If you are just full of prejudice and your own preconceived opinions, and if you entertain the idea that there is nothing for you to know, and that you know all that is worth knowing, you will not get any benefit here. But if you come like children, you want to learn all there is for you—if the God from heaven has sent anything for me, I want it.** The Lord of Heaven has led the mind of man to make a speciality of studying the Scriptures, and when those Scriptures are presented, **He has given me reasoning powers. I can see the evidence just as well as he can see it; I can find the evidence as he finds it. I can go out and speak the truth because I know it is the truth.** And I do know that it is the truth, and therefore I can present it—not as the product of somebody else's mind, but I can present it as the woman of Samaria, as she bore testimony that she had found the Messiah. They flocked out to hear Him, and they said, We know for ourselves, we have seen Him, we have heard Him for ourselves; and we know that this is the Christ. MS56-1890

Cannot you question and investigate with one another? Indeed you can. But the great trouble is that self is so large in us all that just as soon as we begin to investigate, **we will do it in such an unchristian manner.** It has been done here in Battle Creek; it was done in Minneapolis; it has been done in many other places. **God is not in any such work as that at all; it is the devil that is in such work as that.** We want to come to the Scriptures with humble hearts. If God has a work for us we are ready for it, and we want to know that it is the truth for ourselves, and thus you [will] be driven to your Bibles. You must be driven to them... MS56-1890 [And I have thought about this, studying different views with people and I have discovered that when people study as equals they are more likely to be open, understanding, willing to give the other's view consideration. But when the study is done with a hierarchical structure (someone represents a ruling body or position, counsel of Trent, or conference president or committee or a pastor, an inherent sense of ruling authority) then the study becomes unchristian, critical, defensive, unwilling to hear openly and honestly the position of the other—thoughts?]

But I speak of these men that they may know, that they may understand, what is truth; and if they will not hear, if they will keep away, just as the ministers tell the congregations, the



stay-away argument: Don't go to hear. Now, you want to hear everything. If he has got error, we want to know it, we want to understand it, those that are in prominent positions, and then we want to investigate for ourselves. We want to know that it is truth; and if it is truth, brethren, those children in the Sabbath School want it, and every soul of them need it. This is what we want. MS56-1890

Wow—do you see these same problems as we have faced the last 8 years are not new problems. They are the age-old problems that advancing truth has always faced. But the next time a member of the SDA church tells you someone in leadership told them the “stay-away argument—don't go hear” you could share this quote with them and suggest, then that is what you really need to go hear.

Does this mean then, that we set no standards, that we don't draw a line anywhere and we let any idea be presented in our churches and engage in controversial discussion over any topic?

Consider this quotation from the same author in a book called *Confrontation*:

We are not to attend their circles, neither are our ministers to engage in controversy with them [spiritualists]. They are of that class specified whom we should not invite into our houses or bid them Godspeed. We have to compare their teachings with the revealed will of God. **We are not to engage in an investigation of spiritualism.** God has investigated this for us, and told us definitely that a class would arise in the last days who would deny Christ who has purchased them with His own blood. **The character of spiritualists is so plainly described that we need not be deceived by them.** If we obey the divine injunction we shall have no sympathy with spiritualists, however smooth and fair may be their words. {Con 91.1}

What is the underlying principle that would be in practice here that would say, in this case it is not necessary to investigate spiritualism nor engage in discussion with the spiritualists?

If someone came along today and suggested that we can achieve better spiritual enlightenment by putting LSD in our communion wafers, would this be something we should investigate and have serious discussion about? Why or why not?

When the evidence has been sufficiently revealed that a certain course or action is destructive or harmful, then spending more time on that subject debating it or arguing for or against it only opens the door to confusion, distracts from other truths and prevents advancement in other lines of understanding.

Does this then mean we don't deal with anyone who is caught up in spiritualism? Would this mean we would have the discussion with people of Haiti or other cultures where spiritualism is practiced? Or would we need to, as missionaries, evangelists, give such potential converts evidence of the truth and evidence of the errors in which they have been steeped?

So, what then is meant on not engaging with spiritualists?



So, how do we deal with people who hold different views than us?

I really like Romans 14:5 let every person be fully persuaded in their own mind, and draw lines only where it is abundantly clear that a line of investigation is already proven to be harmful or destructive.

Haydin Piper, an online listener, sent in this quote from the book *The Desire of Ages* p. 509.

Today in the religious world there are multitudes who, as they believe, are working for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as an earthly and temporal dominion. **They desire to make our Lord the ruler of the kingdoms of this world, the ruler in its courts and camps, its legislative halls, its palaces and market places. They expect Him to rule through legal enactments, enforced by human authority.** Since Christ is not now here in person, **they themselves will undertake to act in His stead, to execute the laws of His kingdom.** The establishment of such a kingdom is what the Jews desired in the days of Christ. They would have received Jesus, had He been willing to establish a temporal dominion, **to enforce what they regarded as the laws of God**, and to make them the expositors of His will and the agents of His authority. But He said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” John 18:36. He would not accept the earthly throne. {DA 509.2}

Do you think this is the method we should utilize? Should we seek to legislate our beliefs and enforce them?

This is what Sharia law wants to do...it is also what some Christians want to do in regard to abortion law—force everyone to abide by their view and enforce it with the courts.

How is Christ supposed to rule? In the hearts of people by the reproduction of His character and the practice of His methods, which are? Truth, presented in love, and leaving others free!

SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, which is speaking of the argument made by a lawyer against Paul: “Then, he went on...”

Were any of the charges true? It was true that Paul was a leader of those who followed Jesus.

Was Paul an agitator who was fomenting unrest among the Jews? Well from the Jewish leadership’s perspective it was true; Paul was upsetting their way of thinking and the esteem in which they were held by the people. But, Paul was NOT inciting rebellion against Rome, just the opposite.

So, what did the lawyer do? He twisted things, he took a fact, Paul was causing agitation in the minds of the Jews about their traditional understanding of Scripture, challenging them to reinterpret things, which upset the Jewish authorities. They took this fact and made it appear that such teachings were the



reason the Jews were so unruly and there was so much rebellion against Rome.

What do you think of the third allegation—that Paul attempted to defile the Jewish temple?

This last charge is quite interesting—why did the Jews make this charge against Paul?

Why did it matter to them?

Was the temple important to their power base in any way? Was the temple used in any way to influence or control the people?

Who were the actual defilers of the temple? Do you remember Jesus cleansing the temple—why and from what?

Here is a quote from the book *The Desire of Ages*:

In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. **From eternal ages it was God's purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God.** Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple. God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every soul. But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. **They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts.** In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,—from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." Malachi 3:1-3. {DA 161.1}

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17. **No man can of himself cast out the evil throning that have taken possession of the heart. Only Christ can cleanse the soul temple.** But He will not force an entrance. He comes not into the heart as to the temple of old; but He says,



"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him." Revelation 3:20. He will come, not for one day merely; for He says, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; . . . and they shall be My people." "He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." 2 Corinthians 6:16; Micah 7:19. **His presence will cleanse and sanctify the soul, so that it may be a holy temple unto the Lord**, and "an habitation of God through the Spirit." Ephesians 2:21, 22. {DA 161.2}

Why did the Jews allege that Paul was defiling the temple? What did Paul and Jesus threaten?

Jesus and Paul were trying to move people past metaphor and object lesson to the reality of God, to heal hearts and minds. But the leaders didn't want this because they preferred their selfishness, thus they obstructed the higher order thinking.

What about today, could people be threatened in leadership today when we try and teach people that the sanctuary is a metaphor to heal hearts and minds and is not to be taken literally?

What about the nation of Israel itself, could some get offended if we point out they were to be teachers to the entire world, but have no avenue of salvation different than the rest of humanity?

MONDAY

Read fifth paragraph, "In the end, Festus..." Do we ever get confused when we present truth and find it doesn't win the day?

This paragraph points out that Festus was not interested in truth, he was interested in profit and advancement for himself. Thus, arguing the merits of the facts would have little impact on Festus.

Could this happen today, that we present truths to people in church leadership and expect an outcome based on the merits of the facts and evidence, but the people who are reviewing our concerns have other agendas? Like their own profit, perhaps employment, or books they have written which oppose the new view, or position, or authority, or some other concern and thus are not primarily interested in the truth itself?

How do you handle it when people accuse you falsely?

Here are some steps in dealing with false accusations:

- first pray—ask God for wisdom, discernment, His involvement, intervention, that He will use this as opportunity to advance the kingdom. Ask for patience, ask for a heart to love others, and to act in ways that reveal God's methods and principles. So, first and foremost, pray and align the heart with God. DO NOT react reflexively, pause and talk to God.
- Consider who is making the accusation—not every accusation needs answering, some are best ignored. Some are best answered not with words, but with actions, the actions of patient waiting and kindness. Sometimes answering the allegation only brings more attention to it, and



diverts from the truth. Other times answering only gives the enemies of truth more fuel to attack you. Jesus said “don’t cast your pearls before swine...”

- Asks or inquire how they came to believe this, upon what they base their accusations, from where did they hear or come to believe such a thing? Many times people come who are responding to rumor, or gossip and have never checked the facts for themselves.
- Try to discern why this is important to them, why do they want to know, why are they accusing you? Understanding their motives gives you insight into what they really want from the encounter.
- Then, ask God gives wisdom several responses are possible:
 - Silence—no answer at all, Jesus did this many times
 - Answer with questions, which Jesus did to the man who asked about the greatest commandment
 - Answer directly, which Daniel did, Jesus, Paul, Peter and others did—at times
 - But always respond with an attitude of love and interest in others.

TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY and THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, Tuesday “And now Paul...” The lesson asks what it tells us about outward appearance?

Let’s read Acts chapter 26 (from *The Remedy*)

¹Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to present your case." Paul motioned with his hands for silence and then began his defense:²"King Agrippa, I am thankful that you are here to hear my defense against these allegations of the Jews,³because you know Jewish tradition, custom, and theological controversies. So please be patient as I lay out my case.

⁴"The Jews know very well that I was raised in my own country, and later—in Jerusalem.⁵They have known me for years, and if they are honest, they can confirm that by the strictest standards of our people, I lived as a Pharisee and did everything according to their most severe rules.⁶I am on trial now because I believe that what God promised our ancestors has been fulfilled—⁷the promise our twelve tribes long to see fulfilled as they diligently serve God every day. O King, I am being accused because I believe that this promise has been fulfilled.⁸Why should any of you who know the history of our people find it impossible to believe that God raises the dead back to life?

⁹"Yes, at one time I too believed it was my duty to do everything in my power to oppose Jesus of Nazareth.¹⁰And I did just that in Jerusalem. With the approval and backing of the chief priests, I arrested many of his followers, and when they were executed, I voted for them to die.¹¹I went from synagogue to synagogue, punishing his followers and trying to force them to curse his name. In my vigilance, I even traveled to other cities to persecute them.



¹²"I was on one of these trips, heading to Damascus with arrest warrants from the chief priests. ¹³About noon, O King, I was on the road, when a bright light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazed around me and my traveling companions. ¹⁴We all instantly fell to the ground, and I heard a voice from heaven say to me in Aramaic, 'Oh Saul, why are you persecuting me? Isn't it difficult for you to kick against the thorns?'

¹⁵"I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The voice replied, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶Now stand up, for I have come to you to commission you, as my ambassador, to witness what you have seen of me, and what I will yet show to you. ¹⁷Don't be afraid, for I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them ¹⁸to open their minds to the light of truth, and lead them out of the darkness of lies about me—and thus free them from Satan's power and unite them with God—so they might have sin and selfishness remit from their hearts, and be among those who are recreated in righteousness through trust in me.'

¹⁹"So, King Agrippa, what was I to do? I did what I believed was right after such a vision from heaven: ²⁰First I went to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem, and then—all over Judea, to Jews and non-Jews alike. I told everyone they should turn away from selfishness, love God with their whole heart, and demonstrate their love for God by their acts of service to help others. ²¹That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and are trying to kill me. ²²But God has been watching over me to this very day, and has brought me here to tell the truth about him to small and great alike. I am only teaching what the prophets and Moses said would happen— ²³that the Messiah would be rejected, suffer, die, and then be the first to rise from the dead to provide the Remedy to his own people and all peoples of the world."

²⁴When Festus heard this, he interrupted Paul's defense: "Are you crazy, Paul?" he shouted. "You've studied yourself insane!"

²⁵Paul calmly replied, "I am not insane, most honorable Festus. What I am saying is not only true, it is also reasonable. ²⁶The king is familiar with all of this, so I am presenting this to him freely, without the need to lay the groundwork for each point. I believe he is aware of all the events that have transpired, because it all happened very publicly. ²⁷King Agrippa, you believe what the prophets have written, don't you? Surely, you do."

²⁸Agrippa answered, "Do you think you can convert me to be a Christian in such a short time?"

²⁹Paul smiled, "No matter how long it takes, I pray to God that not only you, but everyone here listening will become what I am, except retain your freedom, of course."

³⁰At this, the king, governor, Bernice, and those sitting with them stood up ³¹and left the room. While they were talking amongst themselves, they said, "This man hasn't done anything deserving of death or imprisonment."



³² Agrippa said to Festus, "If he hadn't appealed to Caesar, he could have been set free."

What do you think of Paul's argument?

What authority did Paul cite? Both Scripture and His own experience, he recounted how his experience was consistent with what was taught in Scripture.

What do you think of Paul's appeal to Caesar was it a good choice?

From last week's lesson on FRIDAY, read the last three paragraphs: "Had the leaders in the church..."

What does this suggest about the Sovereignty of God?

Does it suggest anything about God's methods?

Does it have any bearing on what is happening in the church and the world today?



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Oneness in Christ Lesson 1 4Q 2018 Creation and Fall

By Tim Jennings

Announcement:

Last weekend I had the privilege of speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown, Delaware. What a great experience.

This group of believers began about 10 years ago meeting in an old auto parts store with about 100 people. They grew so quickly that soon they were having four services each weekend. So, they bought property and built a large facility, which is still growing. Their current auditorium holds 800 and they are again holding four services each weekend, one on Saturday and three on Sunday each week to accommodate the crowds.

Their focus is on healing the hearts of people to love God and love others. In the past they have been asked by some, “what is your doctrinal statement” and their answer is “the Bible.” This has resulted in some visitors getting upset.

I immediately thought of something EG White, one of the founders of the SDA church, wrote back in 1885:

The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; all who bow to this holy word will be in harmony. Our own views and ideas must not control our efforts. Man is fallible, but God's word is infallible. Instead of wrangling with one another, let men exalt the Lord. Let us meet all opposition as did our Master, saying, "It is written." Let us lift up the banner on which is inscribed, **The Bible our rule of faith and discipline.**

{RH, December 15, 1885 par. 16}

I was so impressed with how this group has put this principle into practice—and not surprisingly there was a spirit of love, unity, peace—but also critical reasoning and thinking.

A few points from their website:

Who We Are

At CCC, we believe the issue is always the heart...

What We Do

We are a church body, created to share the love of Jesus Christ. Our heart's desire is to grow, serve, and spread the Word of God...



Why We Do It

Mission Statement

Crossroad Community Church, a nonprofit corporation, is established to provide a place of worship and fellowship with our Heavenly Father and fellow Christians... It is our responsibility and privilege to propagate the gospel of Jesus Christ by all available means, both at home and in foreign lands.

What You Can Do

Visit us!

When you visit Crossroad Community Church, we are not expecting anything from you. We, as a church body, welcome all to our congregation. We understand that we have a style of how we run our church, and we understand that this style is not for everyone. We believe that Jesus Christ has enabled us to enter heaven, and we rejoice in that. When you visit Crossroad Community Church, you are welcome to sit or stand as we sing. You are welcome to clap or listen. You are welcome to wear jeans or a suit. Do what is comfortable for you. We simply ask that your actions not impede others who are worshiping.

This group of Christians genuinely love God and are seeking to make God first in their lives, in how they live and treat others.

I was reading in the book *The Great Controversy* about Wycliffe, and then read the following:

The great movement that Wycliffe inaugurated, which was to liberate the conscience and the intellect, and set free the nations so long bound to the triumphal car of Rome, had its spring in the Bible. Here was the source of that stream of blessing, which, like the water of life, has flowed down the ages since the fourteenth century. Wycliffe accepted the Holy Scriptures with implicit faith as the inspired revelation of God's will, a sufficient rule of faith and practice. He had been educated to regard the Church of Rome as the divine, infallible authority, and to accept with unquestioning reverence the established teachings and customs of a thousand years; but he turned away from all these to listen to God's holy word. This was the authority which he urged the people to acknowledge. Instead of the church speaking through the pope, he declared the only true authority to be the voice of God speaking through His word. And he taught not only that the Bible is a perfect revelation of God's will, but that the Holy Spirit is its only interpreter, and that every man is, by the study of its teachings, to learn his duty for himself. Thus he turned the minds of men from the pope and the Church of Rome to the word of God. {GC 93.2}

Is this principle still applicable today? Should we turn the minds of people away from church authority, church dogma, church creeds and to the Bible? Does this apply only to the Roman church or to any church?

If we take this position and promote the Bible as our rule of authority and turn people away from church councils, creeds, traditions, and back to the Bible are we uniting or dividing?



As we talk about unity this quarter, consider what unity actually means. The introduction to the study guide points out that Fundamental Belief number 14 of the SDA church states, “In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us.”

What about denominational divisions — can we be united in Christ and be from different denominations?

What types of differences do not cause divisions to Christian unity and what types of differences do cause divisions in Christian unity?

Can two people hold to different understanding of various doctrines and be united in Christ?

Can two people attest to the same doctrinal statements yet be divided?

This leads us into our lesson...

INTRODUCTION to the Study Guide

The lesson states, “The church is God’s family on earth...” then asks, “But what do we mean by church? Who belongs to the church?”

The lesson mentions the local community of believers, the building in which people meet, but says, “The church is about people, not about buildings.”

And then says, “Yet, all these definitions are incomplete. The church is the people of God all over the earth. And though Christ has faithful followers in various denominations (many of whom will in the final crisis join the remnant [Rev 18:1-14]), this quarter we are going to focus on our church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and what unity in Christ means for us.”

Before we get into the specifics for the SDA church, what do you think of the idea that people who are Christ’s faithful followers are somehow, not yet part of the remnant? What would constitute being part of the remnant?

A.W Tozer wrote the following about the remnant:

- I am alarmed because it has been true since Pentecost that such a vast number of people who call themselves Christians—the overwhelming majority—are nominal, and only a remnant is saved.
- There has always been a small remnant, and they have been in the midst of all the rest. A million might wish with their lips and worship with their lips, but only a small fragment truly worship in their hearts in a way that honors and pleases God.
- Where is the remnant? Where can we find them? As soon as we bring this subject up,



immediately all the half-saved and the one percent saved—the backsliders, the borderline, the church members, the professors, and those who have no witness of the Spirit to their redemption—begin to squirm and quote Scripture. And one Scripture they quote is “Judge not, that you be not judged.” (Matthew 7:1)

- The man who belongs to the remnant is not asking if he belongs to the remnant; he is hoping and believing and trusting and seeking and longing and comparing himself not with somebody else but with the Savior.
- So the thing to do is not to look for the remnant; the thing to do is to beware of presumption and self-righteousness and to compare yourself only to Jesus. Then, when you have done that, say, “I am an unprofitable servant.” (quoted from *The Quotable Tozer* compiled by James L. Snyder, Bethany House, 2018, p. 285-286)

Who are the remnant? Revelation 12:17 states about the remnant at the end:

Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Who constitutes the remnant? What are the qualifying features?

What does it mean to obey the commandments of God?

What does it mean to hold to the testimony of Jesus?

What do you say to someone who says, that the following is what it means to obey the commandments of God:

Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. Mt 22:37-39

Would people who fulfill Christ’s description be part of the remnant?

Have you heard some say, that to love God means to obey, which means to observe the 7th day Sabbath?

Then, were the Jews who put Christ on the Cross and wanted Him off before sunset Friday so they could keep the Sabbath, loving God?

What about the Pharisees who didn’t want Jesus to heal people on Sabbath—they said there are 6 days in the week to heal people, don’t do it on Sabbath—were they part of the remnant?



Why do you think Jesus healed chronic conditions, people who had been sick for decades, on the Sabbath?

So, are we part of the remnant if we refuse to help people on Sabbath in order to honor God by observing the Sabbath?

What is Sabbath observance in a way that makes one part of the remnant?

Can a person be part of the remnant and not observe the Bible Sabbath?

What about the second feature, of the remnant, that they hold to the testimony of Jesus.

What does this mean?

Some have suggested the remnant is the denominational organization that has the Bible Sabbath, all 10 of the 10 commandments, and also has the gift of prophecy manifested in their organization.

So, if this is true, does being part of the remnant then mean joining the right denomination?

Can one be part of the remnant by joining a denomination?

Why do some want denominational affiliation to be synonymous with being part of the remnant?

For the same reason the church of the Dark Ages wanted people to believe that you had to adhere to their rules, rituals, sacraments in order to be saved—it gives the organization power over people, keeps people afraid of organizational authority, reduces questioning and thinking, and increases the organization's power-base.

So, would the remnant be those who are like Christ in character, thus the law is written on their hearts and minds, i.e. the law of love, and they give the same testimony about God, His character, methods, design laws and principles that Jesus gave?

Then, if someone had the right day of worship, but had the wrong character, like those who crucified Christ—would they be part of the remnant?

If someone had the right day of worship, but practiced the methods of coercion and force would they be part of the remnant?

If someone has the right day of worship, but misrepresents God as authoritarian and the inflictor of pain and punishment and from whom we need to be protected, would they be part of the remnant?

If someone has, what you consider the wrong day of worship, but has a renewed heart to love God and others, and would give their lives for others, and they say of God and His character what is right,

would they be part of the remnant?

If we love others, can we have unity even if we don't agree on doctrine, like the day of worship?

I can tell you that when we genuinely love God and practice God's principles we can have unity with people also genuinely love God and practice His principles even if they baptize differently, go to church on a different day, do communion differently—but when the love of God is not in the heart then there is no unity, even if all agree on the same doctrines.

We can see the principles of refusing to value truth and failure to love others causing division outside the church as well:

September 11, 2018 a Tucker Carlson Report on Fox News Tucker said the following (don't focus on the specific issue, but the methods employed and the conclusions Tucker draws):

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2018/09/12/evergreen-state-sees-catastrophic-drop-in-enrollment-after-social-justice-meltdown.html>

“A tenured Brown professor called Lisa Littman found that teenagers who say they want to switch genders say they are often influenced, not surprisingly, by friends and social media, like all young people are. The study was solid enough to be picked up by a reputable scientific journal. In fact, Brown's PR department sounded a press release promoting the study. But then activists descended. They were offended by the conclusions of the study, not because the conclusions were wrong, no one even argued they were wrong, but because the conclusions were ideologically inconvenient and therefore unacceptable. They demanded that the data be suppressed and remarkable Brown caved to their demands. The university yanked the press release and apologized for sending it in the first place.

This is not really about Brown. This is what it looks like when reason itself dies—politics trumps science, empirical conclusions are banned, acknowledging reality itself becomes a criminal act, superstition reigns, the Dark Ages arrive. This is what they told you the Christian Right wanted to do—they were lying. As soon as they did it themselves.”

This is not about the gender issue, but about how people deal with different opinions—do we allow for evidence based, reasoned discourse, or do we allow mob rule, hysteria, emotionalism. Does what is politically correct overrule rational thought?

And this type of repression of evidence, of reality itself being criminalized, of superstition reigning happens on both sides, left and right, it happens wherever error is defended and truth is feared.

Is this evidence of what Scripture has warned will happen at the end of time? Is this evidence of a beastly system at work? Can we see it if it doesn't manifest itself on the specific issue we have been taught to look for?



SABBATH

Read memory text, “Then [God] brought [Abraham]...” Who are these descendants referred to in this verse?

According to Paul:

It is not as though God’s word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.⁷ Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children. On the contrary, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.”⁸ In other words, **it is not the natural children who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring.** Rom 9:6-8

This interaction between the Jewish leadership and Jesus:

“**Abraham is our father,**” they answered.

“**If you were Abraham’s children,**” said Jesus, “**then you would do the things Abraham did.**”⁴⁰ As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things.⁴¹ You are doing the things your own father does.”

“We are not illegitimate children,” they protested. “The only Father we have is God himself.”

⁴² Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me.”⁴³ Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say.⁴⁴ **You belong to your father, the devil,** and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.¹

So, who are the descendants of Abraham? Those who are like Abraham in character, i.e. those who trust God and are transformed to be like Jesus!

This is hugely important today because millions have missed this reality and think that something other than character transformation matters—either being a genetic descendant of Abraham or some legal process where one is adopted into the legal family of God thus becoming a legal descendant of Abraham.

No! The only way one is a genuine, in reality, descendant of Abraham in the way the Bible means is that they have the same character and practice the same methods in relationship with God that

¹ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. (1984). (Jn 8:39–44). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Abraham did.

The lesson points out that God created humanity sinless and it was God's goal for human beings to be united in love. But because of sin division has happened.

What caused sin to enter into humanity?

Lies believed break the circle of love and trust...

What is the solution?

Truth will set you free—the truth believed destroys lies and restores trust...

What truth? The truth about God!

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "A clear message flowing..." This is well said! Do you hear the description of the law of love in this paragraph?

And what is revealed when things operate like God intended?

Human beings were created in the image of God—what does this mean?

In what ways did God create Adam and Eve in His image?

- Intelligence—the ability to reason and think
- The power of choice—which means the ability to love, to self-sacrifice
- The power to procreate—to create beings in their own image
- The power to create and build—art, music, etc.
- Dominion—lower life forms to govern and rule over—to work to give energy of one's self toward the welfare of others
- Co-equals to enter into genuine unity of love, bonding and fellowship so that the two become one
- The ability to experience pain and heartache as well as joy and reward

Read last paragraph, "God is love..." This is again well said and has huge functional (operational) implications.

Can love exist in isolation? Or, as the lesson states, does love require relationship?

Therefore, if God is love, God cannot be a singularity, but must be a plurality, thus the Trinity—the smallest number for genuine selfless love—three.



Can you get love by threat, demand, coercion, intimidation, punishment? Thus, understanding the operational nature of love, many false doctrines in Christianity can be quickly eliminated. God cannot be saying love me or I will kill you—all such concepts are seen to be lies of Satan.

God can be saying, love me and let me heal you, because if you don't, you are going to die from your terminal condition. But God cannot be the source of inflicted death and still be a God of love—all such ideas are lies.

So, the penal substitutionary view of God is proven to be a lie, an infection to God's church and an obstruction to the remnant's ability to finish the work of preparing the world for Christ's return. We must reject this lie and come back to God as our Creator and Savior.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "The consequence of the Fall...." What is the primary drive on planet earth today? Survival of the fittest, which Paul describes as....???? The law of sin and death, which is the opposite of the law of love.

And Paul describes in Romans 8 how all nature groans under the weight of sin.

Many get confused about this, because sin has been taught through the false human imperial/imposed law concept and many are taught we are born legally guilty and condemned by God and under a legal death sentence. And many get confused and ask, what about babies, what did they do wrong?

When we return to God's design law, we understand we are not born legally guilty, we are born terminal—with a condition, we as individuals, did NOT choose, but which, without remedy, will destroy us.

Thus, Oswald Chambers wrote in *My Utmost for His Highest*:

The Bible does not say that God punished the human race for one man's sin, but that the nature of sin, namely, my claim to my right to myself, entered into the human race through one man. But it also says that another **Man took upon Himself the sin of the human race and put it away** — an infinitely more profound revelation...

Sin is something I am born with and cannot touch— only God touches sin through redemption. It is through the Cross of Christ that God redeemed the entire human race from the possibility of damnation through the heredity of sin. **God nowhere holds a person responsible for having the heredity of sin, and does not condemn anyone because of it.** Condemnation comes when I realize that Jesus Christ came to deliver me from this heredity of sin, and **yet I refuse to let Him do so.** From that moment I begin to get the seal of damnation.



“This is the condemnation [and the critical moment], that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light . . .” (John 3:19)

Thus, condemnation doesn’t come at birth, condemnation comes when we reject the Remedy of Jesus Christ, sent by God to cure our condition.

In the third paragraph the lesson points out that human wickedness led to the flood—why?

How do you explain the reason for the flood through the truth of God’s design law?

The lesson asks about what things contribute to disharmony and what actions can be taken to restore harmony with people with whom you are not currently in harmony?

What about this?

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? ¹⁵ What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

¹⁷“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. 2Cor 6:14-17

From the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*:

The Bible plainly teaches that **there can be no harmony between the people of God and the world.** "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (1 John 3:13). Our Saviour says, "Ye know that it hated Me before it hated you" (John 15:18). **Satan works through the ungodly, under cover of a pretended friendship, to allure God's people into sin that he may separate them from Him;** and when their defense is removed, then he will lead his agents to turn against them and seek to accomplish their destruction.--PP 559 (1890)

Was Jesus able to have harmony with Judas, Caiaphas, Pilate? So, is it always possible to restore harmony?

Genuine harmony is only possible when operating upon God’s design law—harmony cannot be established while in violation of God’s design law. Confederacies and alliances can be established in violations of God’s design law, but not genuine harmony because selfishness still reigns in the hearts and will eventually cause disunity.

TUESDAY

Why did God confuse the languages at Babel?



Bottom pink section asks, “What are practical steps we can take to help heal the divisions of race, culture, and language that hurt us even in the church?”

When we get back to design law it all falls into place...but when we operate on imposed law divisions always occur.

Did you notice the lesson didn't include divisions based on gender and roles in the church—do we not want unity on this issue?

Is salvation, being part of God's kingdom and usefulness in God's cause, about gender or about character?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson points out that Abraham was justified by faith—what does this mean? How do you explain it?

What law lens to you explain it through?

The lesson references Romans 4:1-3, NIV:

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? ² If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. ³ What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Hmmm... does this make it clear? Or do the legal biases of the translator come in?

Does “credited to” make it sound like he got credit for something he didn't actually have in his account. Like a credit card, you get credit, but you don't actually have the money?

That is not what the Greek actually means. The Greek means accounting like an accountant does. So, other translations which read accounted as righteous are better, but still get misunderstood. The Greek means that you only account what actually exists in reality. You do not account \$5.00 in your bank account unless there is actually \$5.00 in the bank account. Thus, God didn't give Abraham credit, **but actually filled Abraham with a gift of a new heart and right spirit**, because Abraham trusted God and gave God permission to work in his heart and this is why God accounted, or reckoned, that Abraham was righteous, because Abraham had actually been changed by God from unrighteous to righteous.

The penal substitutionary view is a lie and a fraud and cheats people out of the real healing and transformation by getting them to accept a false legal replacement to genuine healing. It would be like a person dying of cancer being tricked into accepting a piece of paper with a written statement of



health on it, instead of a remedy that would cure the cancer.

So, Romans 4:1-3 from *The Remedy*:

What about our father Abraham: what did he understand about this issue? ²If Abraham was somehow healed by his own efforts at keeping a set of rules or performing certain rituals, then he would have his own healing formula to promote, and would not need trust in God. ³But what does the Scripture say? "Abraham trusted God, and his trust was recognized as righteousness because the distrust caused through Satan's lies had been removed, and through trust he was endowed with a new heart, right motives and Christlike principles."

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "In calling Abraham..." For what purpose was Israel called?

The lesson rightly points out that Israel was called to be God's representatives on earth to preserve a true knowledge of God and bring all human beings back to God.

The lesson goes on to say, "God withheld from them nothing favorable to the formation of character that would make them representatives of Himself."

What was their purpose? How did they do?

What about the purpose of the Christian church today? How are we doing?

Read last paragraph, "Their obedience..." What law?

Why would they be successful?

What lessons would be taught?

How do we understand what we read in the history of ancient Israel as recorded in Scripture?

Read bottom pink section, "What parallels..."

Are there any parallels in the attacks and methods of Satan in both groups?

FRIDAY

read questions 1 and 2



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2018 Q4 Oneness in Christ - Lesson 2

Causes of Disunity

by Linda Ojala

The Bible describes only two groups: Good vs bad, sheep vs goats, righteous vs wicked, God's followers vs Satan's followers, the saved vs the lost, those on the right hand of God vs those on the left, those who love others so much that they care for them without a second thought vs those who make a show of doing good things without a real relationship with God.

How we differ:

- Men, women, children, tall or short, slim or heavy, coordinated or not, married or not, educated or not, cultures, languages, jobs, country or city dwellers, views on god/religion, views that there is no god, politics, “glass half full” vs “glass half empty outlook”, etc.
- We even have disunity within ourselves, the struggle between our heart and head, for example
- This is the first time in history when there are four generations in the work force at the same time, each with different views of where work should fit into your life, how work should be conducted.
- Will we ever think alike? We are told it's best not to bring up Politics or Religion over dinner or at the hair salon. People will defend their beliefs with fervor.
- How can we possibly think that we would all think alike about what we read in the Bible, what an experience with God is like, what we should believe. It is likely that everyone in this room and those watching online has some beliefs that vary at least slightly from the others.

In Adventist Home, page 427 by Ellen White, I found this insightful piece of information:

“It is in the order of God that persons of varied temperament should associate together. When this is the case, each member of the household should sacredly regard the feelings and respect the rights of the others. By this means mutual consideration and forbearance will be cultivated, prejudices will be softened, and rough points of character smoothed. Harmony may be secured, and the blending of the varied temperaments may be a benefit to each.”

When I married my husband, I was thrilled that he came home, put his arm around me, listened to my day, told me about his, watched TV with me, ate dinner with me.....however, my teenaged girls' judgment was that he was “lazy”.

- Their experience was that a man comes home, works around the house until bedtime. They were too young to realize how important it is to a relationship to spend time communicating with each other and enjoying each others company.

Differences that bring about unity:

- Fruit salad, the human body, Military

Is there a difference between differing beliefs and disunity?



- Disunity is caused by many things, such as judging each other, jealousy, anger, hate, competition, greed, pride, fear, inflexibility, error, misunderstanding, misinterpretation, misrepresentation, challenges to the status quo.
- I have a dear friend who is a real seeker after God. She doesn't eat what I do, or believe what I do, but we feel like such kindred spirits because we both LOVE GOD and are seeking after Him.
- We are able to discuss what our different outlooks are, without pressuring the other to conform to the way we see things. It is delightful! It is like we are both looking from the outside at a large, beautiful house, through different windows and describing what we see. If we are able to share and love without judgment, we are in unity in our love and desire to know God better.

Does unity smother freedom of thought, being open to new perspectives, seeking of truth or new light?

- In Christ's day, the church leaders wanted unity under what they believed, but when their cherished beliefs were threatened by Jesus, they plotted and killed the very Holy One that came to save them.
- Could this also be the spirit manifested today?
- John 16:12-15: Jesus told his disciples, "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. This is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you."

Christ's Object Lessons, pg 130.4 by Ellen G. White says that old truths will be presented, but in a new light.

That is the way I feel about Come and Reason. We read the same Bible we always have, with the same fundamental beliefs, but we see new perspectives. A few examples, what I'd like to call my, "I could have had a V-8" moments:

- Jesus pleading with the father – Jesus pleading to us alongside the Father to help us understand, trust and love Him and love others; not Jesus the good cop pleading with the Father, the bad cop, not to destroy us. Early Writings, Pt 49.3, Ellen G White
- God the Father has left all judgment to Jesus (John 5:22). Jesus said he doesn't judge us (John 8:15), but has come to heal us and save us (John 12:47). The words Jesus has said will condemn people at the last day (John 12:48), Do not judge, or you will be judged. By the way we judge will we be judged (Matthew 7:2)
- Our God is a consuming fire (Deuteronomy 4:24, Hebrews 12:29)...who can dwell with the consuming fire, the everlasting burning? The righteous, but not the wicked..(Isaiah 33:14-17).
- The wrath of God is letting people go, who will not come to Him for life (Romans 1) and cleansing wickedness from the people who will come to Him for life (Isaiah 1:24-28). Wickedness burns like a fire...they will not spare one another (Isaiah 9:18, 19)



- The 10 commandments are like an MRI – they show where the problems are, so you will come to Jesus for healing, but they can't save you. Only Jesus can save you!
 - No one has truly died yet, all are asleep, so to God no one is dead (Matthew 22:29-32, Luke 20:34-38; Daniel 12:2, 13; John 11:1-15), as no one has yet received the final result of their choices. After the resurrection of the righteous, then the resurrection of the wicked, the final death will occur for Satan, his angels and the wicked. They will be no more. (Malachi 4:1-3; Revelation 20:6-9)
 - Other examples from the audience?
 - God's law is not at all like human law, which can be arbitrarily made up to be whatever we want, then changed whenever we want...like speed limits. God's law is woven into the very fabric of our existence and can never be changed.....like the law of worship – we become like what we worship, the law of exertion – as we use a power or a thought, it becomes stronger....like the law of unselfish love – by love given is love received, etc.
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Consider Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people (Acts 5: 34-40)

- After Jesus' death and resurrection, the Apostles were spreading the news and their testimony.
 - The Sanhedrin wanted to put them to death.
 - Gamaliel advised them to consider carefully what they intended to do to these men.. He brought up two cases, Theudas and Judas the Galilean, and noted that they both came to nothing.
 - He advised to let these men alone, for if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail.
 - But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men: you will only find yourselves fighting against God.
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Consider the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7) by the top church leaders, lawyers, teachers of the law:

- He was telling the church leaders that they had betrayed and murdered the Righteous One, they had received the law but not obeyed it
 - The Sanhedrin were furious, covered their ears, yelled at the top of their voices, rushed at him, dragged him out of the city, stoned him.
 - Stephen prayed, "Receive my spirit and don't hold this thing against them, then he "Fell asleep."
 - Saul was watching, agreeing with what was being done. After his conversion, he recalled this event as one of the things that made him not worthy of being called an apostle (1 Corinthians 15: 9)
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Consider Hezekiah:

- The bronze serpent made by Moses to hold up so that the people who had been bitten by poisonous snakes would be healed (Numbers 21:4-9), a symbol of Christ being lifted up to heal those who looked at Him and believed.



- It became known as Nehushtan, later people were burning incense to it, so Hezekiah dealt with this disunity by breaking it into pieces so they couldn't worship it. (2 Kings 18:1-4)
- People tend to want something concrete. Spiritual doesn't seem concrete. That is probably why there isn't anything left of the sanctuary and articles in it. We would likely revere then idolize them.

Consider Moses' sister Marian:

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- She questioned the leadership of Moses and was given leprosy, perhaps to teach her the death producing results of undermining the God-ordained leadership.
 - Then the leprosy was removed following prayer.
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Consider the Israelite group at the base of Mt. Sanai:

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- They believed God was leading them, but while Moses was taking so long up on the mountain, they thought they needed new leadership and a more concrete, less fear-producing god
 - So they had Moses' brother Aaron create the golden calf and then worshiped it.
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Consider Korah, Dathan and Abiram:

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- They created a rebellion against leadership by saying that the whole congregation was holy, and Moses was just trying to control the power of leadership.
 - God had to deal decisively, as they had already convinced 250 of the leaders to join them.
 - This is the only time the Bible mentions that the ground opened up and swallowed the 3 masterminds and their families and possessions, and then fire from God came out and killed the 250 men.
 - This may sound harsh, but their accusations sound suspiciously like what Lucifer said in heaven, which lead to 1/3 of the angels joining the rebellion:
 - Darkness Before Dawn, pg 2, 3, "Little by little, Lucifer came to indulge a desire for self-exaltation. 'Thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God.' 'Thou hast said,...I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation....I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High.' Isaiah 14: 13,14. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of His affections and allegiance of His creatures, it was Lucifer's endeavor to win their service and homage to himself. And coveting the honor which the infinite Father had bestowed upon His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power which it was the prerogative of Christ alone to wield."
 - All heaven had rejoiced to reflect the Creator's glory and to show forth His praise. And while God was thus honored, all had been peace and gladness. But a note of discord now marred the celestial harmonies. The service and exaltation of self, contrary to the Creator's plan, awakened forebodings of evil in minds to whom God's glory was supreme. The heavenly councils pleaded with Lucifer. The Son of God presented before him the greatness, the goodness, and the justice of the Creator, and the sacred, unchanging nature of His law. God Himself had established the order of heaven; and in departing from it, Lucifer would dishonor his Maker, and bring ruin upon himself. But the warning, given in infinite love and mercy, only aroused a



spirit of resistance. Lucifer allowed jealousy of Christ to prevail, and he became the more determined....”

- “To the very close of the controversy in heaven the great usurper continued to justify himself. When it was announced that with all his sympathizers he must be expelled from the abodes of bliss, then the rebel leader boldly avowed his contempt for the Creator's law. He reiterated his claim that angels needed no control, but should be left to follow their own will, which would ever guide them right. He denounced the divine statutes as a restriction of their liberty and declared that it was his purpose to secure the abolition of law; that, freed from this restraint, the hosts of heaven might enter upon a more exalted, more glorious state of existence.”

SABBATH

Memory Text - “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding”, Proverbs 9:10

First Paragraph: Old testament prophets repeatedly called upon the people of Israel to obey God's instructions. Disobedience and carelessness would lead to apostasy and disunity. Obedience to God's laws was intended as a means to preserve the people from the natural consequences of sin and to sanctify them.

First paragraph: God's intention was for His people to be holy and to be a witness to the nations around them.

Second paragraph: “...be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' Deuteronomy. 4:5, 6

Consider the shepherds of “the flock” of believers?

- Ezekiel 34 – “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves!..... You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.....I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths.....For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: 'I myself will search for my sheep and look after them.....I will shepherd the flock with justice....I will save my flock....' ”
- Jeremiah 3: 14, 15, “Return, faithless people,” declares the Lord, “for I am your husband....I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.”
- People, the sheep, don't really listen.
- It is said that people generally retain only about 10 percent of what they hear in a presentation.



- Then consider that we all see and comprehend things through our particular filters – 10 witnesses to an accident will report 10 different versions of the accident.
- I have had experiences where people will have come to this class, or part of it, or only heard from someone else that this class teaches something entirely different than what it teaches. Good people who haven't taken the time to find out the truth.
- Example of errors people have of what we are teaching:
- False: We believe that people who are resurrected in the resurrection of the wicked have a chance to change the status of their salvation.
- Truth: We believe that when the wicked are resurrected in the resurrection of the wicked, they then demonstrate why they were resurrected at that time, as a witness to the universe that it was by their own choice. They build weapons and plan to attack the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. (Revelation 20:4-9). Even with the gates of Jerusalem open, they do not come in, as Jesus orders the gates to be closed just as the wicked are about to attack the New Jerusalem. (The Great Controversy, Chapter 42 – The Controversy Ended, by Ellen G. White)
- Consider Nicodemus, a top lawyer, teacher and leader in the synagogue during Jesus' time. (John 3:1-21). He heard varying reports and decided to check it out for himself. Even when Jesus was explaining truths to him, he had a very hard time "Hearing it", understanding it. Nevertheless, he took the time, at night. Later, he stood up for Jesus with the Pharisees (John 7:50-52) he and a rich man Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, asked Pilate for the body of Jesus and buried Jesus in Joseph's own new tomb (John 19:38-42).

SUNDAY

Return, O Backsliding Children

First paragraph: Each time God's people consciously followed His will, they were blessed with peace and life. Each time they disobeyed and followed their own ways, their lives became miserable, filled with wars and conflicts. Deuteronomy. 28:1-14 Blessings of obedience.

Second paragraph: God constantly is inviting His people to return to Him and to repent from their wayward actions.

Third paragraph: "Return, backsliding Israel," says the Lord: "I will not cause My anger to fall on you. For I am merciful," says the Lord; "I will not remain angry forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the Lord your God, and have scattered your charms to alien deities under every green tree, and you have not obeyed My voice," says the Lord. Jeremiah 3:12, 13

Fourth paragraph: God had a better future in mind for them, and He longed to bring them back to prosperity, unity, and health. But this could come only if they would live by faith and all that true faith entails.

MONDAY

Right in His Own Eyes



READ: Judges 17:6 and Judges 21:25

- Basically says that they had no king and that everyone did as he saw fit,
- That doesn't mean they necessarily did bad things, but they weren't united.
- The enemy of my enemy is my friend

Second paragraph: We are all fallen beings, and if left to our own devices, if left to follow the inclinations of our hearts, we'll surely wander from the path that God calls us to walk.

What do the following passages tell us about the spiritual and social conditions of Israel during the time of the judges:

- Judges 2:11-13: They didn't remember history or what God had done, so they forsook the Lord and served Baal and Ashtoreth.
- Judges 3:5-7: They intermarried with the groups around them, which were primarily descendents of Ham – Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Jebusites, etc.

Third paragraph: Prophets and Kings, pages 20, 21, by Ellen G. White: “....By refusing to keep His covenant, they would cut themselves off from the life of God and His blessing could not come upon them.....Their covetousness and greed caused them to be despised even by the heathen. Thus the Gentile world was given occasion to misinterpret the character of God and the laws of His kingdom.”

TUESDAY

The Division of the Hebrew Nation

READ: the story of Solomon's son King Rehoboam in 1 Kings 12: 1-16 –

- Jeroboam, son of Nebat, one of Solomon's officials, rebelled against Solomon.
- The prophet Ahijah told him that God was going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's son's hand and give Jeroboam 10 tribes, because of Solomon's worship of Ashtoreth, Chemosh, and Molech.
- Jeroboam ran to Egypt to escape being killed by Solomon, but came back from Egypt after Solomon died.
- The people asked for fewer demands from King Rehoboam than Solomon had required.
- Rehoboam got advice from elders, who advised him to do as the people requested.
- He got advise from young men, who advised that he should tell the people he would be even more demanding than Solomon had been. He followed the young men's advise, so 10 of the 12 tribes left to become a separate kingdom of Israel, and took Jeroboam as their king.
- But Jeroboam didn't want the people to go to Jerusalem to worship, because he was afraid they would leave him and stay with Rehoboam.
- He told the people it was too much for them to go up to Jerusalem. So, he set up two golden calves, one in Bethel and the other in Dan, for the people to use in worship, and appointed as a priest anyone who wanted to become a priest. This became sin.
- So he actually helped to lead those 10 tribes astray.



Second paragraph: Prophets and Kings, p 90, by Ellen G. White, “Had Rehoboam and his inexperienced counselors understood the divine will concerning Israel, they would have listened to the request of the people. But.....they failed to reason from cause to effect, and this forever weakened their influence over a large number of the people.....In this unwise and unfeeling attempt to exercise power, the king and his chosen counselors revealed the pride of position and authority.”

Mutiny on the Bounty:

- 1787 Royal Navy Vessel H.M.S. Bounty, sent to search for breadfruit. Captain William Bligh vs Fletcher Christian.
- Christian felt he just couldn't go on under Captain Bligh, seeing him as being cruel, so he and quite a number of the crew mutinied and set adrift Captain Bligh and 18 loyalists.
- Ultimately, most of the rebels killed each other or died
- Despite being in a small vessel, Captain Bligh was able to make it 3,500 miles back to England and brought to justice some of the remaining rebels, who were hanged.
- Leadership that is dictatorial and harsh can create a backlash of rebellion, and no one benefits.

What do the following say about the importance of wisdom in making right decisions:

- Proverbs 4:1-9: Wisdom will protect you
- Proverbs 9: 10: Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
- Proverbs 24:3,4: By wisdom a house is built, through understanding it is established, through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.
- James 1:5: Ask God to give you wisdom and He will.

Third paragraph: The leadership style recommended to Rehoboam was ruthless and cruel. In the end, he showed himself to be a bully and undeserving of his people's allegiance and faithfulness. Hence, a division occurred among God's people that never should have been there, and that was never God's plan for His people.

So, what about 1 Kings 12: 15 that says, “So the king did not listen to the people, for **this turn of events was from the Lord, to fulfill the word the Lord had spoken** to Jeroboam son of Nebat through Ahijah...”

WEDNESDAY

Schism in Corinth

Second paragraph: the first four chapters of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians was an appeal for unity.

Third paragraph: 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 notes that they were divided about who they followed, Apollos, Cephas or Christ. Paul urged them to have no divisions, they they were to have the same mind and judgment.



Forth paragraph: Paul reminds the Corinthians that Christians are called to follow Christ, not a human being – however talented or gifted or called that person may be.

- When people look at Come and Reason, do they say that we follow Tim Jennings, and think that we don't follow Christ?

Fifth paragraph: Christian unity finds its source in the truth as it is found in Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and in no one else, no matter how “worthy” a mentor or preacher or leader that person might be. Our baptism is into Jesus who alone can cleanse us from sin.

Sixth paragraph: As Seventh-day Adventists, we cannot take for granted our unity of faith and mission. Divisions and quarrels can undermine the unity of our church today unless the love and lordship of Christ unites us to Him.

How did Jesus handle disunity?

- Christ pointed out the inconsistency between belief and behavior of the church leaders, their lack of understanding of the temple, the Sabbath, their view of women, of the sick, of the poor, etc.
- Christ pointed out that they didn't have a correct understanding of the law.
- They thought that they had a correct understanding of all this and were obeying all the law.
- Not just obedience to the Word of God is the antidote to false teaching, but correctly understanding it.
- People can share a truth, but be hateful, merciless, cruel.
- Who is the greatest (Luke 9:46-50; Luke 22:24-27; Mark 9:33-40; Matthew 18:1-5; Matthew 20:20-28) The disciples had a real problem with this! He educated them about true greatness in God's eyes: Servant of others, childlike in belief, the difficulty of being a leader.
- It still seems to be popular to do anything to keep high level jobs in the church, and to do whatever it takes to move up in the ranks.
- Judas Iscariot: (John 6:70,71) Jesus knew from the beginning Judas would betray him, but sent him out with the other disciples to perform miracles, washed his feet the very night of His betrayal, but despite that, Judas never benefited from the example and teaching Jesus did every day.
- Matthew 10:34, Jesus said, “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.”
- Christ stirred up dissension, cognitive dissonance, like choosing Sabbath to do many of his miracles, eating with gluttons and drunkards...sinners, telling people that they needed to eat his flesh and drink his blood.
- Luke 12:49-51 – I have come to bring fire. I have a baptism to undergo. I did not come to bring peace, but division – even to the families.
- John 8:31, 32 – Jesus said if you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.



THURSDAY

Wolves Will Come

Read Acts 20:25-31: Paul warned the Ephesian elders that they should keep watch over themselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit made them overseers. Be shepherds of the church of the Lord, which he bought with his own blood.. He warned that wolves would come in, even from you r own number, men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

Third paragraph: In his Second Epistle to Timothy, Paul wants Timothy, who is responsible for the church at Ephesus, against error in the church and godlessness in the last days.

2 Timothy 2:14-28 and 3:12-17 Paul advises him to:

- Know his Bible, and correctly handle the word of truth.
- Watch out for those who have a form of godliness but deny the power, and those who were saying the resurrection had already taken place.
- He should gently and kindly instruct them, that they might come to their senses.
- Realize that everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
- The scriptures are able to make you wise. They are God breathed, to teach, correct, train in righteousness, and so be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Forth paragraph: What about these statements:

- “Truth alone leads to godliness and harmony among believers.”
- “In the end, obedience to the Word of God is the antidote to false teaching that could threaten the unity of the church.”

The Lava view of religions:

- Start hot with new idea, correcting an old idea, get a following, then get cool and stay there. Luther, etc.
- Another person comes up with another new idea, then gets a following and they cool down and stay there. Etc. to the point of having many thousands of religions based on Christ... Wesley, etc
- Could a misunderstanding of a part of the Bible or what Jesus was teaching happen today?Do we think we understand everything?

FRIDAY

Further Thought

First paragraph: Gospel Workers, page 483, by Ellen G. White, “The Lord desires His chosen servants to learn how to unite in harmonious effort. It may seem to some the the contrast between their



gifts and the gifts of a fellow laborer is too great to allow them to unite in harmonious effort; but when they remember that there are varied minds to be reached, and that some will reject the truth as it is presented by one laborer, only to open their hears to god's truth as it is presented in a different manner by another laborer, they will hopefully endeavor to labor together in unity. Their talents, however diverse, may all be under the control of the same Spirit. In every word and act, kindness and love will be revealed; and as each worker fills his appointed place faithfully, the prayer of Christ for the unity of His followers will be answered, and the world will know that these are His disciples.”

Discussion Questions:

- What can church leaders and members do to help prevent strife and cliques in a local church?
- In the world church?

Second paragraph:

- 'A proper understanding of God's Word and the sanctified effort to obey it are the best protection against disunity and schism among us.'
- What about a close personal relationship with God and love for Him?

Philippians 4:8,9:

- Think about these things: Whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, praiseworthy.
- Instead of digging up dirt, find the gold!
- Matthew 22:37-40: Jesus said that all the law and prophets hang on these: love God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself.
- Think of what this looks like...who do you know that you could say actually exhibits this behavior?



Oneness in Christ Lesson 3 4Q 2018 “That They All May Be One”

by Tim Jennings (announcements on last page)

SABBATH

memory verse, “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.” John 17:20,21 NKJV

What is another word for being “one”? Atone, and the process of bringing us back into oneness is called what? Atonement.

What is the problem that keeps us from being at-one with God and each other?

- Is the problem that causes division, fragmentation, separation from God and others found in God?
- Is the problem found in God’s law?
- Where is the problem found that causes separation? In us—and what is that problem?
- Is the problem that causes separation a historical record of bad deeds or is it an actual defect in our characters, motives, and hearts?
- Then what is the function of the atonement?
- In order to bring us to oneness with God and each other would the problem that causes separation and division need to be resolved?
- So, then, where must the work of Christ in the atonement be focused, effectual, make change in order for oneness to occur? In the heart, minds and souls of sinners.
 - What do you think this quote from the book *The Desire of Ages* means in regard to where the atonement of Christ must be applied?
 - Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. **It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure.** Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. {DA 671.2}
 - What does this mean? Jesus wrought out something—the Remedy to sin—but where is it applied? In the believer!
- Sin causes fear and shame in the sinner and what effect does fear and shame have on the human soul/mind, the inner person? It causes division, it causes fragmentation, it causes one to anticipate rejection to hide, to wear masks.
- God’s healing love and truth must be experienced—thus when Adam and Eve were hiding, God found them and didn’t condemn them, i.e. He knew their defects and loved them showing them grace. The woman caught in adultery—she was terrified, humiliated, ashamed, and Jesus saw her and showed her grace, she experienced God’s love and it healed her. She was brought



into unity with God. But the Pharisees misdiagnosed sin as deeds, not a condition of heart, and they wanted to stone her.

- Since Satan failed to prevent Christ from completing His work while on earth 2000 years ago, what strategy does Satan employ today to obstruct the atonement? He gets people to misdiagnose the problem of sin, to misunderstand the solution, and therefore misapply the work of Christ to either God, God's law or God's record books, creating ongoing falsehoods like, God declares us to be righteous even though we are not.
- Therefore, again we see that the penal substitution theology, which teaches that atonement is a legal process in which Jesus' blood is applied to record books, or to the law, or to God is a lie. We cannot achieve what God wants for us until we reject this penal legal lie and return to Bible truth.

Read first paragraph, "The Gospel..." As soon as I read this I thought: *Should this be called His high priestly prayer?*

I immediately had several concerns about this. I understand why those in the penal camp call this prayer His high priestly prayer, because it is essential for them that Jesus plead to God for them because in their false view without Jesus pleading to God, God would be required by holiness and justice to torture and kill them. Just think about that, what kind of God are they serving?

Why do I have questions about labeling this prayer Jesus' high priestly prayer?

In the OT Levitical system Jesus was represented by multiple actors that represented His multiple roles.

- Jesus was represented in His pre-incarnate state by Moses who went into God's presence talked with God, then left God's presence and confronted the ruler who enslaved the people, set the people free and established the sanctuary. Jesus planned with God our salvation, then left God's presence came to earth confronted the ruler of this world who holds us in the slavery of sin, broke the bonds of sin providing us freedom and established God's true sanctuary.
- Jesus during His 33 years as a human on earth, while subject to death, was represented by the sacrificial lamb. As John the Baptist said, "the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."
- And AFTER His death, resurrection and ascension Jesus is represented by the high priest.

The first concern I have about calling His prayer in John 17 His high priestly prayer is that it is inconsistent with the symbolism of the OT sanctuary service as Jesus had not yet entered the role of High Priest.

The High Priest needed what the sacrificial blood represented in order to fulfill the role of High Priest. Therefore, in order for Jesus to fulfill the role of High Priest He had to first obtain what He was on earth as a human to obtain—a perfect human character while simultaneously destroying the lies of Satan and the infection of selfishness.



- For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Heb 4:15
- Although he was a son, **he learned obedience** from what he suffered and, **once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest** in the order of Melchizedek. Heb 5:8-10

Jesus had to be tempted and overcome those temptation, and to develop a perfect character, and destroy the infection of fear and selfishness and then He could enter the role of High Priest because He would have developed/achieved what He as High Priest would need in order to accomplish His work as High Priest.

And what is the work of High Priest? Cleansing the temple and out of what material is the heavenly temple constructed? Human beings—we are living stones built together into a house for the Lord!

Thus Jesus needed to finish His work on earth in order to reveal Satan as a liar, reveal the truth of His character and develop a perfect sinless human character to reproduce in us. The Penal View, has the wrong diagnosis, and thus has the High Priest focusing and working in the wrong place, either in record books or on the Father's attitude, rather than in the hearts and minds of sinners.

Thus far the idea that Jesus was functioning as High Priest in John 17 is not consistent with the symbolism of the sanctuary, and it contradicts Hebrews description of when Jesus was designated as High Priest by His Father, and it denies the need for Jesus to actually obtain the remedy to sin which He would wield as High Priest before becoming High Priest.

And then we read this in Heb 7:25:

Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Notice what the role of the High Priest is—to save us by His intercessions.

- Could Jesus save us without His victory on the Cross? Thus, could He function as High Priest without His victory?
- Where is the defect that causes separation from God found—in God, God's law, or in humankind?
- Then where is the remedy that Christ achieved to be applied—to God, God's law, or in humankind?
- Then where does Christ intercede, to His Father or in you and me?

Then the prayer of John 17 is not a high priestly prayer, but a prayer of our second Adam, the one who is struggling to, as the new head of humanity, reverse and fix what Adam did. And, as the representative head of the species human before God He prays as a loving parent for all His children asking the Father for the fulfillment of all that they had previously planned together.



SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “The high-priestly prayer...” The fact that Jesus did pray for Himself should give some insight that He was not functioning as High Priest, but was functioning as our second Adam here to fix what Adam broke and as a human was being tempted in every way just like we are, and expressing His human longings, needs, and concerns.

Read second paragraph, “Jesus intercedes for Himself...” What do you think of this idea?

Does it sound a little odd to intercede for oneself? Does it even meet the definition of intercession?

Dictionary definition of intercede is:

1. to act or interpose **in behalf of someone** in difficulty or trouble, as by pleading or petition
2. to **attempt to reconcile differences between two people** or groups; mediate.

Did Jesus have any differences, divisions, conflicts, fractures with His Father that He needed to reconcile? Or did Jesus, in this very prayer, pray that all of us may be one with God just as Jesus and the Father are perfectly united?

If they are already one, if the Father was in the Son reconciling the world to Himself, if seeing Jesus is seeing the Father, then was there any division between the two that needed some intercession?

So, what was this prayer if not intercessory? The same type prayer He had been having with His Father His entire human life—ongoing intimate communication with His Father, the pouring out of His human heart concerns, longings, passions, feelings, and needs to strengthen His bond with His Father preparing for His final battle on earth and the completion of His mission.

Maybe it would be helpful to actually read Jesus’ prayer, so let’s pause and read the entire prayer, from *The Remedy*:

"Father, the time for the completion of my mission has come. Now bring the attention of the entire universe to your Son, that I may reveal your true nature, character and government, and thus bring all glory and honor to you.² For you placed the security of the entire universe in my hands, so that all who unite with me may have eternal life.³ Now, eternal life is this: having an intimate knowledge of you, and connection with you—the only true God, and me—Jesus Christ, your Son whom you have sent.⁴ I have exalted and magnified you on earth by completing the mission you gave me. I have revealed your true character, methods and principles, exposed Satan as a liar (and his methods of selfishness as the cause of death), and procured the Remedy for sinfulness.⁵ And now, Father, bring me back to you that I might occupy my rightful place at your side—the very place I had before this world was made.

⁶"I have revealed your gracious, loving and benevolent character and methods to those you



chose to be my disciples, and who receive this healing truth. Their hearts were loyal to you; you gave them to me to instruct and heal, and they have listened, understood, and freely chosen to follow your ways.⁷ Now they understand that everything I did was a revelation of you.⁸ For I presented the truth about you—your love and kindness, your respect for freedom of choice and truthfulness, your graciousness and constant giving of yourself for the welfare of your creation—and they wholeheartedly embraced it. They know with certainty that I am here as your ambassador, with your full approval and authority.⁹ My heart yearns for them, Father—that the Remedy complete its work of healing their characters. I'm not asking that the Remedy heal those who have refused to take it, but I'm asking for those whom you gave me to instruct and heal, for they now love and trust you too.¹⁰ Our love is pure, as all I have are yours, and all you have are mine. And their transformed hearts and minds powerfully confirm that I have faithfully discharged my mission and brought them back to you.¹¹ My mission here is almost complete, and I will no longer stay in this selfish world, but they will remain to carry the Remedy throughout the world. I am coming home to you. Holy Father, protect them from the lies and deceptions of Satan by reinforcing in their minds the truth of your character and principles—your character of love and your principles of truth and freedom that you revealed through me—so that they may be unified in love, truth, freedom, purpose, motive, and righteousness of character, as you and I are united.¹² While I was with them, I protected them from deception by constantly revealing the truth and showing them love. None has been lost to the infection of selfishness, except—as the Scriptures foretold—Judas, who refused the Remedy, and whose death was the inevitable result of unimpeded selfishness.

¹³"I am coming home to you now, but I say these things while I am still here on the earth so that they may see the importance of daily heart-searching conversation with you, and experience the full joy that comes from constant unity with you.¹⁴ I have given them the truth about you, but the selfish world hates them because they have the antidote to fear and selfishness, and are not in harmony with the principles of the world any more than I am.¹⁵ My desire is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect their minds from being reinfected with deceit, fear and selfishness from the evil one.¹⁶ They are not in harmony with the world, even as I am not in harmony with it.¹⁷ Settle their minds so fully and completely into the truth that nothing can ever move them from it—your word is truth.¹⁸ As you sent me into the world to be your ambassador—to reveal the truth about you—so have I sent them into the world to be our ambassadors to reveal the truth about us.¹⁹ I have committed myself completely—holding nothing back—in order to bring them the only antidote to sin through which they may be fully restored to your original ideal for mankind.

²⁰"My heart's desire is not for them alone. My heart also longs for those who will accept the Remedy they will spread—²¹that those who accept the Remedy will also be fully restored to your original ideal and will be in complete unity, Father, just as you and I are in complete unity in all things. May they also be in unity with us, so that the selfish world may see the power of the healing truth I have brought, and know that you have sent me.²² I have given them the full truth about you, your methods, principles and character that you gave me, that they may be in complete harmony and unity as we are:²³ my character reproduced in them, and your character



flowing out from me. May they be restored to complete unity—practicing only your methods—so the world will know that you sent me as the healing solution, and that you have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴"Father, I want those you gave me (to instruct and heal) to be with me wherever I am, and to see my unveiled glory—the glory that comes from your love—the glory of being one with you before the world was created.

²⁵"Perfect and righteous Father, though the selfish world believes all sorts of lies about you—and therefore does not know you—I know you, and they know that you have sent me. They hate me because they prefer their lies about you to the truth.²⁶ But I have made you known to them in order to dispel the lies about you that Satan has spread—the lies that prevent them from knowing you. I will keep making you known, for this is the only healing solution—the truth about you which dispels the lies, restores trust, and results in the love you have for me being reproduced in them. Then the infection of selfishness will be removed, and my character of selfless love will be restored within them."

What did you hear?

Did it sound like Jesus trying to convince His Father, or Jesus communicating with a trusted friend about their joint operations in the war against evil?

WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph, "At the same time..." What is that apostacy, how would you describe it?

Is apostacy primarily about not holding the right doctrinal understanding—or is it not being true to Jesus and not representing God correctly, not only in the doctrines we teach, but in how we function, what methods we use, how we treat others, how we wield power?

Did you read the article by William Johnson in Spectrum?

<https://spectrummagazine.org/views/2018/time-speak-out>

The article is entitled: **Time to Speak Out**

He opens with:

"We have come to a Luther moment for Seventh-day Adventists. I do not say "for the SDA Church," because the church at its highest levels is the problem. The speaking out must come at the level of the individual, the member who, along with others, is the church."

A little later he writes:



“But I am not alone in my distress over my beloved church. If my concerns were only mine I would be happy to dismiss them as the trepidations of aging brain cells. But they are not. I could list the names of Adventist “greats” past and present who feel as I do. All are household names, all people are respected for their integrity.

“Just over a week ago one of them e-mailed me, pouring out his heart. Titling his message ‘Dismay,’ he wrote:

We have not communicated in a long while. But madness has not stopped growing. I have to confess that I have now given up on hoping and thinking that the central leadership team at the GC can be brought to turn around and think differently and to allow the Balm in Gilead to bring the much-needed healing into our church. Instead they are tearing us apart. For _____, I think this is by design, brought on by a much-corrupted and ill-guided theology.

I pray every day for the church, but I don't know how much further God will allow this to slide.

How sad! Here is a renowned leader, one who has given his whole life to building up the Seventh-day Adventist church, now in retirement dealing with profound dismay at what is happening.”

What is apostasy? Can one be an apostate while promoting all 28 fundamental beliefs?

This week one of our longtime friends and supporters, who attends church in Kentucky, was disfellowshipped from his church for sharing this view about God. He was limited in what he was allowed to say in his defense and the majority who voted did so without examining the evidence of the issue, but instead siding with the allegations of the pastor that this person was teaching heresy.

I was reading about Martin Luther in a book *The Great Controversy* this morning and came across this:

Charge after charge he hurled against Luther as an enemy of the church and the state, the living and the dead, clergy and laity, councils and private Christians....{GC 148.1}

With such weapons the advocates of truth in every age have been attacked. The same arguments are still urged against all who dare to present, in opposition to established errors, the plain and direct teachings of God's word. "Who are these preachers of new doctrines?" exclaim those who desire a popular religion. "They are unlearned, few in numbers, and of the poorer class. Yet they claim to have the truth, and to be the chosen people of God. They are ignorant and deceived. How greatly superior in numbers and influence is our church! How many great and learned men are among us! How much more power is on our side!" These are the arguments that have a telling influence upon the



world; **but they are no more conclusive now than in the days of the Reformer.** {GC 148.3}

The Reformation did not, as many suppose, end with Luther. It is to be continued to the close of this world's history. Luther had a great work to do in reflecting to others the light which God had permitted to shine upon him; **yet he did not receive all the light which was to be given to the world. From that time to this, new light has been continually shining upon the Scriptures, and new truths have been constantly unfolding.** {GC 148.4}

What would you say is the final message to lighten the world? What is the core final truth that is necessary to finish the Reformation and lighten the world for Christ's return?

It is the rejection of the human law construct with its penal/legal theology and return to God as Creator, worshipping Him who made the heavens, sea and fountains of water, which requires we return to design law, the laws upon which life were created to operate. Then we realize the truth—that sin is breaking God's design which destroys the sinner and God is working through Christ to fix what sin did to His creation.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Jesus prays..." What would threaten the faith of the disciples? What about them and their situation that made their faith in Jesus vulnerable?

Were they struggling with multiple layers of misunderstanding about God, His methods, His design law, the mission and purpose of Jesus, and what Jesus had to actually accomplish for our salvation?

Were they vulnerable because even though Jesus had told them several times that He was going to die and rise again, they either didn't understand it, didn't believe it, or it was too upsetting for them to think about so they either ignored it or denied it?

Who, after the crucifixion and before the resurrection, showed that they heard what Jesus said about dying and rising again?

The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. ⁶³ "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' ⁶⁴ So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first."

⁶⁵ "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." ⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard. Mt 27:62-65

So, Jesus' prediction of His death and resurrection was known, even to His enemies, yet the disciples somehow drew no comfort from it.



In the last sentence of the second paragraph the lesson states, “That is why Jesus needs to intercede for them **that the evil one will not defeat them.** (Mt 6:13)”

This is well said!!! Hurray, excellent!!! In this description with whom is Jesus interceding? Is He interceding with His Father or is He interceding in us and in the world to obstruct and oppose Satan and sin?

Then why was Jesus praying to the Father for the disciples if His focus was to obstruct sin and Satan?

First, because Jesus was about to be removed from their presence and not be available to them during the time He was in the tomb so He was doing what all people do with those they love, He was putting them in the hands of the One He trusted the most His Father.

And the second reason He was praying for them was—they were not praying for themselves. They were not seeking God, they were not opening themselves up to God for the strength they would need, they were not engaging their hearts and minds to reason with God and to wrestle against their fears and misunderstanding, so Jesus, as a friend, prays to His Father, just as you pray for your friends and family, not to influence God to do something God doesn’t want to do, but to open avenues within the divine system for God to act.

We are reading Jesus prayer in John 17, but if we read just a few verses before this, in John 16:25-27 we get insight into this:

Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. ²⁶ **In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf.** ²⁷ **No, the Father himself loves you** because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.

In other words, Jesus in John 17 prays because **they were not praying**, but when they pray—connect and converse with God, Jesus will not pray for them, there will be no need.

This is exactly why Jesus said just a few verses before this:

Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. John 16:7 NRSV

They needed to exercise their own individuality to trust in God, think for themselves, pray and develop their own trust relationship with God, enlightened and empowered by the Holy Spirit in order for them to be healed and transformed.

Read bottom pink section, “What does it mean to be ‘not of the world’?” Where does patriotism fall? If we are patriots to an earthly kingdom can our hearts be fully united to God’s kingdom?



Paul writing to the Philippians said:

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. 3:20,21

Do you ever get frustrated and discouraged as you watch the politics in your country? Could it be that such events are to help us cut our ties of loyalty to worldly systems and commit our hearts fully to God's kingdom?

TUESDAY

The second paragraph states, "As the Father and Son are one, Jesus prayed that future believers also would be one."

In what way? How are we to be one?

What is the primary way we are to be one?

Is it not in character, in methods, in principles i.e. we love God and others more than self and practice God's principles—truth, love freedom?

Can we be united in Godly character and principle and have differences in our understanding of doctrinal points?

Why then is there so much emphasis on getting the doctrines right? Because those at level four find security NOT in heart transformation, but in right behavior and rule compliance, which means attesting to the right doctrines or beliefs.

There security is in having the right facts—it is a form of Gnosticism, rather than having the right heart that comes from an intimate connection with the Creator God.

Read the second to last paragraph, "God is leading out a people to stand..." How would you define **eternal truth**? If we are to be united on the platform of **eternal truth**, shouldn't we be able to define what that is?

Would it be truth that is true for all eternity, past and future? Hmmm... then would the 10 Commandments be part of eternal truth? Or were the 10 commandments added as part of God's tools and interventions to lead us back to eternal truth?

Can we reason this out from the evidence of God's word?



- Did angels have laws about sins passing down the generations or adultery or honoring their mothers and fathers?
- Was there a Sabbath before earth was created? Jesus said the Sabbath was made for humankind

Here is a quote from the book *The Story of Redemption*

The law of God existed before man was created. [what law, the 10 commandments? Is that what was said, or merely the law? Would it not be the design law of God, which life is built upon including the law of love?] The angels were governed by it. Satan fell because he transgressed **the principles of God's government.** [what does this mean, he broke a rule or he stepped out of harmony with the protocols upon which life was built?] After Adam and Eve were created, **God made known to them His law. It was not then written,** but was rehearsed to them by Jehovah. {SR 145.1}

The Sabbath of the fourth commandment was instituted in Eden. After God had made the world and created man upon the earth, **He made the Sabbath for man.** After Adam's sin and fall nothing was taken from the law of God. **The principles of the Ten Commandments existed before the fall and were** of a character suited to the condition of a holy order of beings. **After the fall the principles of those precepts were not changed, but additional precepts were given to meet man in his fallen state...** [what does this mean?] {SR 145.2}
If the law of God had not been transgressed, there never would have been death, and there would have been no need of additional precepts to suit man's fallen condition. {SR 145.3}

So what are the eternal truths upon which we are to stand?

- The truth of God's character of love and His methods of governing which are design laws upon which life is built and are expressed as Love the Lord your God.... and neighbor as self....
- Be a lover of the truth, of how reality functions as God built it, the wicked are lost because they do not love the truth
- Freedom—present the truth in love and leave others free

Where do the 10 Commandments fit in? A diagnostic tool added to bring us back to God for healing, and a protective hedge while we are being healed.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "Generally..." When Jesus said if you love me you will keep my commandments, was He primarily talking about the 10 commandments or to love God and others?

Can one genuinely love God and others and have a crucifix or other image of Jesus or saints in their home?



Can someone genuinely love God and others and not observe the seventh day Sabbath?

Can someone keep all the 10 commandments and not love God or others?

Does this mean there is no Bible Sabbath?

FRIDAY

The lesson makes the distinction between God's true church and the remnant—what do you understand this distinction to be?

As time unfolds will this distinction persist, or does the world coalesce into two camps—the saved and lost, sheep and goats etc.?

What would be the key elements that distinguish the two groups?

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

⁴⁰ “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’

⁴¹ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

⁴⁴ “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’



⁴⁵“He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ Mt 25:31-45



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Check our website for new chapters of *The Remedy* the Psalms will be going up slowly as they are completed and edited. When an entire book of the Old Testament is complete then it will be added to the app and when you update the app you will get the new book. Thank you for your prayers and support as I work on this project.

Watch “The Dr. Tim Jennings Show” on WBTN.TV Network. Go to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

October 19, 20, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar at SAHUARITA Seventh-day Adventist CHURCH, 1475 W Via de Chapala, Sahuarita, AZ 85629-9136 church. This is just outside Tucson AZ.

November 9,10 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Houston, TX, in conjunction with the AACC

December 1, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing an Aging Brain seminar in Dallas, TX. Organized by the Arlington SDA church.

January 4-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking for the Florida Conference of SDA Women’s Convention in Orlando, FL.

February 2-3, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking Christ’s Church of Oronogo, MO.

February 22-March 9, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be in Australia speaking in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Adelaide, Avondale, Sydney, Livingston, Perth, and Melbourne.

Mental Health Matters *Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing*
In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!



Oneness in Christ Lesson 4 4Q 2018

The Key to Unity

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

Read memory text: “Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.” Eph 1:9,10 NKJV

What is a mystery? Something hidden? Not understood? Not known?

And what is this mystery, this thing that was not known or understood?

That the universe will be unified by Jesus—He will be the one who brings us all into unity as we unite with Him.

Are there other mysteries in the Bible?

- Daniel chapter 2 Nebuchadnezzar has a dream:
 - ²⁷ Daniel replied, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the **mystery** he has asked about, ²⁸ but there is a God in heaven who reveals **mysteries**. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these:
 - ²⁹ “As you were lying there, O king, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of **mysteries** showed you what is going to happen. ³⁰ As for me, this **mystery** has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than other living men, but so that you, O king, may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.
 - What was this mystery that was revealed to the king through Daniel?
- **“In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. ⁴⁵ This is the meaning of the vision of the **rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands**—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces. vs 44-45.**
 - What was the mystery revealed? All the universe being brought back into unity through the Rock, and that Rock is who? Jesus Christ—this is the same mystery that Paul is talking about.
- Romans 11:25,26: “I do not want you to be ignorant of this **mystery**, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved...”



- What is this mystery? Bringing Jews and Gentiles together into one group of unified saved—the same mystery.
- Romans 16:25-27: “Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the **mystery hidden for long ages past**,²⁶ but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that **all nations might believe and obey him**—
 - What is this mystery? Bringing all nations into unity—the same mystery.
- 1Cor 15:51-52: “Listen, I tell you a **mystery**: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”
 - What is this mystery?
 - The fulfillment of restoring this creation back to perfection and thus bringing us back into unity with the rest of the universe—the same mystery—just a little more detail
- Ephesians 3:2-6: “Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you,³ that is, the **mystery** made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly.⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the **mystery** of Christ,⁵ which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets.⁶ **This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.**”
 - What mystery? The same mystery—bringing all back into unity through Christ!
- Ephesians 5:25-33: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.²⁹ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—³⁰ for we are members of his body.³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”³² **This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.**”
 - What mystery? Bringing all people back into unity or oneness with Christ as Jesus prayed in John 17—the same mystery!
- Col 1:26-27: “the **mystery** that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints.²⁷ To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this **mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**”
 - What mystery? Unity in Christ and does this text give any further insight into how we all become unified? By Christ coming to dwell in our hearts as the one most loved, trusted, adored, and whom we long to be like, and of whose character we partake!

So what is the mystery of God? God’s plan and actions to remove sin, selfishness, lies, corruption, and all deviations from His perfect design of love and restore His character of love, methods of truth and freedom into the hearts and minds of all who trust Him, thus bringing us into genuine unity with him and the unfallen universe.

Do you agree? Then consider this text:

- Revelation 10:7: **“But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished,** just as he announced to his servants the prophets.”
 - What is the mystery? God’s plan to unify us!
 - What does this text add?
 - When in human history is this time period? Now!

And what is it that is required to bring us into unity?

The truth about God that wins to trust resulting in hearts that open and invite in the Holy Spirit who comes with the power of God to recreate and restore filling us with God’s love and reproducing in us the character of Christ!

It is NOT unity of thought—it is unity of heart, affection, love, principle, motive, method.

We **can** be unified in Christ and still differ on:

- Our understanding of Revelation
- On what day we attend church
- On how we are ceremonially baptized
- On what Bible version we read
- On how we partake communion
- On what foods we eat
- On how we dress

But we **cannot** be united in Christ if we are selfish in character and driven by fear.

What incites fear and selfishness? Believing lies about God!

Thus, the theologies that cause us to mistrust God, to live in fear of God, to utilize the methods of this selfish world to punish and coerce others into conformity cause division, fragmentation, and undermine God’s plan.

We, at this time in earth’s history have a message—a message powerful, healing, ennobling, triumphant—a message to lighten the world, to dispel the darkness, to free hearts and minds, to bring people back into unity with God through Christ—it is the message of the three angels, to worship Him who made the heavens and earth, sea and fountains of waters—to worship the Designer and to come out of the worldly system of Babylon with its imposed laws and reject the imperial dictator views of God!

This means we must reject the imperial human law construct with the lie of penal substitution and the false legal interpretations that cause division and prevent the mystery of God from being realized in



our lives today.

- What is another word for bringing us into unity? Atonement—
- And what time in history are we living? The antitypical day of atonement—
- And what is another symbolic way of teaching this mystery of bringing us all into unity? The sanctuary message—
- And what is the cleansing of the sanctuary, which is to happen before the Feast of Tabernacles, before we live with God in an earth made new? It is the cleansing of our hearts and minds, the mystery of God, restoring us back into His perfect design, bringing us back into oneness with Him!

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “The followers of Jesus...” “In Christ we have been adopted...” What does “In Christ” mean?

I think it has two meanings both of which are true, depending on how the phrase is used:

- In the person of Jesus Christ, in His own victory as the second Adam the species human was fixed, restored to perfection and now stands in God’s presence. So in Jesus we, the species human, are restored to God’s family.
- In unity with Jesus Christ, we as individuals can be in Christ by being united in heart, mind, attitude, love, desire, method, motive. We are in oneness with Him, as Jesus prayed in John 17. Thus as individuals we are restored to God’s family.

What of the idea of adoption? Is this a legal process or some other process that is actual, literal, real and not a legal declaration?

- What is the difference between legal and real?
- We can pass laws to make tobacco legal, we cannot pass laws to make it healthy
- If we passed a law in a country that said one race or people were not fully human, but were subhuman (perhaps the laws passed by the Nazi’s in Germany about the Jews, or Jim Crow laws in America) does that make it real?

What is adoption? The act of adopting—what does it mean to adopt?

Its most fundamental meaning, from which the act of adopting a child comes, is: “to choose or take as one’s own; make one’s own by selection or assent.”

i.e. John adopted the nickname JJ...

Adopt means to make something one’s own by specifically choosing to do so.

So, what then would it mean to be adopted by God?



That after Adam and Eve chose to break their unity with God and alienate themselves in heart, mind, character, God, through Christ, chose to take humanity (the species human) back as His own, to make it is own. How?

Jesus **adopted** humanity when He became incarnate. He didn't simply appear as a human, he became human—He adopted humanity as part of His being for all eternity! Think about it! And He fixed what Adam did to humanity thus Jesus restored the species human back into God's original design! Humanity became God's own by God's choice to adopt humanity in the person of Jesus.

Do we have an individual part to play in our personal adoption as sons and daughters of God? While God, through Christ, adopted humanity when Christ became incarnate, we must adopt (personally assent or choose to make our own) the new heart and right spirit freely offered us by God through Christ.

So, is this adoption a legal action or an actual chosen experience by both God and the saved?

Consider these quotes by one of the founders of the SDA church:

The principles of heaven are to be adopted and practiced by those who claim to walk in the Saviour's footsteps. . . . {Counsels on Health 528.1}

What is described? That we adopt, by our choice, the principles of heaven. Hmmm is this part of being adopted into the family of God?

If we wish to be adopted into the family of God, to become children of the heavenly King, we must comply with His conditions; [Does this indicate that for us as individuals it is not a legal declaration by God in heaven? What are the conditions?] we must come out from the world and stand as a peculiar people before the Lord, obeying His precepts and serving Him. {4T 109.4} [What does this mean obeying His precepts? Which law lens do you hear it through? It simply means choosing to agree and trust God and living in harmony with His design, i.e. being part of the family of beings that love God and others.]

God wants every child of tender age to be his child, to be adopted into his family. Young though they may be, **the youth may be members of the household of faith**, and have the most precious experience. **They may have hearts that are tender**, and ready to receive lasting impressions. **Their hearts may be drawn out in confidence and love for Jesus, and they may live for the Saviour.** Christ will make them little missionaries. **The whole current of their thoughts may be changed, so that sin will not appear a thing to be enjoyed, but to be hated and shunned . . .** {The Southern Review July 18, 1899 par. 5}

What is being described? A legal process or a transforming process in the intelligent being?

When we understand God as Creator and His laws as the laws upon which all life is built, then we see



clearly the beauty God has for us and understand accurately the meaning of what the Bible is teaching. But when we read the Bible through the false human law lens the truth about God is obscured.

At the end of the third paragraph the lesson states, “God does not use coercion to save anyone.”

This is well said, absolutely true and without exception. With this truth in mind what ideas can we know are wrong in Christianity?

- Any idea that has God using His power to inflict punishment for sin
- Any idea that is coercive is contrary to God’s nature and character and a result of the false human law construct.
- God is required by holiness or justice to use power to inflict pain, suffering and death for sin
- Jesus died to pay a legal penalty
- God will torture people in hell
- God is the source of pain, suffering and death
- We need someone to stand between us and God to protect us from God
- Such ideas obstruct trust, incite fear, oppose love and damage minds, hearts, characters and relationships and increase fragmentation and division.

If we reject all the false legal, imperial and punishing views of God does that mean there is no punishment for sin, that all will be saved? No! Why?

- sin pays its wage and the wage is death Rom 6:23
- Is there a punishment for jumping off a tall building?
- Is there a punishment for smoking cigarettes?
- Is there a punishment for abusing drugs?
- Is there a punishment for cheating on your spouse—even if the spouse doesn’t know?
- Is there a punishment for welding without eye protection?
- From where does the punishment come?
- From breaking the laws upon which God built life to exist
- And who continues to sustain the operation of those laws? which means what?
- God will not change His universe to meet sinners in sin—we must be changed to live in harmony with God and His design. As Jesus said “Remember that as long as heaven and earth last, not the least point nor the smallest detail of the Law will be done away with...” Mt 5:18 GNB
- Does this give insight into what Paul meant in 1Cor 15:56: “The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.”

Understanding this we can understand how God punishes sin—not by actively using His power to inflict punishment, but by sustaining the operations of His universe, His laws, including the law of liberty and in the end leaving unrepentant sinners free to experience what one experiences what unremedied sin does.

The last paragraph states, “God wills that all men should be saved; for ample provision has been made,



in giving His only-begotten Son to pay man's ransom."

What does this mean? How do we understand such language? What law lens to we hear it through?

What is the function of a ransom? The price to free one held in captivity or bondage.

What holds us in bondage? The lies we believe about God and our own sinful nature.

What is the price necessary to set us free? The truth to destroy lies and win us to trust and a new nature—both of which Christ provided/achieved at great cost to Himself.

To whom are these provided or given or paid? To us!

Notice, there is no legal payment involved at all!

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Some of the deepest divisions..." What is meant by deepest divisions?

We need to clarify because when I was in the military I was Division Psychiatrist for the 3rd Infantry Division—we have divisions in the military—which are separate units—but are the various divisions in an Army divided, or were the various US Army divisions that invaded Normandy united?

Now within our 3rd Infantry Division we had people of different races, ethnicity and religion—yet we were all part of the same Division and were united in a common mission or purpose.

Are there any lessons from this example?

Why do differences all too often cause division (and in this case I mean fragmentation and hostile opposition, not organized partitions)?

What is the underlying motive that contributes to the fragmentation and hostility when difference exist between people and groups of people? Fear and selfishness, which can be exploited with lies, such as people of different groups are less than human—devaluing in some way.

Why do people get threatened and act violently when someone believes differently about God than they do?

Have you ever known some people who get upset or angry at their spouse if the spouse has an idea, opinion, or conclusion that is different than their own?

Why? Because in the mind of the one who gets angry an idea that is different is not seen as a new possibility to be considered, examined, evaluated and if true appreciated, but instead is seen as an



indictment against them—that they are either wrong or stupid or ignorant.

In other words, the one who gets angry is afraid—afraid of not being good enough, bright enough, smart enough, and fears rejection and cannot tolerate ideas that challenge their own.

Could this be a similar process with those who are intolerant of other's religious ideas?

What about scientist and liberals who are intolerant of Christian values or beliefs, what is demonstrated?

Have you ever been taught that one day the conservative Christians will take hold of government to enforce certain religious observances? And history is filled with countless examples of just that:

- The Inquisition
- Mormon's oppressed and persecuted by Christians
- Muslims oppressing Christians
- Christians persecuting and criminalizing homosexuality
- Murders and bombings of abortion doctors or clinics by so-called Christians

But what is happening in the US today is the opposite, those who reject a belief in God and embrace a humanistic godless worldview are inciting mobs seeking to take hold of government to force people to live according to their moral standards—whether it be forcing people to provide abortion treatment, forcing people to participate in gay weddings, forcing people to share bathrooms with a gender conflicted person who appears to be of the opposite sex.

I am not focusing on abortion or gender rights, we should treat all people with equality—valuing each of them—I am focusing **on the methods** people employ in dealing with others who don't agree. Do we present the truth (as we understand or believe it) in love and leave others free or do we seek to coerce in some way, to force others to comply with our values?

And the point is, it doesn't matter if one is politically right or left, if one doesn't stand on Godly principles of truth and love founded upon design law, one ultimately resorts to coercion of others.

We need to move away from rules and check-box thinking to principle-based methods so we can recognize beastly methods wherever they present and with whatever issue is being advanced.

In the second paragraph the lesson quotes Ephesians 2:13, which reads, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

What does this mean?

Is the text referring to literal red corpuscles or is it a metaphor?



Of what is the blood symbolic? The life of Christ—how does the life of Christ bring us near? By demonstrating the truth about God and dispelling lies which leads us to trust, and by providing a template of a new character which we receive from the Holy Spirit. We get new desires, motives, longings etc.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “The practical...” This is the key to unity—love, which loves others more than self, always seeking the best interest of others.

If we love others what happens to our fear and insecurity?

If we love others what happens to the desire to dominate others?

If we love others what happens to racial, ethnic and religious difference when we interact with others?

So, does love for others bring unity?

If yes, then what did Christ mean when He said in Mt 10:34-36:

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.”³⁵ For I have come to turn

“ ‘a man against his father,
a daughter against her mother,
a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—

³⁶ a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’

From *The Remedy*:

"Don't think that I have come to make peace with a selfish world. I have not come to bring peace with selfishness, but a sword to cut selfishness out of the hearts of people.³⁵ I have come to cut dysfunctional family ties: to free a son from selfish loyalty to his father's ambitions and feuds, to sever a daughter from the control of an oppressive and manipulative mother, to cut through the fear and hostility a daughter-in-law has toward her mother-in-law.³⁶ A person's worst enemies are often members of their own family.

So, is the sword here to divide or to remove the cause of division in order to unite? And what is the sword? The sword of truth wielded in love!

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “All Christians...” Do you agree? Who gives the Spiritual gifts? And is it the gifts given by the Holy Spirit that equips people for various ministry?



So, if this is true then why do many church organizations ordain only women if women are already being ordained by the Holy Spirit with gifts of pastoring?

Do we truly believe in the priesthood of all believers, or do we reject the Biblical position and instead promote a human divisive structure?

Read last paragraph, “There is a strong...” What do you understand the message to be? What is being suggested? Is it suggesting submitting to the consensus of the church body?

Hmmm...what about Noah, Elijah, John the Baptist, Jesus, the Apostles, the Reformers?

Where is the balance between advancing truth, standing singly and alone and church unity?

Consider this description of Paul from *Acts of the Apostles*:

In his ministry, **Paul was often compelled to stand alone. He was specially taught of God and dared make no concessions that would involve principle.** At times the burden was heavy, but Paul stood firm for the right. He realized that the church must never be brought under the control of **human power. The traditions and maxims of men must not take the place of revealed truth.** {AA 199.3} [could this include the human imposed law construct?]

Should we surrender our thinking to the church group?

Adventist Pioneers believed that they would also face what Paul faced:

It does not seem possible to us now that **any should have to stand alone, but if God has ever spoken by me, the time will come when we shall be brought before councils and before thousands for His name's sake, and each one will have to give the reason of his faith.** Then will come the severest criticism upon every position that has been taken for the truth. We need, then, to study the Word of God, that we may know why we believe the doctrines we advocate.-
-RH Dec. 18, 1888.

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “Paul’s exhortation to be submitted...” What does it mean to submit to each other? In what ways is submission healthy and when do we not submit?

We do not submit our thinking to others—but we do submit others to others—meaning we submit them to their choices.

We stop fighting to get our way if people are opposed to it, we step back and let them have their way



and experience the results. But that doesn't necessarily mean we participate with them or agree with them.

But we do not submit to participating in moral wrongs or living outside God's design.

We can submit to anything that is merely preferential and not moral, i.e. carpeting, which piano does the church buy, wallpaper, what property to buy, how much to spend on what project etc.

But we cannot submit to mispresenting God or refusing to fulfill what God has called us to do.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Check our website for new chapters of *The Remedy* the Psalms will be going up slowly as they are completed and edited. When an entire book of the Old Testament is complete then it will be added to the app and when you update the app you will get the new book. Thank you for your prayers and support as I work on this project.

Watch *The Dr. Tim Jennings Show* on WBTN.TV Network. Go to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

October 19, 20, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar at SAHUARITA Seventh-day Adventist CHURCH, 1475 W Via de Chapala, Sahuarita, AZ 85629-9136 church. This just outside Tucson AZ.

November 9,10 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Houston, TX, in conjunction with the AACC

December 1, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing an Aging Brain seminar in Dallas, TX. Organized by the Arlington SDA church.

January 4-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking for the Florida Conference of SDA Women's Convention in Orlando, FL.

February 2-3, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking Christ's Church of Oronogo, MO.

February 22-March 9, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be in Australia speaking in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Adelaide, Avondale, Sydney, Livingston, Perth, and Melbourne.

Mental Health Matters *Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing*
In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!

2018 Q4 Oneness in Christ - Lesson 5: The Experience of Unity in the Early Church

by Dr. Wendell Moses

1. **Memory Text:** “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Acts 2:42 NKJV
2. **Sabbath Afternoon**

3. Read the first paragraph
4. “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” John 14:6
 - a. How do you read this?
 - b. Is this a true statement?
 - c. In what way is it true?
 - d. Many read this as a declarative statement.
 - e. This statement by Christ is descriptive: He is describing reality as it is made.
 - i. He is not keeping everyone out.
 - ii. He is trying to get everyone in.
 - iii. “He that is not against us is for us.”
 - iv. “God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.” John 3:17 NLT
5. Read the last paragraph: “I would insist that fellowship is a particularly important element in corporate worship. . .”
 - a. Is this true?
 - b. If so, why?
 - c. We are made communal beings. No one lives to himself. This is how we are designed.
 - d. True holiness is wholeness in the service of God. This is the condition of true Christian living. Christ asks for an unreserved consecration, for undivided service. He demands the heart, the mind, the soul, the strength. Self is not to be cherished. He who lives to himself is not a Christian. {COL 48.4}
 - e. Love must be the principle of action. Love is the underlying principle of God’s

- government in heaven and earth, and it must be the foundation of the Christian's character. This alone can make and keep him steadfast. This alone can enable him to withstand trial and temptation. {COL 49.1}
- f. Many who really want to live for God spend too much time thinking about their faults. In this way Satan tries to separate them from Christ and hopes to gain the victory. We should not make self the center of our thoughts, nor worry whether we shall be saved. Thinking of self turns our minds from God, who gives us strength. We should give ourselves to God and trust in Him. We should talk and think of Jesus, and forget ourselves. {STJ 70.5}
 - g. We must put away our fears and believe in God. Then we may say with the apostle Paul, "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. This life that I live now, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave his life for me." Galatians 2:20. {STJ 71.1}
 - h. God asks us to rest in Him. He is able to keep that which we have given to Him. If we leave ourselves in His hands, He will give us power through Jesus to make sure that we win the battle against Satan. {STJ 71.2}
 - i. When Christ became a human being, He tied the people of the world to Himself by a tie of love. This tie can never be broken except by our own choice. Satan is always trying to get us to choose to break this tie to Christ. We need to watch and pray that nothing will lead us to choose another master. We are always free to do this. {STJ 71.3}
 - j. Let us keep our eyes on Christ, and He will hold us. We are safe when we are looking to Jesus. Nothing can take us out of His hands. We are to look at Him all the time, for then "that same glory, coming from the Lord, ... transforms us into his likeness." 2 Corinthians 3:18. {STJ 71.4}
 - k. Time alone in nature, engulfed in heavenly music, meditation, and prayer are all gifts of God for enrichment and spiritual development.
 - i. They can not and should not take the place of community
 - ii. We are a community of believers for others
 - iii. We are nourished when we expend ourselves for others.
 - iv. We are communal beings.
 - l. Steps to Christ vs Steps to Jesus

- i. Bible versions
- ii. Translations
- iii. Comfort in hearing, language
- iv. Fear of deviation from original
- v. There is benefit of original for the original hearer

6. **Sunday: Days of Preparation**

- 7. Read the first paragraph.
 - a. Remember the promises given to the disciples are also for us.
 - b. In Christ's prayer (the true Lord's Prayer)
 - i. John 17:20-21 (GNT with Deuterocanon) "I pray not only for them, but also for those who believe in me because of their message. I pray that they may all be one. Father! May they be in us, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they be one, so that the world will believe that you sent me.
 - c. Notice the purpose of being in unity.
 - i. To be like the Trinity
 - ii. "So that the world will believe" that Jesus was sent by GOD.
- 8. The colored questions at the bottom of the page.
 - a. Caution of paying too much attention to self
 - b. "Lest we forget how God has led us in the past"

9. **Monday: From Babel to Pentecost**

- 10. Read 2nd paragraph about Pentecost
- 11. Read 6th (final) paragraph about the Tower of Babel
- 12. When mankind turned away from God - the result was selfishness and self centered ideas / plans
 - a. This called for the therapeutic maneuver of confusion (Babel) of languages.
- 13. When mankind turns back to God - there is unity of purpose and a reversal by God of confusing of the languages
- 14. Why was it a good thing for God to reverse what He had done in the beginning?
 - a. Does God change?
 - b. If not, what made His actions change?

15. **Tuesday: Unity of Fellowship**

16. Read the second paragraph: “It is remarkable that the first activity...”
 - a. What did this do for the disciples?
 - b. We are best when our lives are consumed with the betterment of others.
 - c. We remember things better when we are teaching others the concepts we have barely learned.
17. In the 3rd paragraph: “The mention of fellowship certainly infers that this new community spent time together,”
 - a. Time together bonds people for good or bad
 - b. We see this in relationships, marriages, intentional groups
 - c. We would do well as a church (or any organization) to foster activities together.
18. “Absence makes the heart grow fonder”
 - a. Why is this a true statement?
 - b. or is it “Absence makes the heart go wander.”
 - c. You grown fonder of the absent individual only if your thoughts dwell on that individual.
 - d. A model for Christian growth and community.
19. **Wednesday: Generosity and Greed**

20. Comparison between Barnabas vs Ananias and Sapphira
 - a. When did Barnabas and Ananias / Sapphira join the church?
 - b. Were they part of the Acts 2 church?
 - c. This is one narrative
 - d. Parables
 - i. Wheat and tares
 - ii. Sower: rocky soil, good soil, weeds
 - e. Just because we have sinners in our church, does not mean God is not there
 - i. There are highs and lows within each congregation, family, Christian life.
 - f. Acts 4 & 5 are part of the Acts 2 church
21. 4th Paragraph: Read the 4th paragraph. The second sentence says: “Perhaps no sin can destroy fellowship and brotherly love faster than selfishness and greed.”
 - a. Why?
 - b. It is the antithesis of unity.
 - c. Survival of the fittest vs “Not my will but thine”

- d. “Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus”
 - e. John 15:13 (GNT) “The greatest love you can have for your friends is to give your life for them.”
 - i. That not only includes Christ’s literal death for us but the giving our lives, time, attention, priorities for others.
22. 5th Paragraph: “In the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1 - 17), the last commandment, about covetousness, is unlike the others.”
- a. Is this true? **NO!**
 - b. If you view the commandments as declarative statements of commands, this might be true.
 - c. The Ten Words are 10 descriptions of what truly Godly people look like.
 - d. Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5: 21, 22 and Matthew 5:27, 28 are showing that the source of your thoughts is the issue. Christ is not making finer and finer commandments that you must obey. He is describing the converted heart.
 - i. Matthew 5:21-22 (GNT) "You have heard that people were told in the past, ‘Do not commit murder; anyone who does will be brought to trial.’ But now I tell you: if you are angry with your brother you will be brought to trial, if you call your brother ‘You good-for-nothing!’ you will be brought before the Council, and if you call your brother a worthless fool you will be in danger of going to the fire of hell.”
 - ii. Matthew 5:27-28 (GNT) "You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But now I tell you: anyone who looks at a woman and wants to possess her is guilty of committing adultery with her in his heart.”
 - e. The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}
23. Colored section at bottom of page, first sentence: “What are ways in which we can seek to uproot covetousness from our own lives?”
- a. Is this our job
 - b. What is the natural result if our attention is on self

- c. By beholding we become changed.
 - i. What should be the focus of our attention?
 - ii. Where should our time be spent?
 - iii. By comparing ourselves to the Law, we get the diagnosis, but our attention shouldn't be there.
 - (1) Our attention should be on the remedy, not the problem
 - (2) 2 Corinthians 3:18 - we need to behold Him

24. Thursday: Remember the Poor

- 25. First paragraph:
 - a. Did the gift of the Asian Churches strengthen the unity of the Jerusalem believers with them?
- 26. Read second paragraph: "The experience of unity in the early church shows. . . ."
 - a. How is this done?
 - b. With rules?
 - c. With committees?
 - d. With personal rules?
 - e. The third paragraph as an answer

27. Friday:

- 28. Question #3: What is the importance of the phrase found in Acts 5:5 and 5:11 about the "great fear" that came upon the church in regard to the two deaths?
 - a. Is God the source of fear?
 - b. What causes fear?
 - c. What is the result of fear?
 - d. Anything that causes us to focus on ourselves will ultimately create fear within us.
 - i. Fear is not in the creative blueprint for mankind/the species human.
 - (1) We are to be other focused.
 - (2) It is pretty hard to fear when your main concern is not for yourselves, but for others.
 - ii. The antidote for fear is an abiding trust in our heavenly father/God.
 - (1) Example of Christ in the boat during the storm.
- 29. **Teachers comments:**
 - a. Learning cycle: Key concept for Spiritual Growth: "As we share in worship and fellowship, the Holy Spirit works through us to transform our attitudes to that of love for one another. This transformation gives glory to God."
 - i. How and why?

- ii. Because it reveals what a master creator He is to design such a perfect, other-centered creation.

b. **Bible Commentary**

- i. Read the first paragraph on page 67: “Acts 2 provides a glimpse into the life . . .”
- ii. The last sentence says: “Such unity does not occur by accident.”
 - (1) No. . . . it occurs by design.
 - (2) It is not something we have to work at.
 - (3) That is how God designed us.
 - (4) It does require effort on our part. Just as anything else in God’s creation requires energy input to maintain reality.
 - (a) 2nd Law of Thermodynamics
 - (b) God is constantly inputting energy of our recreation and sustenance.

iii. **Defining Devotion: (Page 67)**

- (1) This paragraph was written some months ago but is very appropriate in light of recent events in Battle Creek, Michigan.
 - (a) “The wholehearted attention that faithfulness demands means that devotion cannot happen without a significant level of commitment and discipline. Therefore, devotion cannot be ordered or imposed on others.”
 - (b) **Consider This:** “How would you describe devotion? What forms does devotion take in the twenty-first century? Are all these forms of devotion healthy? Why, or why not?”

iv. **Devotion to God**

- (1) “We should not forget that the loving interactions with others both inside and outside of their community also were acts of devotion to God. When we respond to God’s grace in tangible ways, we honor Him.”

30. Additional Thoughts:

- a. RH 8. 19. 1890 “If you have been permitted to stand in the presence of the Sun of Righteousness, it is not that you may absorb and conceal the bright beams of Christ’s righteousness, but that you may become a light to others.”



Oneness in Christ Lesson 6 4Q 2018

Images of Unity

by Dr. Tim Jennings

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “As anyone who...” What does the phrase “in a sense” mean in this sentence? Are they suggesting there is some part of the sacrificial system that is not symbolic?

Can you think of any part of that Levitical system that is literal, or is every part symbolic of the true reality—Jesus and the plan of salvation?

So, would that mean the OT system was not necessary for salvation—even in OT times? Is there evidence of people being saved in OT without participating in the sacrificial system?

- Naaman
- Nebuchadnezzar
- The Shunamite woman
- Daniel and others during the 70-year captivity, at least didn’t do anything associated with the Temple and we have no record of them sacrificing animals.
- Ninevites

The prophet Jeremiah wrote:

“This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel
after that time,” declares the Lord.
“I will put my law in their minds
and write it on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people. 31:33

The prophet Hosea wrote:

For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,
and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings. 6:6

David wrote in the Psalms:

You take no delight in sacrifices or offerings.
Now that you have made me listen, I finally understand*—
you don’t require burnt offerings or sin offerings. 40:6 NLT

Then if the ceremonial sacrificial system wasn’t required for salvation during Bible times—what was? A new heart and right spirit—i.e. healing of the inner person by God! Is there something different



required today?

Then if the ceremonial sacrificial system wasn't required for salvation during Bible times—will it be required today?

Then why do some Christians teach that in the future the Jews will one day set up a Temple and begin sacrificing animals again as part of God's plan?

What was the purpose of the sacrificial system in Bible times?

- A teaching tool—that is all it ever was
- Is there evidence of this from Scripture?
 - The gifts and sacrifices being offered were **not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper**. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order... But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because **it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins**. Heb 9:9,10, 10:3,4
 - “The multitude of your sacrifices— what are they to me?” says the Lord. “I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; **I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats... wash and make yourselves clean**. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.” Isa 1:11,16,17
 - “I want your constant love, **not your animal sacrifices**. I would rather have my people know me than burn offerings to me.” Hos 6:6 GNT

The sacrificial system in the Bible was NEVER a means of salvation—only a means of education about the means of salvation.

What is the means of salvation?

Peter said in Acts 4:12: “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

What does this mean—no other name under heaven?

In Bible culture what is significant about a name? Name means character—so there is no other character whereby men can be saved, i.e. healed, restored, renewed, reborn, won to trust, recreated, rebuilt!

Salvation is the literal, actual, real recreation of God's original design into the species human, first by the individual person Jesus Christ, and then into every believer—thus writing the law on the heart and



mind. This is the same as having the character of Christ. All the OT symbolism tries to teach this reality!

Note: this is not a legal process it is actual recreation, healing, restoration, fixing what is wrong!

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “The church is about people...” What is it that gives God’s people continuity through all history?

Did a person have to be part of the nation of Israel to be part of God’s people?

If someone was a genetic descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did that automatically make them part of God’s people?

Jesus said to those genetic descendants in His day who opposed Him:

“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire.” Jn 8:44

So are there people who are genetically descended from Jacob that are NOT part of God’s people?

What makes a person part of God’s people?

The lesson states that God’s people are “to be representatives of His love, mercy, and justice to the world.”

How did ancient Israel do in representing God’s love, mercy and justice?

How have Christians done thus far in human history?

What would God’s love, mercy and justice rightly look like?

How do we differentiate God’s character, methods, principles from that of a sinful world—from Satan’s counterfeit?

Here are some key elements that will always be useful to differentiate the two systems:

- Truth versus deception (lies)
- Love versus selfishness
- Freedom versus coercion
- Design law versus imperial/imposed law
- Justice defined through design law versus justice defined through imposed law



What is justice through the world's system, imperial/impose law?

- Inflicting punishment for rule-breaking/sin
- Oversight, monitoring, and inflicting consequences—compliance police

Have Christians applied the world's methods to their practices?

What was the Inquisition?

It was the Roman Catholic governing system to investigate and police heretical views within the body of Catholic believers.

The 1578 edition of the *Directorium Inquisitorium* (a standard Inquisitorial manual) spelled out the purpose of inquisitorial penalties: ... quoniam punitio non refertur primo & per se in correctionem & bonum eius qui punitur, sed in bonum publicum ut alij terreantur, & a malis committendis avocentur (translation: "... for punishment does not take place primarily and per se for the correction and good of the person punished, but for the public good in order that others may become terrified and weaned away from the evils they would commit"). (Wikipedia)

Punishments included various penances, wearing a cross, doing a pilgrimage, exile, banishment, imprisonment and burning at the stake.

If the punishments are mild rather than burning at the stake, does that make this way of functioning okay? Is this type of action Godly?

In 1908 the Catholic Church changed the name of the Inquisition to "Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office" and in 1965 it became the "Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith."

Is it any less problematic if we change the name?

What if we call it compliance of faith?

Here is an interesting quotation from A.W. Tozer:

The average church has so established itself organizationally and financially that God is simply not necessary to it. So entrenched is its authority and so stable are the religious habits of its members that God could withdraw himself completely from it, as He once withdrew the Shekinah from the Temple, and it could run on for years on its own momentum. (Snyder, *The Quotable Tozer* Bethany House, p. 13).

Wow—God withdrew His presence from His chosen people who were called to prepare the world for the first advent of the Messiah—Do you think this could happen to those God called to prepare the world for the second advent?



What caused the withdrawal of God from the Jewish nation?

What would cause God to withdraw from Christians today?

Could it be solidifying in our hearts and minds such a wrong view of God that we, like the Jews 2000 years ago, reject the truth God and prefer a god in the image of Satan—and teach that God, in order to be just, must punish sin?

God's methods are not the methods of the world. God's methods are to present the truth in love and leave people free. As soon as the institutions begin using coercive and compelling measures they stop advancing God's kingdom and instead advance the kingdom of the enemy—the beastly system.

So what would God's justice, based on God's design law look like?

- Defend the poor and fatherless; **Do justice to the afflicted and needy.** (Psalms 82:3)
- Wash yourselves clean. Stop all this evil that I see you doing. Yes, stop doing evil and learn to do right. **See that justice is done — help those who are oppressed, give orphans their rights, and defend widows.** (Isaiah 1:16-17 GNT)
- **The Lord longs to be gracious** to you; he rises to show you **compassion.** The **Lord is a God of justice.** (Isaiah 30:18 NIV)
- This is what the Lord says to the dynasty of David: 'Give **justice** each morning to the people you judge! **Help those who have been robbed; rescue them from their oppressors.**' (Jeremiah 21:12 NLT)

What do you think interfered with Israel's ability to rightly represent God?

They accepted the worldly view of imperial law with imposed punishments as godly and thus they rejected Jesus

What has interfered with Christianity's ability to rightly represent God?

- Christianity has been infected with the imperial/imposed human law construct which has distorted our understanding of God's character, and what His justice actually is. Thus, Christians through history have practiced Satanic methods of coercion in the name of God—crusades, inquisition, burning at the stake, and many other abuses.
- In matters of conscience every person is to be fully persuaded in their own mind. (Rom 14:5) Thus Godly interventions are to promote the truth and leave people free—Satan's methods are to establish defined ways of thinking and then use coercive measures to force those ideas and behaviors on others—REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE IDEA IS TRUE OR NOT!!! Such as promoting Christ as Savior by threat of punishment—this is Satanic.

So, what is currently happening in our church with top down authoritarian methods to enforce certain views is the outworking of infection of the world's methods in this organization. Those at level four will make all types of excuses and deny this reality attempting to justify their actions, rather than



understanding how God's system and methods actually work—which is truth, love and freedom. In God's system truth spreads from person to person and group to group over time organically, not from top down.

What brings unity?

- truth, love and freedom!

Read second paragraph, "God's people are called..." What is meant by darkness? What kind of darkness? What is the light to which we are called?

- There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹ The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. John 1:7-9

Consider this quotation from the book *My Life Today*:

Every truly converted soul will be intensely desirous to bring others from the darkness of error into the marvelous light of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The great outpouring of the Spirit of God, **which lightens the whole earth with His glory, will not come until we have an enlightened people,** that know by **experience** what it means to be laborers together with God. When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; **but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God. God cannot pour out His Spirit when selfishness** and self-indulgence are so manifest; when a spirit prevails that, if put into words, would express that answer of Cain--"Am I my brother's keeper?" . . . {ML 59.2}

When the hearts of the believers are warm with the love for God, they will do a continual work for Jesus. They will manifest the meekness of Christ and display a steadfast purpose that will not fail nor be discouraged. God will use humble men to do His work, for there is a large vineyard calling for laborers. {ML 59.3}

What is the light? It is the light of God's character of love—which is misrepresented by imperial/imposed law concepts and thus as long as we as a people hold to the dictator views of God, and teach penal substitution with God as the punishing judge we obstruct the work of the Holy Spirit and obstruct the finishing of the work. In other words, such presentations promote darkness rather than light.

The lesson asks why God chose Abraham and his descendants for the purpose of being the avenue of God's truth and ultimately Jesus?

Could it be because Abraham was willing?



Could it be we have a record of Abraham because Abraham trusted God and was willing—and we don't have a record of others because they refused God?

Has anyone ever heard of William Foy and Hazen Foss?

From Wikipedia:

William Ellis Foy (1818–1893) was an African American Freewill Baptist minister and preacher in the Millerite movement, who claimed to receive four visions from 1842 (two visions) to 1844. A tall man, he was the first of three Millerites to claim visions around the time of the 1844 "Great Disappointment".

A common theme of his visions was that the Second Coming would come later than the Millerites expected. They inspired many people through the Great Disappointment when Jesus did not return as they had expected. Ellen White supported his visions. They also concern the judgment, and rewards for the righteous.

He claimed visions in January and February 1842, told in his autobiographical *The Christian Experience of William E. Foy*, published 1845. They were similar to those experienced by Ellen White.

Foy was reluctant to obey his commission to share the visions, yet did eventually. He never became a Seventh-day Adventist, and his subsequent history was unknown. J. N. Loughborough's account was simply repeated by later historians until Delbert Baker's definitive 1987 biography *The Unknown Prophet* traced his subsequent history.

Hazen Foss (1818–1893) was another Millerite who claimed to receive several visions. However he refused to proclaim them, and God told him he was "released" from that ministry, and the message given to Ellen White instead. He was Ellen White's brother-in-law. Adventists tend to believe the prophetic gift offered to these two men was instead passed on to White.

Could we know about Abraham because Abraham accepted God's call and this is why his descendants were chosen?

Read last paragraph, "Perhaps we could ask..." What do you think of the idea that "All nations and ethnic groups are composed of people who do not deserve God's love and grace"?

What is being taught here?

Do unfallen angels in heaven deserve God's love but sinners on earth do not?

If we love only those who are obedient is that love?



Jesus said:

- Why should God reward you if you love only the people who love you? Even the tax collectors do that! MT 5:46 GNB

What does John 3:16 mean, “For God so loved the world...”?

Did God select Israel because He loved them while God did not love others?

Do we understand that the phrase “to be loved by God” has two meanings—

- to be loved in God’s heart, i.e. God loves us
- to experience God’s love in us, i.e. we respond to and are changed by the functional power of receiving God’s love

So, Abraham responded to God and opened his heart and thus God’s love could operate in Abraham and many of Abraham’s descendants, so even though from God’s heart God loves all people, not all people open their hearts and experience God’s love, so functionally not all people are loved by God.

And for what was Israel selected by God—to be the exclusive recipients of God’s truth, love, salvation—or to be agents to help God reach the entire world and to be the avenue for the Messiah?

Consider Isaiah 19:18-25:

18 When that time comes, the Hebrew language will be spoken in five Egyptian cities. **The people there will take their oaths in the name of the Lord Almighty.** One of the cities will be called, “City of the Sun.”

19 When that time comes, there will be an altar to the Lord in the land of Egypt and a stone pillar dedicated to him at the Egyptian border. They will be symbols of the Lord Almighty’s presence in Egypt. When the people there are oppressed and call out to the Lord for help, he will send someone to rescue them. **The Lord will reveal himself to the Egyptian people, and then they will acknowledge and worship him**, and bring him sacrifices and offerings. **They will make solemn promises to him and do what they promise.** The Lord will punish the Egyptians, but then he will heal them. **They will turn to him, and he will hear their prayers and heal them.**

23 When that time comes, there will be a highway between Egypt and Assyria. The people of those two countries will travel to and fro between them, **and the two nations will worship together.** When that time comes, ***Israel will rank with Egypt and Assyria***, and these three nations will be a blessing to all the world. **The Lord Almighty will bless them and say, “I will bless you, Egypt, my people; you, Assyria, whom I created; and you, Israel, my chosen people.”** GNB



Does God love only one ethnic group or does God love all humanity?

Through Abraham all nations of the earth will be blessed, the Bible says!

All human beings suffer with the same terminal sin-condition and God loves all human beings and wants to heal every one of us!

So what does it mean to be part of the people of God? To trust God and receive His Spirit to transform us to be like Him, regardless of ethnicity, nationality, or denomination!

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Another image of the people of God...” And from what is this house of God constructed?

What lessons can we draw from the image of a house?

- shelter
- safety
- place of sustenance and nurture
- place for family
- place for children to grow
- place for love
- place for fellowship
- place for marriage
- others?

Do any of these apply to the church?

When you think of the church do you think of a:

- shelter
- place of safety
- place of sustenance and nurture
- place for family
- place for children to grow
- place for love
- place for fellowship
- place for marriage

Can houses become destructive places—places where people are injured rather than nurtured? Can churches become destructive places?



What causes a church to change from a place of healing to a destructive place? Would it be a change in how they understand right and wrong, God's law and justice? Would imperial thinking lead to the need to find fault and punish, rather than identify sickness of heart and bring healing?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Another building imagery..." Is there a difference between the Temple of God, the Sanctuary of God, God's house, and the heavenly sanctuary?

From what is the temple of God built?

Paul says, "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's **house** [sanctuary/temple], **built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone**. In him the whole **building** [sanctuary/temple] is joined together and rises to become a **holy temple** in the Lord. And in him **you too** [you all] are **being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit**. Ephesians 2:19-22.

And Peter says, "As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- **you also, like living stones** [building blocks of the Temple], are being built **into a spiritual house** [Temple] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." 1 Pet 2:4,5.

Does this include the temple in heaven that is not built with human hands?

What do you think of this quotation from the book *Acts of the Apostles*:

Through the ages that have passed since the days of the apostles, the building of God's temple has never ceased. We may look back through the centuries and see the living stones of which it is composed gleaming like jets of light through the darkness of error and superstition. Throughout eternity these precious jewels will shine with increasing luster, testifying to the power of the truth of God. The flashing light of these polished stones reveals the strong contrast between light and darkness, between the gold of truth and the dross of error.

Paul and the other apostles, and all the righteous who have lived since then, have acted their part in the building of the temple. **But the structure is not yet complete. We who are living in this age have a work to do, a part to act. We are to bring to the foundation material that will stand the test of fire—gold, silver, and precious stones, "polished after the similitude of a palace" (Psalm 144:12).** To those who thus build for God, Paul speaks words of encouragement... : "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward." ... **The Christian who faithfully presents the word of life, leading men and women into the way of holiness and peace, is bringing to the foundation material that will**



endure, and in the kingdom of God He will be honored as a wise builder.—The Acts of the Apostles, 598, 599.

Is this temple, built out of living beings, literal, made of real material or metaphorical, symbolic and not real?

If we teach the temple in heaven is built out of living people does that mean there is or is not a real temple in heaven?

If the temple is built out of living beings, then what would the cleansing of the temple, which occurs before the second coming, be about?

Consider this quote from *The Desire of Ages*:

In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing **His mission as the Messiah**, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was **designed to be an object lesson** for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was **God's purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God.** Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, **the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple.** God designed that **the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every soul.** [what was that building to represent—so the heavenly sanctuary is built from what?] But the Jews had **not understood the significance** of the building they regarded with so much pride. [Are the Jews the only ones who did not understand the significance or do many Christians today also fail to comprehend?] They did not yield **themselves as holy temples** for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all **too truly the temple of the heart**, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced **His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin**,--from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul. [What is Jesus mission? What temple is being cleansed?] "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." Malachi 3:1-3. {DA 161.1} [What is Malachi 3:1-3 referring to? Who is being cleansed, what prophecy describes the same event?]

The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, **foretold by**



Malachi, are descriptions of the same event.... {FLB 207.4} [What is the cleansing of the sanctuary? Is this a legal process or an actual healing of heart and mind of all the living stones—cleansing us from lies about God and fear and selfishness, guilt, shame, and all evil?]

Are we taking a message that cleanses the hearts and minds of the lies about God—the view that God is like Satan a being who makes up rules and then threatens to punish for breaking his rules, or are we promoting the truth of our Creator God whose laws are the laws reality are built upon—worship Him who made the heaven, earth, sea and fountains of water?

WEDNESDAY

The metaphor of a body is used to represent the unity in diversity. What lessons can we learn from this example?

What happens in a person when one's body attacks itself? Autoimmune diseases of various kinds—what happens in the church when we attack ourselves?

What contributes to autoimmune diseases? When our immune system, which is designed to protect from outside destructive elements, falsely identifies members of the body as outsider and begins attacking those parts.

And what contributes to problems in the church? When we begin attacking within ourselves differences, divergent ideas, perspectives that don't meet the orthodox view and believe we must rid the body of people with such ideas.

Do you ever see this happening?

What is the solution? Truth, love and freedom—which is presented in harmony with God's design laws—to present so-called truth through the imperial law lens does not present truth but distortion, which all too often happens in Christianity.

THURSDAY

The metaphor of the shepherd and his sheep, what lessons can we learn from this metaphor?

- How does a shepherd lead?
- What methods do shepherds use?
- Does the shepherd know his sheep and the sheep know the shepherd?
- Who fights for the sheep? Do the sheep fight for themselves? What about in the church—do we allow Jesus to defend us or do we feel the need to fight for ourselves?
- When a sheep is lost what does the shepherd do?
- Do others live in fear sheep? Do others live in fear Christians?
- What would it mean if Christians become people that incite fear in others?



- What is the difference between a lost coin a lost sheep and a lost son?
 - Some people are like the coin—lost and don't even know they are lost
 - Some people are like the sheep—lost and know they are lost but have no idea how to get home and bleat for help
 - Some are like the lost son—lost, know they are lost, and know the way home but have to decide to turn back and go home.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 3, what are merits?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Watch *The Dr. Tim Jennings Show* on WBTN.TV Network. Go to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

November 9,10 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Houston, TX, in conjunction with the AACC

December 1, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing an Aging Brain seminar in Dallas, TX. Organized by the Arlington SDA church.

January 4-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking for the Florida Conference of SDA Women's Convention in Orlando, FL.

February 2-3, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking Christ's Church of Oronogo, MO.

February 22-March 9, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be in Australia speaking in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Adelaide, Avondale, Sydney, Livingston, Perth, and Melbourne.

Mental Health Matters *Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing*
In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!



Lesson 7 - Q4 2018 When Conflicts Arise.

by Russell Atkins

SABBATH

“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:27, 28, NKJV).

What does this text mean? Will our ethnic differences, our genetic differences, our sex differences not exist in Heaven? Will we not recognize each other as women/men, conservative/liberal, black/white, etc.? Will there be no hierarchy in Heaven? Or will there be a different hierarchy than we are used to? Is this text even referring to our future home or our home on Earth now?

From the Lesson: *“One of the most difficult tasks of any Christian community is to maintain unity when differences of opinion arise on matters pertaining to the identity and mission of the church. These differences can lead to devastating consequences.”*

We are at a point in the history of our own church where we will be able to watch this occur in real time [see links below].

<https://spectrummagazine.org/article/2018/08/28/adventism%E2%80%99s-shocking-fulfillment-prophecy>

<https://spectrummagazine.org/views/2018/time-speak-out>

<https://atoday.org/autumn-council-2018-a-pyrrhic-victory/?fbclid=IwAR1QtCII5fRp3VBYAe3ZA2-FFzIcVdENO39fxkqmpz6GEIc6GR8ij3RnQGI>

How are we to respond to differences of opinion? Differences of direction? Differences of mission?

Do our tactics matter, or just our goals? Do tactics matter even if we are presenting Truth?

The following is from the Teacher’s edition of the lesson:

- a. The problems were acknowledged openly. Too often conflicts are ignored in the hope that, by doing so, the conflicts would disappear on their own. Conflicts need to be acknowledged and dealt with promptly.



- b. One or more people were appointed to seek a solution for the problem. The individuals chosen were well known and trusted by the congregation.
- c. The stories and opinions of those involved on both sides of the conflict were heard.
- d. Scripture was considered. For instance, at the Jerusalem Council, the leaders considered both the law of Moses, which talked about circumcision, and the prophets, who predicted that there would be Gentile believers.
- e. Evidence of the leading of God was both presented and sought after.
- f. Finally, the decision was communicated, along with the reasons for
- g. the decision. When this could not be done directly by the leaders
- h. who had made the decision, a message was sent with an individual trusted by the church.

I think these are sound principles to follow for conflict resolution.

SUNDAY

Ethnic Differences

In the Church's infancy, some complained that Jews of Greek heritage were *allegedly* being discriminated against vis a vis food distribution. "This *perceived* favoritism" caused a distraction for the 12 apostles, and they were called upon to address petty disagreements instead of carry the gospel forward [see Numbers 11: 16-30].

I emphasize *allegedly* and the lesson emphasizes *perceived* because Scripture is silent on whether or not these charges were accurate. I personally doubt that there was any widespread food distribution inequalities, and suspect that the solution to the problem was more important to be recorded than the problem itself. One of Satan's most effective traps is to tempt an individual or group to perceive some inequality. It doesn't matter which side of the "inequality" one is on. The temptation of discontent is a strong one.

Remember that the "equality/inequality" argument originated in Heaven with Lucifer alleging equality with one member of the Godhead, and continues, unabated, here on Earth.

From the bottom section:

"What significance do you see in the fact that the leaders called many of the believers together [Acts 6:2] in order to try to work out a solution?"

Should we view this as a bottom up / grass roots solution instead of a top down / imperial one? What are some of the advantages & disadvantages to a bottom up solution?

Any lessons here for our church today?



MONDAY

The Conversion of the Gentiles.

This lesson is based on Acts 10 – Peter’s vision of the sheet being lowered from Heaven with a variety of creatures and the command to “kill and eat.”

The lesson notes that *“he had never partaken of unclean or defiled foods, as the law required (see Leviticus 11, Ezek. 4:14, and Dan. 1:8)”*

Which law required this?

Obviously, the vision was an object lesson for Peter [and the infant Church], and had nothing, whatsoever, to do with diet.

Did Peter learn the lesson [see Galatians 2: 11-14]?

Do we still have similar prejudices in our church today? How should these be dealt with?

TUESDAY

The Spirit is Leading.

The early Church had to rely on personal testimony and corroboration by witness testimony. How did they recognize the evidence of the Holy Spirit?

The 21st century Church has photographic, video, internet testimony in addition to the above.

Are we in a better or worse position to know if/when/how the Holy Spirit is communicating than the early Church?

In the last half of Acts 11, Scripture documents that persecution scatters and actually grows the Church. Which Design Law does this harmonize with? Can you think of any contemporary examples of this?

As a result of the spreading of the Gospel to more Gentile believers, more were converted, and the jealousy of some Jews was aroused.



WEDNESDAY

The Jerusalem Council.

What precipitated the need for the council? Was it not a group holding on to tradition, and mistaking symbolism for reality? Does contemporary Christianity make the same mistakes? List a few.

- The Sanctuary is a building in Heaven vs. made up of living beings.
- Christ's blood erases deeds from record books vs. erasing sin from humanity.
- God's fire is a fire of combustion vs. The Fire of Love.
- The Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience vs. A perpetual memorial that God values FREEDOM of choice and will never use His power to coerce.
- God killed His Son to assuage His wrath vs. God **GAVE** His Son to reveal His Character, and secure the healing Remedy for terminally ill humanity.

The council's decision to avoid food offered to idols, fornication, from eating animals that had been strangled, and from blood.

Do these requirements seem arbitrary or are there some Design Law implications from following these principles?

From the bottom section of the lesson:

“Was there ever a time you changed your mind about how you understood a deeply held belief? What did you learn from the experience that could perhaps help you when you might again have to question your understanding of a belief?”

I can speak from personal experience that I've changed my entire viewpoint on God and His government 180° from what I used to believe. It's taken decades and came with a lot of cognitive dissonance. I've had to admit that I misrepresented Him to many in my circle of friends and family in years past.

Think how much more difficult it would have been if I had made a career of teaching a mistaken God construct, if I had written articles and books promoting this erroneous gospel, and led others to believe the same.

THURSDAY

A Difficult Solution.

I would have titled today's lesson “An Elegant Solution.” The difficulty was in dealing with cultural biases and prejudice with the Jews. For James to distill the solution down to four practices [all based on Design Law] was pretty slick.



The lesson suggests that during the process, Old Testament texts were re-read and reinterpreted through a new lens. What is the likelihood that 21st century SDA's need a new lens to see both Old and New Testament passages?

FRIDAY

“The council which decided this case was composed of apostles and teachers who had been prominent in raising up the Jewish and Gentile Christian churches, with chosen delegates from various places. Elders from Jerusalem and deputies from Antioch were present, and the most influential churches were represented. The council moved in accordance with the dictates of enlightened judgment, and with the dignity of a church established by the divine will. As a result of their deliberations they all saw that God Himself had answered the question at issue by bestowing upon the Gentiles the Holy Ghost; and they realized that it was their part to follow the guidance of the Spirit.”

“The entire body of Christians was not called to vote upon the question. The ‘apostles and elders,’ men of influence and judgment, framed and issued the decree, which was thereupon generally accepted by the Christian churches. *Not all, however, were pleased with the decision; there was a faction of ambitious and self-confident brethren who dis-agreed with it. These men assumed to engage in the work on their own responsibility. They indulged in much murmuring and faultfinding, proposing new plans and seeking to pull down the work of the men whom God had ordained to teach the gospel message. From the first the church has had such obstacles to meet and ever will have till the close of time.*”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 196, 197. *Emphasis mine.*



Oneness in Christ Lesson 8 4Q 2018

Unity in Faith

by Tim Jennings

The lesson this week is about unity in our faith and specifically the lesson focuses on unity in doctrinal belief within the SDA church.

The lesson points out that in 1888 the SDA church went through a period of great debate over various doctrines and EG White emphasized a couple of points that the lesson highlights in last two paragraphs: “that we should NOT expect everyone in the church to agree on every point of interpretation on all Bible texts. But she also emphasized that we should seek unity of understanding when it comes to essential Adventist beliefs.”

I wanted to share EG White’s perspective on the aftermath of the 1888 GC:

In Minneapolis God gave precious gems of truth to His people **in new settings. This light from heaven by some was rejected with all the stubbornness the Jews manifested in rejecting Christ, and there was much talk about standing by the old landmarks.** [What is being described here? God was trying to reveal truth in new setting, a new perspective—what might that be? Design law—that was it! Righteousness by faith moving away from the legal declaration to the actual experience of heart change—being made righteous. But, many of the leaders refused to advance in truth, and they held the false legal view and shipped EGW to Australia. There she wrote her greatest works DA, COL, MB, SC, all of which teach design law. What was used to obstruct the advance in truth? A claim that they had to hold to tradition, the old landmarks of truth. We have had the same argument made to us. Note what EGW says next] But there was evidence they knew not what the old landmarks were. There was evidence and there was reasoning from the word that commended itself to the conscience; **but the minds of men were fixed, sealed against the entrance of light,** because they had decided it was a dangerous error removing the "old landmarks" **when it was not moving a peg of the old landmarks, but they had perverted ideas of what constituted the old landmarks...** {CW 30.1} {1888 518} [This false argument is still happening when we present the Sabbath, Sanctuary, Atonement, Second Coming, final end of sin and sinners all through the design law view, some accuse us of moving the old landmarks, but we are not removing the old landmarks we are elevating and refining them to be understood in their true light.]

One of the landmarks under this message was the **temple** of God, seen by His truth-loving people in heaven, and the ark containing the law of God. **The light of the Sabbath** of the fourth commandment flashed its strong rays in the pathway of the transgressors of God's law. **The nonimmortality of the wicked is an old landmark. I can call to mind nothing more that can come under the head of the old landmarks. All this cry about changing the old landmarks is all imaginary.** {CW 30.2} {1888 518}



Now at the present time God designs a new and fresh impetus shall be given to His work. Satan sees this, and he is determined it shall be hindered. [What do you think the new and fresh impetus to be given to the work is? What is it that Satan opposes and how? It is the light of the 3 angels, the light of God as our designer, the light of design law overthrowing imposed law. And Satan opposes it by getting people to interpret all these doctrines through the imposed law lens. Thus, while we might be right on the fact, if we present it through imposed law lens, we still misrepresent God and His kingdom.] He knows that if he can deceive the people who claim to believe present truth, [and make them believe that] the work the Lord designs to do for His people is a removing of the old landmarks, something which they should, with most determined zeal, resist, then he exults over the deception he has led them to believe. The work for this time has certainly been a surprising work of various hindrances, owing to the false setting of matters before the minds of many of our people. **That which is food to the churches is regarded as dangerous, and should not be given them.** And this slight difference of ideas is allowed to unsettle the faith, to cause apostasy, to break up unity, to sow discord, all because they do not know what they are striving about themselves. **Brethren, is it not best to be sensible? Heaven is looking upon us all, and what can they think of recent developments? While in this condition of things, building up barriers, we not only deprive ourselves of great light and precious advantages, but just now, when we so much need it, we place ourselves where light cannot be communicated from heaven that we ought to communicate to others.**--Manuscript 13, 1889. {CW 31.1} {1888 518}

The men in responsible positions have disappointed Jesus. They have refused precious blessings, and refused to be channels of light, as He wanted them to be. The knowledge they should receive of God that they might be a light and blessing to others, **they refuse to accept, and thus become channels of darkness. The Spirit of God is grieved.** Never can the heart be stirred up with envy, with evil-surmising, with evil reports, but the intellect becomes unbalanced, and cannot decide correctly any controverted point. **The attributes of Satan which have found entrance to the soul, cannot harmonize with truth.** {1888 519.1} [What men in responsible positions was she referring to? Would these be ordained ministers, conference officials? Could this be true today? Could this state of affairs have altered the course and effectiveness of the SDA church? Could this be a reason for the delay in Christ's return that many SDA's believe has occurred? Then what does it mean in regard to allowing those in leadership to determine our beliefs and thinking?]

What are essential Adventist beliefs?

The lesson highlights five essential truths for our church—the five S's:

- Salvation in Jesus
- Second coming of Christ
- Sanctuary
- Sabbath
- State of the dead



The EGW quote above stated that these doctrines were to be presented in a new light: what is the new light into which these ideas are to be presented?

The light of our Creator God who designed His universe to operate in harmony with His character of love and whose law is design law.

What happens if we have these truths presented through imposed law lenses?

Then we still misrepresent God and promote the beastly system of coercion, this is the grand deception of Satan—not on the specific doctrine but the false legal way these doctrines are presented.

We will see that when we present any doctrine through the imposed law lens that we are not presenting the final message to the world, but are still presenting the lie of Satan, the beastly system. It is only when the doctrines are presented through God's design law that the truth about God is seen and Satan is exposed.

SUNDAY

Salvation in Jesus

Read second paragraph, "The Apostle Paul told..." This is well said—atonement is at-one-ment, God working through Christ to bring us back into oneness with Him.

How can the truth that salvation through Jesus alone be presented in such a way as to obstruct salvation through Jesus?

By presenting it through the imperial law lens, and teaching that Jesus had to die to pay a legal penalty, assuage or turn aside the Father's wrath and go to heaven to plead with His Father to prevent His Father from destroying us.

This view, commonly called Penal Substitution Theology is a lie and is based on the lie that God's law functions like human law and thus justice requires God to punish sinners for sin and Jesus took our sin upon Himself and God punished Jesus in our place. We then can claim Jesus' legal payment in our behalf and be legally declared righteous in heaven, even though we remain unrighteous on earth.

This entire theology is false and the SDA church was called to reframe the truth of salvation in Jesus alone through the design law reality of the 3 angels:

- When Adam and Eve sinned God was not changed, God's law was not changed but the condition of humanity was changed from being in harmony with God and His design law, to being out of harmony with God and His design law
- This change constituted a terminal condition for human beings—we are born in sin and conceived in iniquity, and are dead in trespass and sin
- No human born of natural descent could cure this condition



- Jesus was born in a unique way, the combination of a sinful woman and God the Holy Spirit. Thus, Jesus had a humanity infected with fear and selfishness, and could be tempted in every way just like we are. But He was able to resist the temptations and develop a perfect sinless human character thereby restoring God's design for life into the species human.
- According to Hebrews "once he was made perfect he became the source of salvation for all who obey him." (5:8) Wasn't he always perfect? No, he was always sinless, Bible perfection is about perfection of character and character cannot be created it must be developed by the choices of the sentient being. Jesus, as a human, exercising only the abilities of a human, with a human brain, developed a perfect, sinless human character and simultaneously eliminated the infection of fear and selfishness that was tempting Him. He rose in a perfected and healed humanity and now offers to share His eternal life with us. We can become partakers of the divine nature.
- For you computer geeks—Jesus restored God's original source code in humanity and eliminated the corrupted code.
 - Think about it—if you have corrupt code in your computer—no amount of external actions will benefit you—no review by a board of peers who make a proclamation of non-infected code will change what actually is happening within the computer. To fix the problem someone has to get into the code and eliminate the malicious script and rewrite the original operating system.
 - When an update comes to your computer and icon appears, "do you want to accept this update—yes or no." For the update to do any good it must be accepted. This is what we just read about truth coming to our minds—the truths must be accepted and incorporated into our minds and hearts and this is how we are individually updated, changed, matured, transformed. But if we reject the truth, say no—just like the computer, the infection gets worse.

EGW put it this way:

Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; but mercy does not set aside justice. **The law reveals the attributes of God's character, and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition.** [Why? Because God's law is the law upon which life is built to operate. The law of respiration cannot be changed to meet a drowning man under water.] **God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption.** "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Corinthians 5:19. {DA 762.1} [God was reconciling man to himself, not having Christ die to reconcile God to humanity. Nothing was wrong with God, something was wrong with humanity that needed fixing.]

The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and **developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have **remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.** More than this, Christ **imbues men with the**



attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very **righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."** Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2} **Where is the righteousness of the law fulfilled? IN THE BELIEVER!!! What is God's justice? Doing what is right, and what is the right thing to do when a loved one is dying? To save them, to heal them, to provide remedy for their terminal condition!!!!]**

The legal lie of penal substitution theology cheats people from genuine healing. It teaches them that the problem is a legal one and the solution needs to happen, not in the heart, but in the courts of heaven, that God must have a payment made to Him. That in heaven you will be declared righteous but on earth you will not be made righteous, you will remain unrighteous. Thus, the penal view creates a false security, undermines trust in God, increases fear, and prevents genuine healing of heart and mind.

We must present salvation in Jesus through design law lenses if we are to fulfill our end-time mission!

MONDAY

Second Coming of Christ

The first paragraph states, "All who love Christ look forward with anticipation to the day they will be able to share face-to-face fellowship with Him."

What does the Bible say happens or occurs that enables us to share this face-to-face relationship with Jesus?

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, **we shall be like him**, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him **purifies himself, just as he is pure.** 1John 3:2-3

We share face to face fellowship because we are transformed to be like Him!

The lesson points us to the parable of the 10 virgins, 5 wise, 5 foolish, all have lamps; all are looking for the coming of Christ (Bridegroom); but only 5 have oil in their lamps and are ready when Christ comes.

What is the right understanding of this parable?

What is the oil that the five wise virgins could not share with the foolish and why couldn't they share it?

Here is an historic SDA view—do you agree:



The oil of grace gives to men the courage, and supplies to them the motives, for doing every day the work that God appoints to them. **The five foolish virgins had lamps (this means a knowledge of Scripture truth), but they had not the grace of Christ.** Day by day they went through a round of ceremonies and external duties, but their service was lifeless, **devoid of the righteousness of Christ.** The Sun of Righteousness did not shine in their hearts and minds, and they had not **the love of the truth which conforms to the life and character, the image and superscription, of Christ.** The oil of grace was not mingled with their endeavors. Their religion was a dry husk without the true kernel. **They held fast to forms of doctrines, but they were deceived in their Christian life, full of self-righteousness,** and failing to learn lessons in the school of Christ, which, if practiced, would have made them wise unto salvation.-- Review and Herald, March 27, 1894. {Christian Service 263.1}

Now is the time for the careless to arouse from their slumber. Now is the time to entreat that souls shall not only hear the word of God, but without **delay secure oil in their vessels with their lamps. That oil is the righteousness of Christ. It represents character, and character is not transferable.** No man can secure it for another. Each must obtain for himself a character purified from every stain of sin. {Testimony to Ministers 233.2}

How can the truth of the righteousness of Christ be misrepresented through the legal lie?

By teaching that we are legally declared to be righteous in the courts of heaven but are not made righteous hear on earth.

The design law truth is that God is working through Christ via the Holy Spirit to reproduce Christlike perfection in us.

Some ask, if character is not transferable then how can we obtain the character of Christ.

By beholding we are changed—this is a design law. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth and love. Christ sends His Spirit to inspire us to a better life, to enlighten us with truth and then we must decide to choose to accept or reject the truth, when we choose the truth the Holy Spirit strengthens us to live the truth, our characters change, our brains rewire, and we are able to comprehend and experience more truth, we grow and develop to be more and more like Christ.

Thus, Jesus is the pattern that we behold and via the indwelling Spirit we become like Jesus as we choose to accept, agree, surrender, and apply Jesus and His design laws to our lives.

From *Our Father Cares* by EGW:

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18. {OFC 26.3}



When enlightened by the Spirit of God, the believer beholds the perfection of Jesus, and beholding this perfection, he rejoices with joy unspeakable. In self he sees sin and helplessness; in the Redeemer sinlessness and infinite power. **The sacrifice that Christ made in order that He might impart to us His righteousness**—this is a theme upon which we may dwell with deeper and still deeper enthusiasm. Self is nothing; Jesus is everything. . . . {OFC 26.4} [What was the purpose of the sacrifice of Christ? To impart His righteousness to us—what does this mean? To infuse us with His perfection—to actually change us back into righteousness—this is not legal it is actual.]

The transforming power of grace can make me a **partaker of the divine nature**. On Christ the glory of God has shone, and **by looking upon Christ, contemplating His self-sacrifice,** remembering that in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, the believer is drawn closer and closer to the Source of power. . . . {OFC 26.5}

How essential that we have the **enlightenment of the Spirit of God; for thus only can we see the glory of Christ, and by beholding become changed from character to character in and through faith in Christ.** . . . [How are we changed? Upon what law is this change taking place? The law of worship, we become like what we admire, love, adore, choose, partake of. And the law of liberty and love, we are left free to choose what we ingest, not just physically but mentally, what we take into our minds and hearts. This is why Jesus is called the Word, which was made flesh. We are to partake of His flesh and blood, meaning we partake of the truth (word) of who He is and accept His character of love!] He has grace and pardon for every soul. As by faith we look to Jesus, our faith pierces the shadow, and we adore God for His wondrous love in giving us Jesus the Comforter. . . . {OFC 26.6}

The sinner may become a child of God, an heir of heaven. He may rise from the dust, and stand forth arrayed in garments of light. . . . **At every step of advance, he sees new beauties in Christ, and becomes more like Him in character.** {OFC 26.7} [How do we become a child of God—a child who possesses the attributes of God, the qualities of God, the character, methods, principles of God and thus is recognized as being part of the family of God? By beholding, loving, and choosing Jesus!]

The love that was manifested toward him in the death of Christ, **awakens a response of thankful love,** and in answer to sincere prayer, the believer is brought from grace to grace, **from glory to glory, until by beholding Christ, he is changed into the same image.** {OFC 27.1}

TUESDAY

Jesus' Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary

What do you understand this doctrine to be? It is often referred to as the Investigative Judgment—the investigation before Christ returns.



This is classically presented through the imposed law lie, which has God/Jesus in the role of a Judge examining record books in heaven of the recorded deeds of the people on earth and deciding who have had the legal application of Jesus' blood paid to their account, and if there are any sins that have not been paid for and thus not removed from the record. In that case, the person is unsaved and will be punished by God accordingly at the end of the 1000 years.

But what is actually recorded in the records? Since this is a unique SDA doctrine, why not let one of the founders of the church and developers of this doctrine tell us:

Remember, your character is being daguerreotyped [photographed] by the great Master Artist in the record books of heaven, as minutely as the face is reproduced upon the polished plate of the artist. What do the books of heaven say in your case? **Are you conforming your character to the Pattern**, Jesus Christ? Are you washing your robes of character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb? "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as **his work shall be**" [Revelation 22:12]. . . . {TSB 62.1}

Every passing hour of the present is shaping our future life. These moments spent in carelessness, in self-pleasing, as if of no value, **are deciding our everlasting destinies**. [What decides our everlasting destinies? Is it a tribunal in heaven, God's review of record books, or the choices we are making here and now?] The words we utter today will go on echoing when time shall be no more. **The deeds done today are transferred to the books of heaven, just as the features are transferred by the artist onto the polished plate**. [Why are the deeds transferred? Is this suggesting a list of acts, or is it describing how the acts react upon the character and get burned into the heart, mind and character and they are in this way transcribed into the heavenly records? Keep reading....] **They will determine our destiny for eternity, for bliss or eternal loss and agonizing remorse**. [What will determine our destiny? The choices we make which determine the character we form. Do we choose to trust Jesus, believe God is like Him, accept the truth of His design law and choose to follow Him where He leads?] **Character cannot be changed when Christ comes, nor just as a man is about to die. Character building must be done in this life...** {TM 429.3}

What is recorded in the records of heaven? An exact transcript, copy, of our characters!

If you have a video camera taking a live shot of you and it is broadcast on live TV and we see that on the TV you have dirt on your face—what must occur in order for you to be seen with a clean face on the TV?

- Do we wash the TV?
- Do we record the image and then go in with a digital enhancer and photoshop the picture?
- Do we wash your face?

Thus, what must happen to have sinfulness removed from our record in heaven is to have sinfulness removed from our characters on earth!



This is known as the cleansing of the sanctuary, which is described in Daniel 8:14. But notice this description by the same SDA founder:

The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by **Malachi, are descriptions of the same event;** and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25. {FLB 207.4}

This is referring to the investigative judgment, the cleansing of the sanctuary, and Malachi 3:1-3 describes what occurs, what is being cleansed:

“See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty.

² But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will **purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver...**

The Levites—the priesthood of believers, we are being cleansed.

What does this have to do with investigation or judgment? Daniel seven describes the same event. In Daniel 7:13 Jesus is coronated but on earth a war is ongoing between the forces of evil (little horn) and the saints, Daniel 7 reads:

I beheld, and the same horn **made war with the saints**, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and **judgment was given** to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Dan 7:21,22

This has been misread through the imperial law lens to mean God pronounced a legal judgment in favor of the saints and thus a legal process is going on in heaven.

But that is not what is said, and is not what is meant.

The Daniel text tells us the horn warred against the saints and was defeating them. What kind of warfare was going on?



For though we live in the world, we do not **wage war** as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up **against the knowledge of God**, and we take **captive every thought** to make it obedient to Christ. 2 Cor 10:3-5

What kind of war? Where is it being fought?

This is a war between truth and lies, centering on God's character, and being fought in our minds! Amazingly, Paul makes the connection to the cleansing of the Temple even closer and shows how the Temple is connected to this war going on in our minds:

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he **sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God**. 2Thes 2:1-4

Paul is describing the exact same events as Daniel 7 in which evil powers war against the saints and oppose God. In the aftermath of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, did this man of lawlessness ride into heaven overthrow God, set himself up in God's temple in heaven, and proclaim himself to be God? No, where did this happen? In the Spirit Temple! In our minds!

Satan sets himself up in our minds and proclaims himself as God when we teach the penal substitutionary view of God—that God's law functions like human law and God is required to use His power to inflict pain, suffering and death!

The cleansing of the temple, as described in the Bible, is the cleansing of our minds from the lies about God, which wins us back to trust and results in our cleansing from sin.

Daniel is told in vision that an evil power would arise that would lie, distort, misrepresent God, and defile the Spirit Temple by getting humans to accept, worship, and teach a false picture of God. According to our understanding of interpreting prophetic time, it would take 2,300 years before enough truth would be recovered for Christ to empower His people on earth with judgment (discernment) to break free from the lies and be cleansed in their minds and characters.

"Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of **his judgment** has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water." Rev 14:7

Today is the time in universal history for people of God to reject the imperial law lies about God which have infected and contaminated the Spirit temple and make a right judgment about God! This

right judgment wins them to trust, they see Christ in His right light and by beholding Him they are changed, thus their Temple is being cleansed and God's character is reproduced in them. They give Him glory by revealing His character and worshiping the designer and rejecting the dictator views of God.

WEDNESDAY

The Sabbath

The commandment says, Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy... what does this mean?

If we built a golden calf and had an orgy of pagan worship during the Sabbath hours, have we made the Sabbath less holy?

We cannot keep the Sabbath holy for we didn't make it holy and we can't make it unholy—we can only keep *ourselves* holy.

And can a person keep themselves holy only one day in seven?

The Hebrew translate "it" in the Sabbath commandment is: **הוא, היא** [*huw', beyond, Pentateuch*), *hiy'* /*hoo/*] pron 3p s. A primitive word; TWOT 480; GK 2085 and 2115; 38 occurrences; AV translates as "that", "him", "same", "this", "he", "which", "who", "such", and "wherein". **1** he, she, it. **1a** himself (with emphasis).¹

This allows for a completely different interpretation: "Remember the Sabbath day keeping *yourself* holy." Or, "Remember the Sabbath day *in order to stay* holy."

According to Jesus, the Sabbath was made for man—for what reason? Was it in some way to aide humankind in holiness, in keeping ourselves holy?

And what is holiness? Holiness is the state of being holy—which is what?

I would like to suggest being holy is being in harmony with God in all aspects of our being. Thus, being holy is living in harmony with God's character, protocols, methods—His design laws!

And how is the Sabbath related to this?

When was the Sabbath created (remember the Sabbath was *made* for man)?

At the end of creation of planet earth and this solar system.

What was happening in the rest of the universe during that week?

¹ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



War—what kind of war and over what?

And there was **war** in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Revelation 12:7-9

The Greek translated “war” is **πόλεμος** [*polemos* /**pol**-em·os/], from which we get polemic—it is a war of words, a war of ideas. And Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44).

And what has been the focus or target of Satan’s lies and where is this war fought?

For though we live in the world, we do not **wage war** as the world does.⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up **against the knowledge of God**, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2Corinthians 10:3-5.

The war is over the truth about God—whether we can trust God, whether God is worthy of our love, devotion, loyalty.

God wants our love, trust, loyalty and devotion—can any being get love, trust, loyalty from another by threat, by coercion, or by infliction of punishment for not loving?

In fact, what happens to love, trust, loyalty and devotion when threats are used? Love and trust are broken and rebellion ensues.

So, if Satan can get intelligent beings to believe that God is coercive, threatening, the source of inflicted pain, suffering, torture and death then love and trust break down and rebellion against God ensues.

How did Satan get intelligent beings to conclude this about God?

By alleging God’s laws are not the design protocols the Creator built life to operate upon, but instead function no differently than the rules enacted by human beings—imperial laws that require the ruling authority to inflict punishment for disobedience.

Then how does the Sabbath fit in?

What does it say about God, that in the context of an assault on His right to rule, rather than using His power to force all beings to bow to Him, He instead created a day of freedom to think?



Who was watching as God created planet earth?

“Where were you
when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell me, if you possess understanding!
Who set its measurements—if you know—
or who stretched a measuring line across it?
On what were its bases set,
or who laid its cornerstone—
when the morning stars sang in chorus,
and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Job 38:4-7

The heavenly beings were watching as God created earth and a war over God’s right to rule was raging.

Why would God create planet earth at this point in universal history? To demonstrate by actions (give evidence) that Satan’s allegations were wrong.

Earth was created as the pinnacle of Godliness, a world of procreative power to operate upon love. A place where angels could look to find answers to the questions raised by Satan:

“We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men.”
1Corinthians 4:9

Adam and Eve were created in perfect love to give of themselves in love and create beings in their image and rule over the planet in other-centered love. In sinless perfection, Adam and Eve would not have had children to abuse or enslave, but to care for and nurture, thus the way they govern this world would a microcosm of the universe revealing how God lovingly rules His entire creation.

And after 6 days of creation God says to all the watching beings, “You have heard the allegations against Us, you have seen the evidence we have just given, now universe—I rest My case! Take 24 hours aside and think for yourselves, come to your own conclusions and decide who you are going to trust.”

Days 1-6 of creation week we learn God has power—day seven reveals the character of the One who wields the power: God presented evidence (truth), in love, leaving His creatures free to decide for themselves. No coercion, to intimidation, no pressure—freedom!

So then what is the Sabbath commandment about? It is about how one lives their life—in harmony with God and His design for life—do we present truth in love and leave others free or do we use imperial rules and coerce others with threats of punishment?



Do we present the Sabbath as evidence of God's character and each week we remember God as Creator and His laws as the laws upon which reality is built and do we love His character of love and choose to practice His methods in our lives? Or, do we accept the lie that God's laws are like Satan alleges, rules imposed which require inflicted punishments and thus misrepresent God and turn the Sabbath into an arbitrary test of obedience filled with restrictions and prohibitions, which incite fear of punishment and undermine our love and trust in God?

THURSDAY

Death and Resurrection

Read first paragraph, "At Creation..."

The first premise to be addressed with the question of the state of humanity is whether at Creation God created humankind immortal or were they created mortal?

What are the implications if God created Adam and Eve with immortality?

- Does God have foreknowledge?
- Did God know they would sin?
- Then what kind of god would give immortality to beings who would rebel and suffer for all eternity?
- If you say God does not have foreknowledge—He didn't know what would happen—then does He not have wisdom to know what might happen and take wise actions to prevent His children from placing themselves in a situation where some will suffer for all eternity?

Not only does the doctrine of immortality of the soul contradict Scripture it makes God out to be either a horrible being or an inept being—there is no other option. In other words, there is no possibility for God to be a perfect and good God if He created Adam and Eve with immortality.

What about the idea that at death nothing goes to heaven?

Hmmm.... what is recorded in the records of heaven?

Consider Paul's words:

¹³ Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. ¹⁴ We believe that Jesus died and rose again and **so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. [From where is Jesus coming? Heaven, and who is Jesus bringing with Him? The saved—then where are the saved after they fall asleep in the first death? In heaven with Jesus...but keep reading]** ¹⁵ According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet



call of God, and **the dead in Christ will rise first.** [who are these that are arising out of the grave? These are the same dead that are coming down out of heaven. How is it they are in heaven and also in the grave? We are tripartite, body, soul, spirit/ soma/psyche/pneuma, matter/individuality/energy, like a computer to be operational need all three hardware/software/electricity At death the software/individuality is stored on the heavenly servers, Lamb's book of life, the body decays to dust and the life energy returns to God who gave it. At the resurrection God brings the servers with the individualities of the saved from heaven, creates new bodies and downloads their individualities/souls into the bodies and gives them energy and they live again] ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 1Thes 4:13-17

FRIDAY

read and discuss question 1



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Watch *The Dr. Tim Jennings Show* on WBTN.TV Network. Go to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

December 1, 2018: Aging Brain seminar in Arlington, TX at the LoneStar Auditorium on the UT Arlington campus, 9am-4:30pm, preregister @ tiny.cc/BriainRegistration

January 4-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking for the Florida Conference of SDA Women's Convention in Orlando, FL.

February 2-3, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking Christ's Church of Oronogo, MO.

February 22-March 9, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be in Australia speaking in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Adelaide, Avondale, Sydney, Livingston, Perth, and Melbourne.

April 3-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Sophia Bulgaria.

Mental Health Matters

Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

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

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!



Oneness in Christ Lesson 9 4Q 2018

The Most Convincing Proof

by Tim Jennings

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “Last week we...” Are there any concerns with this?

Three elements were emphasized:

- Jesus as Savior
- Truth of Scripture
- The time of the end

Don't most Christians believe Jesus is Savior, Truth is found in Scripture and we are living in the time of the end?

Is there a message that is specific for human beings at this time in human history?

How would you describe the message that we, as Christians, as a church, are to take to the world in this time in human history?

What do you think of this as a suggested message for our time, from the book *Christ's Object Lessons*:

It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. **At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known.** Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth... **The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.**” Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

Do you agree or disagree?

Is this message different or the same as the message of the 3 angels of Revelation 14:6-12 from NRSV?

Then I saw another angel flying in midheaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation and tribe and language and people. **7** He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

8 Then another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has



made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

9 Then another angel, a third, followed them, crying with a loud voice, “Those who worship the beast and its image, and receive a mark on their foreheads or on their hands, **10** they will also drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and they will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. **11** And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image and for anyone who receives the mark of its name.”

12 Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and hold fast to the faith of Jesus.

Does this sound like a message of God’s character of love?

What law lens do you hear it through? What law lens was it translated through?

From *The Remedy*:

⁶Then I saw another messenger flying in midair, and he had the eternal good news about God's character of love to proclaim to everyone living on earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and people—which represents a movement of people who arise to proclaim the truth about God's character of love throughout the world.⁷He said in a clear, resounding voice, "Be in awe of God, and glorify him by living his methods of love, because the hour has come for everyone to make a judgment about God, and worship the Designer, Creator and Builder who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and springs of water— all of which operate upon his law of love."

⁸A second messenger followed the first, proclaiming throughout the world: "Don't trust Babylon the Great—a symbolic description of religions that misrepresent God—as it is fallen into the lies about God and intoxicates the world with its pagan views of God, maddening the people with its adulterous idea that God coerces and must inflict punishment if not properly appeased."

⁹And a third messenger followed the first two and proclaimed in a voice that was heard throughout the world: "If anyone gives worth and honor to the beastly system of coercion by choosing the methods of the beast and thus marking themselves as 'loyal in heart' by embracing the character of the beast, or marking themselves as 'loyal in deed' by practicing his methods,¹⁰ they will reap the full fury of unremedied sin when God no longer shields them from their destructive choice. They will experience immeasurable torment of mind and burning anguish of heart when they stand in God's fiery presence and are bathed in unquenchable fire of truth and love—all in the very presence of Jesus and the holy angels.¹¹The memory of their suffering and the lesson of their self-destructive choice will never be forgotten throughout all eternity. There will be no peace of mind—day or night—for those who prefer the methods of the beast and model after him, or for any who choose to mark themselves as followers of the



beast."¹² This requires patient endurance on the part of the healed, who live God's methods of love and remain true to Jesus.

Does this sound different?

Can the truth that Jesus is our Savior be presented in a way that, rather than uniting, divides?

How can that be?

When we operate at level four thinking, which is law and order, imperial law, rules oriented, then security is found in proper definitions, doctrines, right ideas, rather than right character and right methods.

It lends itself to missing the forest for the trees—in this case missing actual salvation, the restoration of Christlikeness within, for ensuring the right doctrinal definitions are taught.

The false law view leads to *the ends justify the means* mentality. We must ensure that we are united in the right doctrines and thus we must set up compliance committees, use coercive pressure, threaten income, for no one can buy or sell save him who has the mark of the beast. But this is considered okay because we are enforcing the right doctrines, rules, laws.

They fail to realize this is not how reality works—one cannot get love, loyalty, devotion, trust, friendship by threats and punishment.

Does this mean there is no relationship between doctrine, what is taught and salvation or is there a relationship between doctrines and salvation? Yes there is a relationship!

Is there a relationship between salvation in Jesus and the message of unity to the world? Yes!

What is that relationship?

Is there a relationship between teaching/doctrines and salvation? It is all based in reality—How reality, God's kingdom actually works:

- When doctors taught people with lung disease they would improve by smoking tobacco—was there a relationship between what was being taught and their health outcomes?
- When doctors changed their teaching to teach tobacco causes lung disease and no one should smoke—was there a relationship between what was being taught and health outcomes?
- So what is the relationship between doctrines and salvation in Jesus?
- If they teach the truth about God, His character and methods, His design for life, what is actually wrong that God is fixing through Christ then the doctrines are effective in leading people to salvation.



- But if what is taught is myth, is distorted, is false then the doctrines taught can actually make things worse—increase fear, harden hearts, incite rebellion, cause division, and incite abuse of others—all under the guise of loyalty to God. Remember those who crucified Christ, or the Dark Ages, Inquisition and what Revelation teaches about the end of time.

So, what methods unite and what methods divide?

Truth presented in love while leaving free, when these methods are **accepted** then unity results.

Lies believed results in fear selfishness leading to coercion and always divides.

Truth presented to a group of people who all believe the same lie and practice the same distorted methods will divide. This is what Jesus meant when He said He did not come to bring peace but a sword—the sword of truth.

Matthew 10:34-36 from *The Remedy*:

"Don't think that I have come to make peace with a selfish world. I have not come to bring peace with selfishness, but a sword to cut selfishness out of the hearts of people.³⁵ I have come to cut dysfunctional family ties: to free a son from selfish loyalty to his father's ambitions and feuds, to sever a daughter from the control of an oppressive and manipulative mother, to cut through the fear and hostility a daughter-in-law has toward her mother-in-law.³⁶ A person's worst enemies are often members of their own family.

What happens if we have a right doctrinal fact, say, ceremonial baptism by immersion in water and we use methods of coercion to force people to be baptized by immersion—are we promoting the truth or a lie?

How about we teach people the Bible method of baptism, but leave them free to decide for themselves and a person is not convinced of the immersion method and instead is baptized by sprinkling does that preclude them from being saved? Would baptism by sprinkling prevent someone from being part of God's church triumphant?

But, could baptism by sprinkling prevent someone from being part of various denominations until they are not immersed in water?

What does this say about denominations versus the church triumphant?

If we have a message for the end of time that is to unite people under one head, Jesus, should that message be one that unites all people, or should we present truths that are truths, but in such a way that they fracture and divide?



SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Like many other spiritual...” What is being taught in this paragraph?

Are they saying if we agree on the method of baptism, claim by faith the death of Jesus for our sin payment and the forgiveness of sins and believe He rose from the dead, and share common definition of what the three angels’ messages mean, then we will be united?

Hmmm...So is unity an agreement of ideas merely?

Or, is unity a unity of hearts of love who practice the same methods but yet could still disagree on definitions of things like the meaning of the 3 angels or method of baptism, or why Christ had to die?

What about the idea that unity is not a human creation by our good works or efforts?

Does that mean we can have unity, as God designed it and through God’s methods, without our good works and efforts?

What is meant by:

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Php 2:12-13

Can a person be saved by their own efforts apart from God and Jesus? No!

Can God save a person through Jesus without the effort, cooperation, and active engagement of that person? No!

This is another place where the false imperial/imposed law lens has corrupted simple truth. Because the species human was saved by Jesus alone and no work, effort, action we sinner can take can contribute in any way to what Jesus accomplished for us it is falsely taught that we have no work in our salvation. Untrue—we have no work in developing the remedy for our sin problem—this Jesus did singly and alone. But we do have a work in partaking and cooperating with Jesus and the Holy Spirit in the application of that remedy into our individual lives.

The legal lie tells people you only need to accept the legal payment of Jesus blood to your heavenly ledger and God will declare you to be righteous, even though you remain wicked. Your only work in being saved is to accept the legal payment. Once saved, you have work to do in gratitude but that work doesn’t contribute to your being saved.

The truth is that Jesus saved the species in His own humanity and developed a perfect sinless character, destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness, revealed God as altogether trustworthy and



His methods as the only methods of life and exposed Satan as a liar. We have a work to do in thinking/studying the truth and choosing to trust God, and then in applying to our lives the methods and principles of God.

Here is what one of the founders of the SDA church wrote—is this part of the end time message we are to take to the world—do you see this as a different message than the penal substitutionary lie?

- We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}
- **There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies--** divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding,** but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . .** . Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}
- And he who seeks to give light to others will himself be blessed. "There shall be showers of blessing." "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." Proverbs 11:25. **God could have reached His object in saving sinners without our aid; but in order for us to develop a character like Christ's, we must share in His work.** In order to enter into His joy,--the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice,--we must participate in His labors for their redemption. {DA 142.2}

What law of God is described in that last quote? The law of exertion—if you want something to get stronger you must exercise it. God wants us to grow, to develop, to become like Him, and we must also want that and choose it, not just as a concept but as a way of life. The legal model is a lie of Satan that cheats people from genuine holiness, healthiness and happiness.

Read third paragraph “Whatever else we believe...”

How is this different from every other Christian denomination? And if all Christian denominations teach salvation through Jesus’ death in our behalf, does that mean we are united with all denominations?

Why can two people both proclaim belief in Christ’s death but not be united in Christ?



“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ Mt 7:21-24 NIV

These are not Buddhists or atheists, these are people proclaiming Jesus as Lord—Christians, but they are not united with Jesus why? Because they were not doing the will of the Father in heaven. And what is the will of the Father?

To love—to live in harmony with God’s character and design law of love!

MONDAY

In the second paragraph the lesson asks us to read Ephesians 2:13-16:

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. NIV

What does this mean?

Who was far away and far away from what? Would it be far away from God and God’s design for life, God’s law of love?

What is meant by “the blood of Christ”? Does that mean the red corpuscles?

How does the blood of Christ bring one close to God and God’s design?

What are the two that are brought into one? What is the barrier, the wall dividing? What does it mean abolish the law in his flesh?

How does Christ create in himself a new human and how does this bring peace, peace with who or what?



From *The Remedy*:

But now, you—whose minds were once far away, and who were practicing the principles of selfishness and survival-of-the-fittest—have been enlightened and brought near to God, and are in unity with Christ through the truth revealed when he died.

¹⁴ For Christ himself is the Remedy that heals the species and brings peace. He has removed fear and selfishness that cause division, mistrust, prejudice, and hostility.¹⁵ He did this by partaking of our human condition, and—via the exercise of his human brain—he loved perfectly, thereby destroying in his flesh (in the humanity he partook) the selfish survival-of-the-fittest drive along with the lies of Satan. In this way, he destroyed the need for the law (with all its regulations) to expose Satan’s lies and methods. His purpose was to be the template of a new humanity born out of the unification of the two—our selfish, infected condition merged with his sinless state—thereby purging selfishness from the human heart, and transforming, healing, renewing, regenerating and recreating humanity back to God’s original ideal;¹⁶ and in this new being, to reconcile the human race—regardless of ethnic background—into loving unity with God and each other through the revelation of truth at the cross, by which he destroyed the lies of Satan, reestablished trust, and removed fear, selfishness, and hostility.

Do you see how only design law—understanding God as Creator, how God built life to operate and how sin is breaking God’s design for life which causes pain and death—can give us the right understanding? If we try to understand the Bible with the imperial/imposed law lens we will always end up with wrong conclusions and too frequently misrepresent God as beastly.

The lesson asks us to read 2Cor 5:17-21 from the NIV:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation**; *:[is a new creation as this verse says or do we believe the legal lie that says one is declared to be a new creation even though he is not?]* the old has gone, the new has come! ¹⁸ **All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself** *[Do we believe the Bible or the penal/legal lie that Christ had to propitiate the Father’s wrath and also reconcile the Father to us?]* through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, **not counting men’s sins against them.** *[do we believe what the Bible says or the legal lie which teaches God does keep score, does keep record of the sins, counting them and recording them in the books of heaven to one day punish for?]* And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ **God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.** *[Substitution—for what purpose? So that we might become the righteousness of God. The Penal Substitutionary lie is that we are declared righteous even though we are not. This is not so. God was in Christ restoring the species human back into perfection!]*

Do you believe that God does not count our sins against us?



Isn't it taught that God does count our sins against us? Is this true or not?

What does 1Cor 13 say about love, "it keeps no record of wrongs." Is God love? Then does God keep record of wrongs to judge us by and punish us by?

No! This is Satan's lie to undermine our trust in God. God doesn't have to keep record of wrongs because His law is not imperial or imposed, it is design law. All deviations from God's design law injure and damage the sinner and God is working through Christ to heal and restore all who trust Him.

God's records are merely the records of reality—like medical records, documenting the actual condition of each heart and also documenting all the myriad interventions from God to heal every person and all the many times any lost person rejected God's free remedy. Thus the records are not lists of our misdeeds to punish and destroy us for, but a record of all God has done to save each person, even those who are lost and how the lost are destroyed by their own persistence in selfishness—not by God.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "In 1902..." Is what is described here a legal process or actual transformation of the sinner?

What is the mind that was in Christ that is to be ours?

How did Jesus treat the woman caught in adultery?

- Did He condemn her?
- Did He condone the adultery?
- What did He do and why?
- How should we treat people who are living in "sin"?
- Why do we not need to condemn?
- What would our attitude be toward a loved one who smoked two packs per day? Why? Is this how it is for those who live in sin?
- Why is this a safe approach?
- What if we believe that a particular action/practice is sinful but it is not, what happens if we leave people free? But if it is harmful? What happens?

How did Jesus treat the woman with the bleeding problem?

- Did He let her slip away?
- Do you think she wanted everyone to know she had been bleeding in this way for years?
- Might she have been embarrassed?
- Why did Jesus call her out publicly?
- What was Jesus trying to heal?



- She struggled with not only bleeding of her body, but with shame, guilt, fear of not being accepted by God. Jesus wanted to remove her shame, to have her realize that by trusting in Him not only was her body healed, but she gets a new heart and right spirit. To set her truly free to hold her head up in society and to know that God wanted her to be well.

What mindset does Jesus reveal in Mt 5:43-48:

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

What law does Jesus cite as evidence of God’s methods?

How are we to be perfect? In what way? In love, in heart attitude toward others. Which law helps us do this? Design law!

WEDNESDAY

The lesson focuses on Romans 14 and 15, and how there were disagreements over what to eat or what days to hold as sacred and Paul made the point that every person is to be fully persuaded in their own mind and we are not to judge one another.

Thoughts about the principle?

Read second paragraph, “It is very likely...” What is the lesson trying to do here?

It is trying to make a distinction between issues that we should allow others to differ with us upon, and other issues that we should call *salvation issues* and not allow such divergence. Is it true that Paul’s counsel was only on issues of opinion and not to be applied to “salvation” issues?

Is accepting Jesus as our Savior a salvation issue?

Should every person be fully persuaded in their own mind about accepting Jesus as their Savior? Yes! This counsel applies to all truths why?

Because a person convinced against their will is of the same opinion still.

When we understand design law we understand that only when a person is convinced in their own mind does the truth have any benefit to them. If they disagree with the truth and conform for some



other reason then, in their heart, they become a rebel, hardened, and move away from God.

This is what much of legal religion does, it pressures people to keep rules for which they do not agree and this causes either rebellion or destroys individuality, developing brute beasts of religious enforcement.

Notice this brilliant insight in *Christ's Object Lessons*:

A profession of faith and the possession of truth in the soul are two different things. The mere knowledge of truth is not enough. We may possess this, but the tenor of our thoughts may not be changed. **The heart must be converted and sanctified.** {COL 97.2}

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. [this is level four, this is Penal Substitution Theology] When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. **True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God.** The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. [this is design law!] {COL 97.3}

Why is this so? Because of design law, the law of liberty, love can only be experienced in atmosphere of freedom. Pressure or coerce someone against their will and they will rebel. Thus we read:

A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. **If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints.** Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897}

Notice the lesson suggests that Paul's counsel did not refer to eating pork or the weekly Sabbath—why would the lesson suggest this?

Because they are operating under the false imperial law lens and think that certain rules must be enforced.

Of course, the principle of persuading everyone in their own mind applies to eating pork or the Sabbath. However, if a person is not persuaded about the foods they eat they will not be punished by God in hell, but will suffer health problems.

What about the Sabbath—if a person is not persuaded about the benefits of the Sabbath then what? What would happen if a person doesn't believe the Sabbath is a gift to man from God, but they observe it because their spouse wants them to, or because they fear God will punish them if they

don't—what happens?

What if a person doesn't believe in it and doesn't observe it at all? They miss out on all the Sabbath was designed to teach and provide, but does that mean they miss out on a love relationship with Jesus?

Read bottom pink section, "Is there anything that..." Is there a difference in being a member of God's family, being saved, fulfilling God's purpose in one's life, having God's law written in the heart and mind, living fully to the light God has given you and to what denomination one belongs?

What is the benefit of organizational groups?

THURSDAY

What is the mission of God's people at this time in human history?

Is that mission exclusive to any denominational church, or can any person be part of that mission even without joining a specific denomination?

Can a person be part of God's end time mission without having God's character reproduced within?

FRIDAY

The lesson suggests the Holy Spirit guides the church in three ways, revelation, Scripture and consensus—thoughts?

Could any of these be used by a false spirit?

Where should consensus fit in?

Can consensus occur and it be against the Holy Spirit? Did the Sanhedrin have consensus to crucify Christ?

Should consensus overrule each person being fully persuaded in their own mind?

During The Reformation the reformers decided:

"Let us reject this decree. In matters of conscience the majority has no power."--Merle d'Aubigne, History of the Reformation, b. 13, ch. 5. {AA 68.1}

Consider this EGW quote:

"I have been shown that there is one practise which those in responsible places should avoid; for it is detrimental to the work of God. **Men in position should not lord it over God's**



heritage, and command everything around them. Too many have marked out a prescribed line which they wish others to follow in the work. **Workers have tried to do this with blind faith, without exercising their own judgment upon the matter which they had in hand.** If those who were placed as directors were not present, they have followed their implicit directions just the same. **But in the name of Christ, I would entreat you to stop this work. Give men a chance to exercise their individual judgment. Men who follow the leading of another, and are willing that another should think for them, are unfit to be entrusted with responsibility. Our leading men are remiss in this matter. God has not given to special ones all the brain power there is in the world. Men in responsible positions should credit others with some sense, with some ability of judgment and foresight, and look upon them as capable of doing the work committed to their hands. Our leading brethren have made a great mistake in marking out all the directions that the workers should follow, and this has resulted in deficiency, in a lack of a caretaking spirit in the worker, because they have relied upon others to do all their planning, and have themselves taken no responsibility. Should the men who have taken this responsibility upon themselves step out of our ranks, or die, what a state of things would be found in our institutions! Leading men should place responsibilities upon others, and allow them to plan and devise and execute, so that they may obtain an experience. Give them a word of counsel when necessary, but do not take away the work because you think the brethren are making mistakes. May God pity the cause when one man's mind and one man's plan is followed without question. God would not be honored should such a state of things exist. All our workers must have room to exercise their own judgment and discretion.** God has given men talents which he means that they should use. He has given them minds, and he means that they should become thinkers, and do their own thinking and planning, rather than depend upon others to think for them.”
{Special Testimony to our Ministers 06 61.2}

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Oneness in Christ Lesson 10 4Q 2018

Unity and Broken Relationships

Dr. Tim Jennings

What is the basis of healthy relationships? Love and trust

How do you define each of these?

Love—the principle of other-centered motivation—the concern, care, regard, desire for the health, welfare, beneficence of the other.

So how does love function?

Does love always give what another person wants?

Does love always avoid actions that cause pain?

Love does what is in the best interest of the other—given the context, the understood impact, the opportunity and position one holds in the other person's life.

How do you define trust?

Trust – Confidence in another without fear or doubt.

Upon what is trust based?

I propose there are four elements necessary for one to experience healthy trust or faith in another:

1. The other person genuinely loves you more than self, and would sacrifice self for you. Thus, they will not betray you or turn on you or become your enemy. Does God meet this criteria? Yes! (How deeply is trust in God undermined because legal theologies put God in the role of the one from whom we must be protected?)
 - a. why is this quality alone not enough to establish trust? Your 6 y/o child may have this love for you and if you were in danger run into harm's way without a thought for self to save you. But if you tell a 6 y/o not to take a piece of candy in the bowl, or to wait their turn do you have complete trust it will happen or does the child need supervision and oversight? So, in addition to love we need #2...
2. The other person has demonstrated mature self-governance, the ability to be reliable and consistent in carrying out what they have said they will do. Does God meet this criteria? Yes!
 - a. Why is love for you and self-governance not enough to establish trust? Could a person genuinely love you, and have good self-control, but misunderstand God's law and design for relationships and seek to control you, rule you, dominate you, discipline you



- believing, with all sincerity, that you are not supposed to be an equal in the relationship but a subordinate? So in addition to love and self-governance trust requires #3
3. The other person possesses genuine wisdom or understanding of how reality actually works and operates in harmony with design law, or at least has a mindset that is eagerly grow with new insights. Does God possess this criteria? Yes!
 - a. These first three together constitute someone who is genuinely trustworthy. Does finding a person with these three attributes result in a trust relationship or is something else required?
 4. You come to actually know that other person for yourself and thus experience 1,2 and 3 for yourself—and you choose to trust.

What undermines our ability to trust someone who is trustworthy?

- Some people are so wounded, so hurt, so fearful because of past betrayals that even when dealing with someone who has demonstrated trustworthiness they still don't trust because of fear.
- A second reason is doubting or distrusting our own judgment—having trusted someone in the past and been burned, one not only lives in fear of others, but some live in fear that they themselves can't tell who to trust.
- Being so hard-hearted, selfish, and untrustworthy that one sees everyone else like themselves and doesn't trust.
- other reasons?

So healthy relationships are designed by God to operate on love and trust. But love and trust are attributes of living beings and thus we could say, healthy relationships **require healthy people—and healthy people love others more than self, have self-governance and are wise in God's design laws for life.**

With this in mind let's turn to the lesson and consider the issues there:

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "What is forgiveness?" If someone has been wronged, can they experience healing of their heart and mind without forgiving the wrongdoer?

If a person who has been wronged forgives the wrongdoer, who always gets changed by the experience of forgiving the wrongdoer?

If a person who has been wronged refuses to forgive, who always gets more injury?

If forgiveness is a requirement to heal after being wronged, what prevents so many people from doing it?



Believing lies or misunderstanding what forgiveness is and what it means.

Let's examine some myths of forgiveness:

- Kate
 - Depressed, anxious, upset, distraught
 - She was being pressured, she didn't know what to do

Myth # 1 Forgiveness means restored Trust.

- Trust is restored when the offender is changed to be trustworthy AND the offended forgives
- Three types of distrust –
 - malevolent/selfish person who is out to harm/for themselves
 - child who means well but too immature to handle responsibilities
 - The adult who worries what others will think, afraid of conflict, who won't stand up for what they themselves know is right
 - The unwise person who applies the wrong principles thinking they are doing right.
- Kate's husband was the second, he, in the moment of confrontation, was sorry he hurt Kate, and meant it when he said he would never do it again, would most likely pass a lie detector, but he was not mature, was not practiced in standing up to his own feelings and thus was untrustworthy even though he sincerely wanted to be -

Myth # 2 Forgiveness comes after the offender says they are sorry

- Bob was angry, bitter, hurt, resentful – his sister had come over, brought beer, gotten him drunk and then stolen his rare coin collection he had started since childhood – She took the coins and left the state and sold them to buy drugs– Bob was angry
 - Had problems in relationships
 - Was irritable, flew off the handle and refused to forgive until his sister came back and asked his forgiveness
- God's kindness leads you to repentance Romans 2:4
- When Adam sinned what happened?
 - Adam ran and hid because he was afraid, why?
 - Was God his enemy?
 - Was God out to injure him?
 - Was there any resource other than God to help Adam after he sinned?
 - Then why did Adam run?
 - Because he didn't trust God and was therefore afraid
 - What did God do?
 - God ran after Adam – Why?
 - To heal and restore their friendship
 - God has been running after mankind ever since!
 - When God ran after Adam had God already forgiven Adam or was God unforgiving toward Adam and something needed to be done to God to get God to forgive?



- What came first God's forgiveness or man's repentance?
 - But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8
 - Did Christ die to get God to forgive us?
 - This is another lie of the penal substitutionary theology that Jesus had to die to pay a legal penalty or else God could not forgive us.
 - Some Bible translations actually translate this lie into Heb 9:22 as, "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin." It should be "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin."
 - What is the difference? If you have cancer do you want to be forgiven or want the cancer to go into remission?
 - Without Jesus' sacrifice sin in humanity would not remit, we could not be healed, saved, restored to God's original ideal.
- Another distortion contributing to myth #2
 - Forgiveness is a legal process that requires payment or appeasement
 - This occurs from accepting the lie about God's law
 - Consider the contradictions the false legal view creates, which damages the minds of people because they stop thinking:
 - Many people believe that Jesus came to die in order to pay our legal debt, to pay for our sins AND also that God forgives us our debts as we forgive our debtors
 - can you "forgive" the debt and also "collect" the debt?
 - If you collect it, have you forgiven it?
 - If you forgive it, do you also collect it? If you owed someone \$100 and you couldn't pay and the person demands money from another so your brother steps up and pays the \$100 can that person then look to you and say, "now that I have been paid and you no longer owe me I forgive your debt"?
 - Interestingly, many Christians claim God forgives our debts but also demands the payment of the innocent life of His Son to pay for our debts. It seems it is one or the other – I choose what
 - God said to Moses "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness." Exodus 34:6
 - Or what Paul says, "that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them." 2 Cor 5:19
 - Love keeps no record of wrongs 1Cor 13:5

Myth # 3 Forgiveness equals salvation

- Comes from believing that the problem with sin is God rather than our condition – and thus if we get God to forgive we are okay –
- This misdiagnoses the problem as a problem with God rather than realizing the truth, the problem is with us
- Consider those who put Christ on the cross—did God the Son forgive them? Were they then



saved?

- Salvation = Healing
- Salvation = Reconciliation
- Reconciliation requires forgiveness AND repentance—a change in the heart of the wrongdoer from untrustworthy to trustworthy
- Forgiveness alone is useless
- If you child disobeyed your instructions to never mess with the household cleaners under the sink and somehow disobeyed and drank some of the poison—would you forgive your child? Would your forgiveness be all that is required to save them?
- If a serial killer, a Ted Bundy or Son of Sam were alive and legally pardoned by the president and set free from prison, would you want them as your next-door neighbor? What if someone truly loved them and offered to pay their legal penalty and was executed in their place, would you want them as your neighbor? Why not?

Myth # 4 Forgiveness leads to greater vulnerability.

- Sheila came to see me with a long history of depression, mood instability, anxiety, sleep problems, inability to relax, panic, nightmares, inability to trust and fear of getting hurt.
 - She reported she had been raped in college and was filled with incredible amount of rage and anger.
 - As therapy progressed we discussed forgiving, *in her heart*, the man who had raped her.
 - But she said she would never forgive him because the anger made her feel strong, the rage made her feel powerful and she would be ready, like a poised lion, the next time anyone tried to hurt her.
- She believed the myth that forgiveness leads to greater vulnerability
- Sunburn analogy—if you had a bad sunburn and
 - your 3 y/o child jumped on your back to play what do you do?
 - If you loving spouse gives you a big bear hug what do you do?
 - if someone slaps your back what do you do?
 - When you are sunburned you lose the ability to tell the difference between touches of play, touches of love, and touches of aggression—everything hurts and you push everyone away
 - Is the best strategy when burned to figure out how no one ever gets close enough to touch you again, or heal the burn?
- Is the myth true? Would forgiving him mean she would take less precautions, leave doors unlocked, walk alone at night?
- Forgiveness is the means of healing ourselves and does not cause one to be less cautious in the future



Myth # 5 Forgiveness means forgetting

- Does forgiveness mean forgetting?
- "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more." Isa 43:25
- "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." Heb 8:12
- What do these texts mean?
- Do they mean, as the legal proponents claim, that when we confess our sins they are erased out of the books of heaven and the memories of all the sinless and saved so in heaven no one will know our sinful past?
- Can our angels read our Bibles?
 - David, Bathsheba, Solomon, Uriah
 - Will they know each other? Will they know how it came to be?
 - Will it matter at that point in time?
 - Why not?
 - Imagine being nominated to serve in children's department and someone says, "before you nominate them, I think it is important the committee know that they had a bad viral infection when they were a child and vomited on their mother's couch and had diarrhea all over the carpet. What would the committee say?"
 - "Why are you telling us this?"
 - "Because it was gross, disgusting, ugly"
 - That may be historically true, but what is the only question that matters?
 - "Are they sick today?"
 - "Well, no."
 - then it doesn't matter.
 - When we get to heaven we may have a history of sin-sickness that is disgusting and gross, but the only question that matters is—are we still sin-sick or have we experienced healing of heart and mind to be like Jesus!
 - And if the answer is yes, there is no need to erase the memories or the historical records because they enhance our love and appreciation for God!
 - Mary Magdalene anoints Jesus feet
 - "those forgiven much love much"
 - If God were to wipe out memory we would lose so much of our appreciation and love for God.
- So how do we understand those texts about not remembering?
- Analogy of child who fibbed and you as the parent forgave and intervened with discipline and your child repented and there was reconciliation with hugs and kisses
 - When your child comes home from school the next day do you think "here comes that little liar..."
 - No! as far as the relationship is concerned it is forgiven—but do you have amnesia of



what happened?

- One can safely “forget” ONLY when reconciliation has occurred
- Why do people hope for memory erasure?
 - Misconceptions about God

Myth # 6 Forgiveness means the offender gets away with it.

- Cherie was bitter, angry with a lifelong history of mood problems, irritability, anxiety, relationship problems, inability to relax, chronic feelings of emptiness, loneliness, worthlessness, inability to trust, always afraid of getting exploited
 - She reported she was molested from ages 5-12 by her uncle, but she never told, he was never caught, he was never punished
 - She refused to forgive because he was never caught therefore forgiving would be like he got away with it
 - Cherie was going to hold him accountable
 - Misunderstands nature of sin
 - Sin always damages the sinner

SUNDAY

Read first three paragraphs, “Paul and Barnabas...” Was the problem that Paul was unwilling to forgive John Mark? No!

What was the problem? That Paul didn’t trust John Mark—why? Was it because John Mark didn’t love others? Or was it because John Mark demonstrated a lack of maturity to handle the responsibility?

Did Paul’s lack of confidence or trust in John Mark mean Paul didn’t care for him or wasn’t his friend?

What is the old saying, “Friends don’t let friends drive drunk.” So, from Paul’s perspective could he not want to avoid putting John Mark in position to fail again?

What was different about Barnabas’s attitude toward John Mark? Could it be that both Paul and Barnabas assessed John Mark similarly, as one who wanted to fulfill God’s calling, but one who was not ready for the responsibility, i.e. an intern still in training—and Paul was wanting a fully equipped partner and Barnabas was willing to take on a trainee who needed more encouragement and supervision?

So, could we have Paul’s objections be based upon his objective assessment of John Mark’s abilities and have nothing to do with an unwillingness to forgive?



MONDAY

The lesson focuses on Onesimus and Philemon. Both believers in Jesus, Onesimus was a slave who ran away from his owner Philemon.

What action did Paul take and why?

Why did Paul send Onesimus back to his slave owner?

How did Paul do it?

Why didn't Paul start an underground railroad for runaway slaves?

Why didn't Paul speak out more against slavery?

Read third paragraph, "At first glance..." If a slave owner comes to love his slave as much as his own son, what will happen?

Did anyone see the movie Ben Hur? Remember Charlton Heston played Ben Hur who was a slave to a proconsul of Rome and the proconsul came to love him like a son and set him free and adopted him as a son making him his heir.

Which approach would have the best impact in resolving, not only slavery, but all divisions between people, working politically to overthrow the system of government that sponsored slavery (the Spartacus approach) or working to bring the love of God into the hearts of all people—the Pauline approach?

Because the Bible writers didn't act politically, didn't seek to change the laws of Rome, does that mean they endorsed, supported, condoned, or in any way approved of slavery? Absolutely not!

If there are Christians today who don't act politically, don't want to use the church's energy to get politicians elected, or judges appointed, does that mean they endorse the way the government functions?

TUESDAY

The lesson points out that God gives different people different abilities and spiritual gifts for the benefit of the entire body of believers.

How does Satan exploit our differences to incite division?

- Comparing ourselves to others and inciting jealousy and envy
- Inciting fear of those that are different—fear they will dethrone us from the position in which



we believe we deserve to be:

- Why race distinctions cause division—we don't see the other as equal
- Why men dominate women and don't want them to occupy positions of leadership and authority—fear
- Fear causes people to make decisions, not based on ability, competencies, character, but on color of skin or gender and whenever we do this we undermine the health, vibrancy, wellbeing of the organization. Thus, the church suffers when we make ordination gender based, rather than based on the gifting of the Holy Spirit.
- Did anyone see the movie The Imitation Game? It was a true story about Alan Turing who, during WWII built the first computer that was able to decode the German Enigma machine and it is estimated shortened the war by 2 years and saved 14 million lives. He went on to work on further computer developments after the war, but in 1952 was prosecuted for homosexual acts and accepted chemical castration instead of imprisonment. He died in 1954 from cyanide poisoning deemed suicide.
 - Why could people not recognize Turing for his gifts, abilities. how he treated others, his honesty, integrity?
 - What has humanity missed out on because his genius was lost?

What about the church—what does the church miss out on because we have bigotry, biases, and fears that cause us to reject others with mature character with gifts that could benefit the church?

THURSDAY

The lesson focuses us on resolving conflict in the church and points us to Jesus's counsel in Matthew 18:15-17:

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. ¹⁶ But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. NIV

What do you hear? How is this to be applied? To whom is it to be applied?

Is it to be applied to people that are members of the same organization, i.e. church, but with whom we have no personal relationship?

- You hear a rumor that a person in the church has done a certain sin; you have only seen this person on an occasion, and you have no relationship with this person. Should you go to this person and talk to them about the rumor?
 - Does Jesus' counsel apply to this? Why or why not?
 - Have you been sinned against, even if this is true?
 - Do you have a standing that your approach will likely be beneficial?
 - Should you go to church leadership with the rumor?

I have had experiences like this people who belong to the same organization but who have no relationship with me, hear a rumor. They don't know me; they haven't spent time with me; they haven't sat down to talk with me, but they have felt it their responsibility to either tell me how they thought I was wrong, or write letters, or put out public statements, or go to church authorities seeking some action against me.

Some have reached out, had a brief conversation, in order to tick off the first requirement of Jesus's instruction and be able to say that they went to me, and then went on to go throughout the church spreading their concerns about me.

Is that what Jesus meant?

One of the founders of the SDA church gave this counsel, do you agree?

I have seen the great sacrifice which Jesus made to redeem man. He did not consider His own life too dear to sacrifice. Said Jesus: "Love one another, as I have loved you." **Do you feel, when a brother errs, that you could give your life to save him? If you feel thus, you can approach him and affect his heart; you are just the one to visit that brother. But it is a lamentable fact that many who profess to be brethren, are not willing to sacrifice any of their opinions or their judgment to save a brother. There is but little love for one another. A selfish spirit is manifested.** {1T 166.2}

Has this been your experience?

Do you see again how the two law lenses change how we understand and apply Scripture? If we read through the imperial/imposed law lens then we see rules that must be followed, a checklist that keeps us out of legal trouble as we seek to eradicate sin in others.

But when we see through design law we realize God's instructions are all designed to heal hearts and minds and bring us back into the unity of love and trust with Him and each other. Therefore, if we apply God's methods we don't take actions that would injure or harm another.

Are we willing to put things in the best light or do we misconstrue them?

If a brother differ with you on some points of truth, do not stoop to ridicule, do not place him in a false light, or misconstrue his words, making sport of them; do not misinterpret his words and wrest them of their true meaning. This is not conscientious argument. Do not present him before others as a heretic, when you have not with him investigated his positions, taking the Scriptures text by text in the spirit of Christ to show him what is truth. You do not yourself really know the evidence he has for his faith, and you cannot really clearly define your own position. Take your Bible, and in a kindly spirit weigh every argument that he presents and show him by the Scriptures if he is in error. When you do this without unkind



feelings, you will do only that which is your duty and the duty of every minister of Jesus Christ.-- Letter 21, 1888. {CW 50.2}

This week I received an email from an online listener who found on another website a rebuttal of my presentation on homosexuality.

The rebuttal said:

Dr Jennings calls out the Christian community for “a lot of ignorance and a lot of misinformation.” He believes that “We have to start with facts, we have to start with truth.” He asks, “Are you willing to look at evidence and facts or do you want to hold beliefs that are refuted by evidence, facts, and truth?”

But when he goes into these ‘facts’, we find that they don’t prove what he thinks they prove. Most of his arguments involve very rare abnormalities.

*First, he brings out Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, where a person is genetically male (XY), but has no testosterone receptors, so the child develops to look outwardly female (but lacks a uterus and ovaries). **Dr Jennings makes the first of many errors in his video when he says that all babies begin as females, and hormones, particularly testosterone, cause the baby to masculinize.** At fertilization, every individual is either genetically female (XX) or male (XY) (yes—there are a handful of intersex chromosomal conditions, most commonly Klinefelter’s—but these are rare), and the baby develops as a female or a male according to the genetics. Dr Jennings inadvertently acknowledges this when he says that the male baby has testes even with AIS.*

This is an example of not reaching out to understand and not being honest with what was presented, but misconstruing what was said and putting it in a false light.

Any honest person would realize that I was speaking of the physical, what is called phenotypical, with female external genitalia and the tissue that internally that would become uterus and fallopian tubes. Yet, they distort what I have said, attempting to suggest I am in error, because they don’t like the conclusions. Whoever wrote this didn’t contact me to clarify what I meant.

FRIDAY

Read question 3, “If we look at our church...” What is the greatest thing holding the church back?

I would suggest it is doctrinal, one specific doctrine, clinging to the false law lens, the lie that God’s law functions like human law, the infection of penal substitution theology with all its corruption.

Why? Because of the design law—by beholding we are changed. So, when we cling to the false law lens, and believe God functions like a dictator, who imposes rules and punishes rule breakers, we



become like that God.

This leads to rules based religion, needing to police the system to ensure all members are keeping the right rules and teaching in the right way.

From the book, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*:

The effort to earn salvation by one's own works inevitably leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, **they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey.** All this turns the mind away from God to self. **His love dies out of the heart,** and with it perishes love for his fellow men. **A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard.** The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, and **causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies.** {MB 123.1}

It all stems from what type of law do you believe God's government operates upon—design law, or laws like humans make, imposed rules.

- **The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God.** Upon this battle we are now entering,—a **battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition.** {GC88 582.2}
- **There is no such thing as weakening or strengthening the law of Jehovah. As it has been, so it is. It always has been, and always will be, holy, just, and good, complete in itself.** It cannot be repealed or changed. [what kind of law is this? It is design law] To "honor" or "dishonor" it is but the speech of men. {PK 625.1}

Between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah will come the last great conflict of the controversy between truth and error. [What kind of laws do men enact? Imposed law, but God's law is design law. The final conflict will be over this issue, and upon what type of law does penal substitution theology rest? Imposed law! It is a lie that has infected Christianity and God is waiting for a people to cast it off] **Upon this battle we are now entering--a battle not between rival churches contending for the supremacy, but between the religion of the Bible and the religions of fable and tradition...**[We are not in a battle between rival churches? How much of SDA eschatology has pitted the SDA church against the Roman and other Sunday keeping churches? Such a construct is a lie, we are not battling against other churches, but against the pagan god constructs that operate upon imposed law, inflict imposed punishments and require propitiation with a human sacrifice. **This is most prominently manifested in Penal Substitution Theology.** We must reject this legal fraud and come back and worship Him who made the heavens...] {PK 625.2}



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2018 Q4 Oneness In Christ - Lesson 11

Unity In Worship

Lori Atkins

So when we talk about this idea of “worship”, are we talking about the devotional practices in your home? We used to call that “family worship”. Are we talking about the tenor of the church service...whether we sing hymns or praise songs...whether we play the pipe organ or a guitar, or heaven-forbid, drums (/gasp)? Is that what we mean when we talk about the incredible importance of who and what we worship?

In the commentary of the teacher’s quarterly, we are asked to review Revelation 4:8-11...which I will read from The Remedy:

“These beings could act unbelievably fast—both physically and mentally—which was symbolized by each having six wings, and eyes all over, even under their wings. And they lived constantly—day and night—in a continual state of appreciation and love for God, saying: “God is holy, holy, holy—Lord Almighty, who has always been, who is, and who is to come.” Whenever these four living beings honor God’s character of love and thank him who governs the universe from the throne—the one who is the source of life and lives forever—the twenty-four elders are filled with awe and humbled in hearts, and demonstrate their devotion by falling down in love before him who sits on the throne, and they worship him who is the source of life and who lives forever. They cast their gold crowns before him—**demonstrating that their lives, their perfect characters and their healed minds come from him**—and proclaim: “You are worthy, our Lord God Almighty, to receive all honor, praise, glory, and power because you created all things, and all things have their origin in you and are sustained by you.”

The Nature of Worship - The Bible uses multiple words in Greek and Hebrew to describe different aspects of worship. The Hebrew words for worship emphasize honor, respect, and reverence by focusing on the actions of bowing down, prostrating, or otherwise humbling oneself before another person. However, worship in the Old Testament is not confined to bodily actions. It also includes the concepts of obedience and service that demonstrate the reality of our worship. Isaiah clearly indicates that simply going through the motions of worship activities [without obedience] is not worship at all (Isa. 1:10–17, Isaiah 58).

In New Testament Greek, we find a similar variety of words that can mean to bow down, revere, show honor and devotion, or to serve. The most common word for worship in the New Testament is proskyneō, which literally means “to kiss toward.” It likely reflects the custom of showing honor to a king or official by bowing before them and kissing their feet, an action understood as an admission of dependence or submission to the person in authority. In using this word to describe the worship of



God, we can therefore deduce that more than the physical action of kissing or bowing down is intended. To worship God is to recognize the greatness and majesty of God, to understand that He is the Creator and we are created - He is infinite, we are finite, to admit one's own helplessness and absolute dependence upon Him. Such admission also carries with it the implication of willingness to accept God's lordship over our lives. True worship has several important features.

First and foremost, it is directed at God and Him alone (we will talk more about the important aspect of **which** God in just a bit).

Second, it is never forced...it is a spontaneous response to the character of God and His redemptive, healing actions on our behalf. It begins from the heart and not from the expectations of others (like a compliance committee?).

Third, worship is not simply a Sabbath morning activity or a part of a worship service. It is a lifestyle. We are to live and breathe our responses to what God has done for us.

The living creatures in the throne room, pictured in Revelation 4, worshiped continually day and night. This imagery underscores the idea that each word and action of ours should bring honor to the name of God.

I have read this to you before, several years ago...but it made such an impact on me when I first read it decades ago, before I even knew anything about the law of worship, that I think it bears repeating in the context of this week's lesson. Noted speaker and author, Louis Giglio, wrote a little pocket book about this concept called *The Air I Breathe: Worship as a Way of Life* (2006). He starts his book this way:

"You, my friend, are a worshipper! Every day, all day long, everywhere you go, you worship. It's what you do. It's who you are. I don't know whether or not you consider yourself a 'worshipping' kind of person, but you cannot help but worship – something. It's what you were made to do. Should you for some reason choose not to give God the worship He desires, you'll still worship something – exchanging the Creator for something He has created. Worship is simply about value...Worship is our response to what we value most. This person, this thing, this experience, this...whatever...is what matters most to me - it's the thing I put **first** in my life. And we are not just talking about the religious crowd, churchgoers, Christians...we are talking about everybody on planet Earth...a multitude of souls proclaiming with every breath what is worthy of their affection, their attention, their allegiance...proclaiming with every step what it is they worship. So how do you know where and what you worship? It's easy. You simply follow the trail of your time, your affection, your energy, your loyalty. At the end of that trail you'll find a throne...and whatever or whoever is on that throne is what's of highest



value to you – on that throne is what you worship. Sure, not too many of us walk around saying, “I worship my stuff. I worship by Xbox. I worship my job. I worship this pleasure. I worship her. I worship my body. I worship me!” But the trail never lies. We may say we value this thing or that thing more than any other, but the volume of our actions speaks louder than our words – our worship is more about what we DO than what we SAY.”

To me, taking this honest inventory of how and where my time, energies, talents, and resources are being used can be a sobering, humbling, convicting process full of revelations and...opportunities for character growth.

Why is this idea of worship **so** important?

Why does who and what we worship really matter so much?

SABBATH

Saturday’s lesson states,

“Gratitude to God expressed in community worship transforms people’s hearts and minds into the likeness of the character of God and prepares them for service.”

This is absolutely true - regardless of **which** God and which character of God is being worshipped!

The apostles worshipped the God revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus...their hearts and minds were transformed, and they lived in community of other-centered love and spread the gospel far and wide. But what about some other examples?

Some church folks in the Dark Ages worshipped God...their hearts and minds were transformed, and what did they do? They burned people at the stake in order to “save” them and send their souls to heaven.

In 1994, Christians in Rwanda worshipped God...their hearts and minds were transformed, and what did they do? They actually used churches as killing fields as pastors, priests and nuns would lead people to their churches for sanctuary and then call in militia to kill them, or trap them inside and burn them alive!

Are we beginning to see how very important our worship is - not just that we are worshipping God, but which God we are worshipping! Why?

Because as the quarterly rightly states, it transforms our hearts, minds, and characters...we become like that which we worship, esteems, and admire - it’s a LAW and no one is exempt - this outcome is



100% predictable. Just like you can predict with 100% certainty what will happen if I drop my glasses - how is that? How can you so accurately predict the future? Are you clairvoyant? Do you have a prophetic gift?

No...but you do have a firm understanding of the natural law of gravity...and I'm telling you, once you start to understand the natural laws we discuss in this class, impacts of living in harmony with and deviating from these natural laws...the world starts becoming a whole lot more predictable - people (behaviors and reactions) become more predictable, relationships become more predictable, outcomes become more predictable - it's almost like you have some secret, insider information...a decoder ring...or a crystal ball.

You know, this class has a potluck and bible study every month just to get to know each other better, and dig deeper into the past month's lessons...see me after class or go to our web site if you want to be added to that email list so you get reminded about those. But several months ago, Linda was leading and had us go back and identify and discuss the specific natural laws we have defined...and I thought it was such a good idea. We had folks at that study who had never been to our class and didn't really know what we were talking about, we have new folks joining this class or discovering these class videos every single week...so we try to be really cognizant of that and just keep reviewing some of these concepts so we don't end up speaking our own secret, non-inclusive language that only members of the club understand. Is it okay if we review and define some of these natural laws to maybe refresh our own knowledge and maybe bring some others up to speed?

What do we mean when we use the term "natural laws" and what makes them so?

God runs his universe on certain principles, certain fundamental laws, certain constants that life and our reality are designed to operate upon. These laws are not enacted, legislated, or imposed...rather they are an inherent aspect of God's original design, and emanate from the very nature and character of God Himself. These are the principles that life is designed to operate upon and our health and happiness is dependent upon being in harmony with them.

You may know about or recognize some like the laws of health, the laws of physics - the law of gravity for example. So help me out here and throw out some of the more specific design laws we have defined in this class.

Law of Liberty - Love cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom...again this law emanates from the very nature and character of God for **God. Is. Love.**

What happens when liberty is violated?



There are a couple of very predictable, testable outcomes you can count on happening when someone's liberty is violated:

- 1) Love is always damaged and eventually destroyed,
- 2) A desire to rebel is instilled, and
- 3) If freedom isn't restored, then individuality is eroded.

Does a person have to know about the Law of Liberty in order to experience these outcomes?

Does a person's liberties have to actually be violated...or can even the possibility or threat of liberty bring them about?

Once you are convinced that this law is real, that it works, that it is a constant that never changes, then you have a standard against which to test theories, doctrines, and beliefs about God. We are going to connect these dots on why and how important this concept is when considering the type of God we choose to worship.

Law of Worship - By beholding we become changed (modeling) - we become like the God we worship. This law is the foundation of this week's lesson...and, by the way, it is the reason why God's church triumphant, the remnant, the priesthood of believers can be wholly united – in heart, in mind, in purpose, and in character, but differ, sometimes dramatically, in doctrine, in beliefs, in practices, etc.

Law of Respiration - Requires that you breathe in order to live.

Why is this a requirement? It seems so unreasonable!

Does the law of respiration condemn those who tie plastic bags over their heads?

What are the "wages" of doing that?

Can the law be changed to meet the person with a bag over his head in that state so they can remain healthy and alive?

Can God's law be changed to meet the sinner in his sin?

What if a person was suffocating with a plastic bag over their head and they had a loving brother who tied a bag over his head in order to pay the legal penalty of the broken law of respiration which cannot be changed?

Would that action result in saving the other brother?

What is the only option for salvation? The sinner must be transformed back into harmony with the law - the plastic bag must be removed.

Law of Exertion - if you want something to get stronger you must exert or exercise it, because if you don't use it you lose it.



What does God want for us?

He wants us to grow in ability and develop a Christlike character by trusting in Him, which requires what?

That we exercise our trust in him, exercise our will by choosing to accept His truth updates, cooperate in agreement with him, practice his methods! This was the reason for the tree in Garden of Eden.

“All who put to use the ability that God has given them, will have increased ability to devote to his service. Those who do nothing in the cause of God will fail to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. If a man should lie down and refuse to exercise his limbs, he would soon lose all power to use them. Thus the Christian who will not use his God-given powers, not only fails to grow up into Christ, but loses the strength which he already had; he becomes a spiritual paralytic. It is those who, with love for God and for their fellow men, are striving to help others, who become established, strengthened, settled in the truth. The true Christian works for God, not from impulse, but from principle; not for a day or a month, but during the entire life.” {RH, May 23, 1912 par. 13}

“The mind must be exercised on the solemn truths of God's word, or it will grow weak.” {RH, March 4, 1884 par. 11}

“But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.” Hebrews 5:14 (NASB)

Law of Sowing & Reaping - Cause and effect.

“If you plant in the field of your natural desires, from it you will gather the harvest of death; if you plant in the field of the Spirit, from the Spirit you will gather the harvest of eternal life.” Galatians 6:8 GNT

“The Spirit of God keeps evil under the control of conscience. When man exalts himself above the influence of the Spirit, he reaps a harvest of iniquity. Over such a man the Spirit has less and less influence to restrain him from sowing seeds of disobedience. Warnings have less and less power over him. He gradually loses his fear of God. He sows to the flesh; he will reap corruption. The harvest of the seed that he himself has sown, is ripening. He has a contempt for God's holy commandments. His heart of flesh becomes a heart of stone. Resistance to truth confirms him in iniquity. It is because men sowed seeds of evil, that lawlessness, crime, and violence prevailed in the antediluvian world.



All should be intelligent in regard to the agency by which the soul is destroyed. It is not because of any decree that God has sent out against man. He does not make man spiritually blind. God gives sufficient light and evidence to enable man to distinguish truth from error. But He does not force man to receive truth. He leaves him free to choose the good or to choose the evil. If man resists evidence that is sufficient to guide his judgment in the right direction, and chooses evil once, he will do this more readily the second time. The third time he will still more eagerly withdraw himself from God and choose to stand on the side of Satan. And in this course he will continue until he is confirmed in evil, and believes the lie he has cherished as truth. His resistance has produced its harvest (MS 126, 1901).”—Ellen G. White Comments, The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 1112.

Law of Love - the law of giving...the more you give, the more you receive - this is the principle of giving upon which life is built to operate, and we many examples throughout nature (water cycle, breathing, food cycle, circulation).

“One of the divine plans for growth is impartation. The Christian is to gain strength by strengthening others. "He that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Proverbs 11:25). This is not merely a promise; it is a divine law, [what kind of law?] a law by which God designs that the streams of benevolence, like the waters of the great deep, shall be kept in constant circulation, continually flowing back to their source. In the fulfilling of this law is the secret of spiritual growth... {Amazing Grace 285.4}

Law of Restoration – When a resource has been used or expended, it must be rested and restored. Mothers/parents, caregivers, Sabbath.

Again, when Isaac Newton “discovered” and documented the Law of Gravity in 1687...that did not mark the creation or origination of that law, only the recognition and naming of an existing constant...and folks were surprised that there was a law - they thought stuff stayed on the ground or fell to the ground because that’s just how things work, it’s just reality.

MONDAY

False Worship

The second paragraph states,

“Satan seeks to establish a false system of worship, one that takes people away from the true God and, even if subtly, direct worship toward himself.”

How does he establish a false system of worship...how does he subtly direct worship toward himself?



The first paragraph mentions Jesus' third temptation in the wilderness as an example...what is tempting about devil worship?

Are most Christians...or even atheists...tempted to openly worship Satan?
What does Satan truly desire?

2 Thes 2:3-4 says,

“Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.”

Since we don't believe that he flies up to heaven and physically bumps Christ off his throne, how does Satan accomplish this...how does he “set himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God” ...and have so many people buy it?

Reading that same Thessalonians text in the Remedy gives us some clues:

“Don't be fooled by any idea like this, because, before the Lord returns, Satan will counter everything Christ taught, and a rebellion against God's law of love will occur: a man-made theological system of imposed law will form, and this system—which promotes god-concepts outside God's law of love—will be exposed. This man-made system is destined for destruction, because it opposes God's design for life and instead exalts a human concept of law and punishment over the way God built things to operate. This distorted view of God will become so accepted and orthodox that it will set itself up in God's spirit temple—the minds of people—and it will be proclaimed that God is like Satan in character.”

So, he gets people...not just people...he gets **Christians**, Christ-followers, Christ's ambassadors to accept and proclaim and teach that God is like Satan in character and in methods. Then he gets them to agree and endorse and value those coercive methods (marked in the forehead), and practice/carry out those coercive, punitive methods (marked in the hand) - as described in Revelation 14:9-11

“And a third messenger followed the first two and proclaimed in a voice that was heard throughout the world: ‘If anyone gives worth and honor to the beastly system of coercion by choosing the methods of the beast and thus marking themselves as ‘loyal in heart’ by embracing the character of the beast, or marking themselves as ‘loyal in deed’ by practicing his methods, they will reap the full fury of unremedied sin when God no longer shields them from their destructive choice. They will experience immeasurable torment of mind and burning



anguish of heart when they stand in God's fiery presence and are bathed in unquenchable fire of truth and love—all in the very presence of Jesus and the holy angels. The memory of their suffering and the lesson of their self-destructive choice will never be forgotten throughout all eternity. There will be no peace of mind—day or night—for those who prefer the methods of the beast and model after him, or for any who choose to mark themselves as followers of the beast.”

“By accepting the pagan imposed law constructs as representative of God’s kingdom, people actually worshiped the dragon, as these distortions about God originated from him; and since the beast used the dragon’s lies as the basis for its authority, they also worshiped the beast. They marveled, ‘Who can compare to the beast? Who can fight against it?’” Revelation 13:4

This is the true essence of false worship - worshipping a god whose character, methods, and principles are those of Satan.

TUESDAY

The First Angel’s Message

This is the true essence of false worship - worshipping a god whose character, methods, and principles are those of Satan. Is this happening right now...and can we come up with some examples?

Let’s bring this around full circle here...we were just talking about the natural design Law of Liberty. We said violations of it had some very predictable results...and these results are proveable, reproducible, and therefore the law is “testable”...right?

So what does that mean and what does that look like in practical application - how can we use this knowledge practically to gain some insight and wisdom?

Well, once you are convinced that this law is real, that it works, that it is a constant, that it never changes, then we have a standard against which we can test our theories, our doctrines, our beliefs about God. God will NEVER violate His own character of love, which means God will never violate freedom or the law of liberty. This standard, this law of liberty is one of the spiritual weapons you can wield in warfare against evil forces - remember, we are in a war over the knowledge of God - who is God, what is He like, can He be trusted.

Is God like Satan has alleged OR Is God like Jesus revealed Him to be?

This is THE question. Well now we have a standard against which we can test our theories - Is God a power monger, is God a being of stern justice who must use His power to inflict penalties - Does God



say, “All I want is your love, but if you don’t love me I will kill you, I will burn you in hell and torture you until you die?”

In every false religion of the world, the central fallacy is a distorted picture of God. He is either a being who is too busy to care, detached and disinterested or a cruel being of absolute power that must be appeased. And what is the final contest over?

What will be the culmination of events as the Bible predicts?

A conflict of worship, over two systems - over two pictures of God - 1) The Beast System which violates liberty, you can neither buy nor sell (sanctions)...and 2) God’s system of love, greater love has no man than he give his life...This is how we know what love is....For God so loved the world that he gave...These are they who do not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. And what is the result of worshiping a God who does not value our freedom?

What is the price we pay for accepting lies about God?

What is the consequence to believing in a God who will use His power to destroy, a God who must be appeased in order to forgive?

It is a violation of the Law of Liberty, and these outcomes are just as predictable as what happens in human relationships - love is damaged and eventually destroyed, rebellion is instilled, and individuality is eroded. Jesus states that at the end of time, the love of most will grow cold.

Paul states they will have a form of godliness, but deny its power.

Why will love grow cold?

Why will they have a form of godliness but without any power?

Because they have accepted Satan’s version of God, and preach it from the pulpit! When we have a form of godliness but worship a god who is like Satan alleges, love is destroyed and over time:

We either become shadow people

- people who have lost their ability to reason
- people who worship out of fear of punishment (from God...or a compliance committee?)
- people who become non-thinking empty shells, afraid to have an independent thought - God said it, I believe it that settles it, we don’t ask questions we take that on faith
- people who rigidly clinging to rules, rituals and ceremony without understanding of what they mean
- we become like that god we worship, and will use power to control others, dominate others, coerce others into our way...to cleanse/purify his church?



- we will bomb abortion clinics, fly planes into buildings
- we use our power to silence freedom of thought and opposing views
- no one can buy or sell save him who is like this god OR
- We rebel completely, reject the idea of God altogether, and become a postmodernist agnostic, evolutionary-teaching atheist.

This is Satan's goal – to destroy love and trust for God, and thus destroy humanity!

Love cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom. God cannot be saying – love me or I'll kill you. If you hear a such concepts, test them, do experiments. If you see doctrines or practices or methods employed that violate the Law of Liberty, test them... perform some diagnostics and root cause analysis. We are to **practice** God's law in our lives. We are to live a life in complete harmony with God and his natural laws, so if someone is teaching such distortions and you are confused, challenge and test those teachings and see what happens.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study & Fellowship

The first Christians were faithful in studying the Scriptures for what they said about Jesus the Messiah.

They were in constant fellowship to share with one another the blessings God had given them and to encourage each other in their spiritual walk with God. In the Word they mined the sacred truths that became the foundation of their message to the world.

THURSDAY

Breaking of Bread & Prayer

Acts 2:42-47 “They committed themselves to studying the truth taught by Christ's ambassadors, encouraging each other, sharing meals together, and talking with God daily. Everyone was filled with awe at the miracles performed and signs shown by Christ's ambassadors. They were filled with love for one another and were united, sharing with each other what they had. They sold what they owned and pooled their resources for the benefit of all, and provided for everyone's needs. They fellowshiped and studied together in the temple courts each day. They had meals together in their homes, with hearts full of gladness and affection for each other, giving praise to God. They were so kind and gentle that the people enjoyed having them around. And every day the Lord brought more people to them to partake of the Remedy and be healed.”



Oneness in Christ Lesson 12 4Q 2018

Church Organization and Unity

Tim Jennings

How many watched the funeral services at the National Cathedral for President George H.W. Bush?

What did you think?

- Was God glorified in the service?
- Was the message of God's character of love presented?
- Was the power of Christ and the victory over death presented?
- Was the message a message of unity?
- Unity upon what?

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, "As Seventh-day Adventists..." Do you agree that salvation is found in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and is not found or linked to institutional affiliation?

Read second paragraph, "Nevertheless the church..." When we speak of the church as God's creation are we speaking of denominations or the church universal, the church made up of all those who have been truly reconciled to Christ?

And believing that the church is God's creation for the distribution of the gospel, God's remedy to sin, would we expect that Satan would try to infiltrate and corrupt the church?

How would Satan do that? Would he try and substitute a false remedy, a false gospel for the truth?

Would his primary attack on the church be that there is no God, or an attack on the kind of being God is?

How might he do this?

If you were dying of a terminal disease and a physician had a remedy that would cure you, but you had an enemy that wanted to ensure that you would not take the remedy, what might that enemy do?

What would happen if the enemy got you to believe your condition isn't killing you, but your legal standing with the examiner, the one coming to look you over is the problem. If that doctor, now called a judge, comes and gets a good look at you, he will be required by all that is pure and right to kill you.

If you believed that what might you do?

How could Satan get Christians to twist their view of Jesus to believe Jesus wasn't coming to help



them but was going to kill them? He didn't—Satan twisted our view of God, so in our metaphor, the physician is the prince and the prince of the realm would like to heal us, but his father is a king who tolerates no breaking of his law. So, if the king sees you he will kill you for your law breaking.

So, how did Satan get Christians to believe God was the one from whom we needed to be protected and that Jesus is our agent to protect us from God? By getting Christians to change how they view God's law from design law.

Did God know Satan was going to do this?

Yes, in Daniel 7:21,22,25 states:

As I watched, this horn was **waging war** against the saints and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom...He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and **try to change the set times and the laws...**

What kind of war?

For though we live in the world, **we do not wage war** as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against **the knowledge of God**, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2 Cor 10:3-5

What kind of war? Where is it being fought? And what is it over?

This is a war between truth and lies, centering on God's character, and being fought in our minds!

Amazingly, Paul describes the same thing:

Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the **man of lawlessness is revealed**, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that **he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God**. 2Thes 2:1-4

What temple? The spirit temple, Satan distorts the truth about God so effectively that he sets himself up in the hearts and minds of people to believe that God is like Satan in character. Thus, the church becomes infected with Satan's view of God while claiming to be worshippers of God.

God, looking down the corridors of time told Daniel in Daniel 8:14 that it would be 2300 years before these lies would be cleansed from the hearts and minds of people.



Can we be specific, can we identify the core lie that is the root to all the distortions about God and from which we are to free ourselves in order to fulfill God's end-time mission for His people?

- **The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God.** Upon this battle we are now entering,—a battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition. {GC88 582.2}
- **There is no such thing as weakening or strengthening the law of Jehovah. As it has been, so it is. It always has been, and always will be, holy, just, and good, complete in itself.** It cannot be repealed or changed. [what kind of law is this? It is design law] To "honor" or "dishonor" it is but the speech of men. {PK 625.1}

Between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah will come the last great conflict of the controversy between truth and error. [What kind of laws do men enact? Imposed law, but God's law is design law. The final conflict will be over this issue, and upon what type of law does penal substitution theology rest? Imposed law! It is a lie that has infected Christianity and God is waiting for a people to cast it off] **Upon this battle we are now entering—a battle not between rival churches contending for the supremacy, but between the religion of the Bible and the religions of fable and tradition...** [We are not in a battle between rival churches? How much of SDA eschatology has pitted the SDA church against the Roman and other Sunday keeping churches? Such a construct is a lie, we are not battling against other churches, but against the pagan god constructs that operate upon imposed law, inflict imposed punishments and require propitiation with a human sacrifice. **This is most prominently manifested in Penal Substitution Theology.** We must reject this legal fraud and come back and worship Him who made the heavens...] {PK 625.2}

Has Christianity been infected with lies about God? And did God call for a message to be given at this time in earth's history? What is that message?

The 3 angels' messages, which calls people out of a system of human imposed law constructs back to worshipping the Creator, the Designer who is working to heal and restore all who trust Him!

When we consider how human systems and God's system operate, what methods they employ, can we distinguish the movements of God's Spirit from Satan's?

Which system brings pressure and coercion to bear to get compliance God's or Satan's?

Which system presents truth in love and leaves people free?

What method did Saul of Tarsus use? What method did Paul the Apostle use?

What method does the beast of Revelation use? What about those who are sealed to God?



How does truth progress through the population? What organizational system would enhance the avenues for truth and what organizational system would obstruct the progression of truth?

A system with local control and without a top down authoritarian rule would keep open the avenues for truth, a system of top down authority would place obstacles in the path of truth.

Why are some in leadership in the SDA church seeking to impose a top-down authoritarian rule? Because they have accepted the lie about God's law. That lie is the root to all rebellion against God and one of God's design laws—by beholding we are changed, the law of worship—means that those who accept the lie eventually practice the false methods.

I received this email from an online listener this week:

Dear Come and Reason Team,

I thought deeply about your story when you went to talk to the Theologians about whether Design Law results in bringing Adventist people into or out of the Adventist denomination. The message brought Russell and a Pastor back.

I have been listening/studying for over six years now and God's design law is the only concept that brings the Bible into the perfect unity of love and the exquisite beauty of how all laws work together.

This is where I need your help/ advice. My church and conference are infected with the penal/legal view of God's law. This view has resulted in a fear-based organization that protects the organization above individual liberty. Almost everyone thinks the same and there is little learning where members refuse to consider new ideas. When these ideas are surfaced, members subtly demean us... The Pastor is an "out of the closet" penal legalist where each sermon becomes more and more painful to listen to. The church and conference penal/legal view misrepresents God's character and their refusal to have a discussion drives me away from this Church. When I first entered the church, I was on fire to learn more, but now these same people are stagnant. My life has been all about learning, but now I don't know what to do? I am very active in the community, Chaplain, Stephen Ministry, bible studies, Prison ministry, etc and know that I am part of the end-time remnant church, but am compelled to leave as I am being smothered. Can you provide any wisdom for me?

What wisdom do you have for our friend and brother?

This reminds me of what EGW described many years ago:

- **"But as real spiritual life declines, it has ever been the tendency to cease to advance in the knowledge of the truth. Men rest satisfied with the light already received from God's**



word and discourage any further investigation of the Scriptures. They become conservative and seek to avoid discussion.

"The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God's people should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. **There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error.** When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves to make sure that they have the truth, there will be many now, as in ancient times, **who will hold to tradition and worship they know not what.**" *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 706,707 (1889); *GW* 297,298; *CWE* 39

Why do people in error fear investigation of their positions?

And what will organizations do in order to ensure their system remains in control? Make up rules

AW Tozer wrote:

Whenever a church backslides from the truth and runs away from the plain Word of God, that church begins establishing its own laws. -- *The Quotable Tozer* p. 74

This reminded me of a quote from Ellen White, one of the founders of the SDA church:

The effort to earn salvation by one's own works inevitably **leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin.** For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, **they will devise rules and regulations** of their own to force themselves to obey. All this turns the mind away from God to self. **His love dies out of the heart**, and with it perishes love for his fellow men. **A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions**, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard. The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, and causes men to become **self-centered judges and petty spies.** {MB 123.1}

Would this idea of judging others, of spying on others, to ensure they keep the rules be similar to setting up compliance committees?

We must come back to worship our Designer and that means we reject the lies about God's law and begin practicing God's methods again.

SUNDAY

Read the second paragraph, "The church also derives..." What do you think of the idea that Jesus is the originator of the church's beliefs and teachings?

Have all the teachings that are found in Christianity originated in Christ? Are there any teachings



within Christianity that you would suggest originated with Satan, yet these teachings are accepted as Christian? Can you name any?

- Eternal burning hell?
 - Satan has ascribed to God all the evils to which flesh is heir. He has represented him as a God who delights in the sufferings of his creatures, who is revengeful and implacable. It was Satan who originated the doctrine of eternal torment as a punishment for sin, because in this way he could lead men into infidelity and rebellion, distract souls, and dethrone the human reason. {CE 73.2}
 - Why does believing in an eternal burning hell dethrone human reason? Is it reasonable to believe God is love yet will torture people who don't love Him for all eternity? So what do people do? "I don't think about that. I just take that on faith" which means they dethrone reason.
- What about any hell in which God uses His power to inflict death in order to punish sin? Would that also dethrone human reason?
 - **Satan is the author of death.** What did Christ do after He brought Satan under the dominion of death? The very last words of Christ while expiring on the cross were "It is finished" (John 19:30). The devil saw that he had overdone himself. Christ by dying accomplished the death of Satan and brought immortality to light. {CTr 287.3}
 - Who do you believe is the source of death—God or Satan?
 - Then if God is the source of life and Satan is the author of death, why do many Christians, including many SDAs teach that God will use His power to execute, i.e. kill, the unrepentant in the end?
 - Why do they teach this? Because they accept the lie about God's law that it is imposed requiring the law giver to impose penalties, but this also dethrones human reason because it has God saying love me or I will kill you.
 - Only when we come back to design law and realize that death is the unavoidable outcome for those who insist on staying out of harmony with God's design for life, do we get it right.
- Immortality of the soul
 - In Eden Satan's first lie to Eve was that she would not die—
 - In 1Tim 6:16 the Bible says God alone is immortal—do we teach in Christianity today that we are immortal?
 - Is this a lie of Satan infecting Christianity?
 - What impact does it have on how we see God?
- God's law functions like human law
 - How many teach that God in order to be just must punish sin?
 - Why? Because they believe God's law is not design law, but like the laws sinners make—Satan's view all along.

Read third paragraph, "Although we may be hesitant..." To what kind of leadership are we to submit?

The problem with the idea of submission is that it is taught through the lens of imposed law, rules



over, enforcement by coercion and threat. This is Satan's government and Christianity is deeply infected with this lie.

We are to be worshippers of the Creator God, who builds reality. His laws are the laws of life, the laws which bring health, peace, and the good of all. We are to submit to goodness, to love, to righteousness, to healing, to restoration, to recreation, to eternal peace—all of which flow from the heart, mind and character of our Creator God of love!

We are to rebel against sin, which is selfishness, which is based upon lies about God, founded in imperial law constructs. We are not to submit to Satan or Satan's view of God.

Read last paragraph, "The church is built upon Christ..." What do you think about the idea that we are not to rely upon another human to dictate what we believe?

Would this include the General Conference (GC)?

Would this then invalidate and negate any type of compliance committee?

Some people at the GC attempt to suggest that when the GC meets in session and votes it is God's highest authority on earth. They do this because of this quote, written in 1875:

I have been shown that no man's judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any one man. **But when the judgment of the General Conference, which is the highest authority that God has upon the earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but surrendered.** - Testimonies For The Church, Vol. III page 492 (1875) {PC 422.2}

What do you think about this statement? Is it a statement that is written in stone and is true and will always be true and to which we must submit our thinking? Or are we to reason for ourselves and consider whether this was true only at one point in time and then is no longer true?

What I find interesting is that the current GC leaders who want to promote their authority by the pen of Ellen White, insisting that we must all submit to the vote of the GC, refuse to incorporate what she wrote on this very subject in 1896, 1898, and 1901. Consider these statements:

- The voice from Battle Creek [the GC], which has been regarded as authority in counseling how the work should be done, **is no longer the voice of God.**--17MR 185 (1896). {LDE 50.2}
- **It has been some years since I have considered the General Conference as the voice of God.**--17MR 216 (1898). {LDE 50.3}
- That these men should stand in a sacred place, to be as the voice of God to the people, **as we once believed the General Conference to be--that is past.**--GCB April 3, 1901, p. 25. {LDE 50.4}



- **It is working upon wrong principles** that has brought the cause of God into its present embarrassment. The people have lost confidence in those who have the management of the work. **Yet we hear that the voice of the Conference is the voice of God. Every time I have heard this, I have thought it was almost blasphemy. The voice of the Conference ought to be the voice of God, but it is not,** because some in connection with it are not men of faith and prayer, they are not **men of elevated principle.** [Notice she doesn't say they are not men who follow the rules, but that they don't practice elevated principles. They have embraced the imperial law, rule oriented approach and corrupt the church by using coercive power.] There is not a seeking of God with the whole heart; there is not a realization of the terrible responsibility that rests upon those in this institution **to mold and fashion minds after the divine similitude.**--Manuscript 37, 1901, p. 8 (April, 1901, Talk by Mrs. E. G. White in the Review Chapel regarding the Southern work). {ChL 20.4} [Notice the responsibility is to mold and fashion minds after the divine similitude, NOT rule the institution by enforcing rules. The only way minds can be transformed is through God's methods, truth, love and freedom. Thus the GC, practicing methods of top down authority are not practicing God's principles and are not working to heal hearts and minds and are not to be accepted as the voice of God!]

And what would it indicate if people, who profess to be supporting Christ and profess to love the church, were to implement methods of attempting to exert authority over what others in the church believe and teach?

Would it not indicate they are practicing the enemy's methods, which would be evidence of accepting the lie about God's law?

What happens when we replace God's design law with imposed law? We get a god who punishes and this leads to all kinds of distortions. Like the story Russell emailed me yesterday about the Minnesota State University professor who tweeted that the virgin Mary did not give consent to be impregnated because of the power difference between a created being and God. He cites the history of God punishing disobedience as evidence that she didn't really have a choice. He tweeted:

The biblical god regularly punished disobedience. The power difference (deity vs mortal) and the potential for violence for saying 'no' negates her 'yes.' To put someone in this position is an unethical abuse of power at best and grossly predatory at worst.

If God's law functions like human law and God is the source of inflicted suffering, pain and death, then this professor is right.

The problem, of course, is that the professor is making an argument based on a false reality—the lie that God's law is imposed, and He uses coercive power.

The sad part though is, that almost all of Christianity accepts the lie about God's law and agrees with the professor that the God of the Bible is the source of inflicted punishment for disobedience.



The truth of design law and God's character of love resolves this. If Mary would have said no, the only consequence to Mary would have been not having the blessing of being the mother of Jesus. There would have been no punishment or retaliation from God.

<https://www.campusreform.org/?ID=11607>

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read Matthew 20:25-28:

²⁵ Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." NIV

Read second paragraph, "In this concise passage..." This is well said—the Roman idea of authority is power over, rules over, enforcement, coercion—it is the power of imperialism and it is not the power of God's kingdom.

Why would Christians then, resort to using this type of power in the church?

Can we get unity in this way?

Will love grow with more rules, more enforcement, more compliance?

How does love grow?

Is there a difference in using power to coerce consciences and establishing organizational policy or structure?

Where is the line drawn?

What about hours of operation, dress, diet rules, marriage, is there a difference between what is endorsed i.e. approved and thereby promoted, and what is allowed/permitted in individuals without organizational retaliation?

When a person attends 12 step meeting and acknowledges they have been using their substance, how are they treated? Does anyone send the message that continuing the addiction is desirable, healthy, acceptable? Is it understood by all parties that the addiction needs to be overcome?

What enables the 12 step groups to continue fellowship without reprisal with people who are still using their substances?



While they allow and encourage fellowship with people not yet in recovery, do they allow those who are known to not be in recovery to lead out, to sponsor others? Why not?

Are there any lessons to apply to the church?

Would making healthy decisions require we actually understand reality, understand design law, be able to recognize spiritual pathology in order to differentiate those who are mature in Christ from those who are still struggling for victory in their lives?

What would be elements that would differentiate the struggling sinner seeking victory in Christ, from a mature Christian who is growing in Christ and ready to be in position of leadership?

What does the writer of Hebrews use to differentiate the mature from the immature? What do the immature focus upon? Rule keeping and ritual, what do the mature focus upon? Reality, the transformation of character and the ability to discern right from wrong.

Should we desire that our leaders to have a mature understanding of God's character and design law? Should we ever hold out as a job requirement that those in leadership understand design law, reject imposed law penal legal views and practice God's methods?

What would an organization look like if run by those who hold to Satan's imposed law method?

What would an organization look like if run by those who hold God's design law method?

What is the difference between being a servant leader and being a doormat?

How do we serve without letting those we serve dictate what we do?

TUESDAY

The title is Preserving Church Unity. What would you say is the key to church unity?

Read 2Timothy 2:15 and Titus 1:9:

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Read first paragraph, "Notice how much..." What is the key to unity? What is the sound doctrine or teaching that is the key to unity? Is it a list of fundamental beliefs that one must attest to, and if we all



agree on the right day of worship, the right standard for dress, the right diet, the right amount to give in tithes and offerings, if we can just formulate the right list of things to believe and do, then we will have unity?

This is the lie—this is the thinking one gets when one accepts Satan’s lie about God’s government and laws. When we think through the lens of human imperial law then we think we have to all agree on the right definition and we will get unity—not so, we actually get more fragmentation and division.

What did Jesus say?

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:34,35

What about Romans 12:10:

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Can we love others and be devoted to each other’s eternal good while disagreeing on what happens to the soul at death, whether the rapture is secret or not, what day to go to church upon, what foods we eat, how we dress etc.?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “One of the main issues...” do you agree?

Is one of the main issues of church organization, i.e. to organize together is so that we can monitor each other and discipline those who diverge from the organizational standard—particularly in what they think?

Or is the purpose of church organization something entirely different?

- Spread the love and truth of God to heal hearts and minds?
- To oppose evil, i.e. elements that break God’s design and actually cause harm
- To demonstrate by action how God’s methods work, truth, presented in love while leaving others free?
- To minister to each other in love in order to help each member grow, mature and experience victory over fear and selfishness in their lives?
- More like 12 step programs?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “As we have seen throughout...” What is the mission of our church



organization? How would you describe it?

Is our mission to convert people to an organization or to Jesus?

Could a person be a disciple of Jesus and not be a member of a church organization?

Read second paragraph, “Jesus’ great commission...” Do we all agree on what the gospel is, how to baptize and what Jesus said?

What is the gospel that you would want to take to the world?

What does it mean to baptize?

What is the core message of Jesus that we need to teach people?

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

January 4-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking for the Florida Conference of SDA Women's Convention in Orlando, FL.

February 2-3, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking Christ's Church of Oronogo, MO.

February 22-March 9, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be in Australia speaking in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Adelaide, Avondale, Sydney, Livingston, Perth, and Melbourne.

April 3-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Sophia Bulgaria.

Mental Health Matters

Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing

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

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!

Oneness in Christ Lesson 13 4Q 2018

Final Restoration and Unity

As I was preparing the lesson for this week, one of our online listeners, Terry Utt, sent me a link to a short 5 minute YouTube video, produced by the US Airforce, filmed in the National Cathedral. He said he wished our church could have made this video. Consider the message of unity and whether there is a lesson for us.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q41ctPLDHvU>

SABBATH

What do you think when you hear the title? Do you get excited? Do you get enthusiastic? Do you get anxious and fearful?

Read memory text: “Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” NKJV

What is righteousness? The state of being righteous, which means what? To be morally upright—which is defined by what? What is the standard to determine what is right, just, upright, righteous?

I am going to read you a quote from EGW that some might use to promote a legal penal view of righteousness, but I am going to insert the author’s own definitions and descriptions of the terms used and you will see that it is not penal/legal at all, but healing and transforming through Christ. The challenge for each of us is to know the truth so well and have our minds so filled with the facts that when people pull quotes like this you can immediately insert the various definitions to know the true meaning and not get confused.

Righteousness is obedience to the law. The law demands righteousness, and this the sinner owes to the law; [what does this mean? What law, design or imposed? Why do we owe the law righteousness?] but he is incapable of rendering it. [Why are we incapable? Did we make a choice to be incapable or were we born incapable?] The only way in which he can attain to righteousness is through faith. [Which means what? Trust, in what or who? And when we trust God does something happen in us? What?] By faith he can bring to God the merits of Christ, and the Lord places the obedience of His Son to the sinner's account. [What does by faith mean? Does it mean by trusting and having confidence in Christ? What are the merits of Christ? They are the attributes and achievements which are his perfect character. What account? Would it be our heavenly record? What is recorded in the heavenly record, a list of deeds or our actual character? This same author wrote “Remember, your character is being daguerretyped [photographed] by the great Master Artist in the record books of heaven, as minutely as the face is reproduced upon the polished plate of the artist. What do the books of



heaven say in your case? Are you conforming your character to the Pattern, Jesus Christ? {TSB 62.1}. So how does the merits of Christ get put in your heavenly account? By recreating Christ within you. And this is how we by faith bring the merits of Christ to God by having Christ live in us.] **Christ's righteousness is accepted in place of man's failure, and God receives, pardons, justifies, the repentant, believing soul, treats him as though he were righteous, and loves him as He loves His Son.** [Why does the Father receive us as holy and righteous as the Son? Because as Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Gal 2:20 NIV, Why does the Father see Christ's righteousness? EGW said it this way: "This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us... By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. **When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness,** which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. COL 311 Why does the Father see Christ's righteousness when we exercise faith/trust in Jesus? How does faith get the righteousness of Christ into our records? All the legal descriptions cheat people from this reality!] **This is how faith is accounted righteousness;** and the pardoned soul goes on from grace to grace, from light to a greater light. He can say with rejoicing, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5-7). {FW 101.1}

She quoted Titus 3, lets read verses 4-8 from *The Remedy*:

But when our God and Savior appeared with the kindness and love of God,⁵ he healed us—he procured the Remedy. We could not do it ourselves, neither have we contributed anything to the cure. He did it because of his compassion. He heals us through the work of the Holy Spirit who cleanses our hearts and minds⁶ by taking what Christ achieved and generously reproducing it into us,⁷ so that—having been regenerated to be right in heart by the Remedy Christ achieved—we actually receive eternal life.⁸ This is the truth. I want you to make this truth clear, so that those who have partaken of the Remedy and trust God will focus their resources on doing good; for living in harmony with the law of love is healthy for everyone! Titus 3:4-8 *The Remedy*

Or consider this quote about righteousness, remember we are talking about the new heaven and new earth the home of the righteous:



Righteousness is holiness, likeness to God, and "God is love." 1 John 4:16. It is conformity to the law of God, for "all thy commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172), **and "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:10). Righteousness is love, and love is the light and the life of God.** The righteousness of God is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by receiving Him. {FLB 109.2}

Not by painful struggles or wearisome toil, not by gift or sacrifice, is righteousness obtained; **but it is freely given to every soul who hungers and thirsts to receive it.** "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat;. . . without money and without price." Isaiah 55:1. "Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord," and, "This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." Isaiah 54:17; Jeremiah 23:6. {FLB 109.3}

What is righteousness? It is love—God's character of love reproduced in us. It is not rule keeping, but living as God constructed and designed life to live!

So all of this is described in this way in the book *The Desire of Ages* and I think this is one of the best summation descriptions:

The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. [Why does the law require it? Because it is the protocol life operates upon, like saying the law of respiration requires that we breathe"] He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. **But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. **Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.** [How do we have remission of sins that are past, by a legal payment? No! By God's forbearance] More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. **Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ.** God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

So what is an effective method to break people out of the penal/legal view of salvation which is a lie and keeps people trapped in sin rather than experiencing the freedom of a new heart provided by Christ?

Would connecting the presentation of the gospel with some aspect of reality in which design law is obviously demonstrated and which brings healing and health be beneficial in promoting the gospel?

Consider this quote:

Medical missionaries and workers in the gospel ministry are to be bound together by indissoluble ties. Their work is to be done with freshness and power. **By their combined**



efforts the world is to be prepared for the second advent of Christ. Through their united labors the Sun of Righteousness is to rise, with healing in His wings, to lighten the benighted regions of the earth, where the people have long lived in gross darkness. Many who are now dwelling in the shadow of sin and death, as they see in God's faithful servants a reflection of the Light of the world, will realize that they have a hope of salvation, and **they will open their hearts to receive the healing beams, and will in turn become light bearers to others yet in darkness.** {CT 468.2}

This is what our ministries does—weaves together the design laws of life, the laws of health and the gospel truth!

What law does our physical health operate upon? When medical personal bring healing interventions what laws are they utilizing?

- Can doctors get patients well in violations of the laws of health?
- Do doctors try and teach people how to live in harmony with the laws of health?
- What kind of laws are the laws of health?
- If patients refuse to follow medical advice, what happens to them?
- Do medical personal inflict pain and suffering and death upon non-compliant patients?
- Are there powerful lessons that apply to the plan of salvation and how sin kills and how God through Christ heals?
- Can you see why Satan wants to separate the medical work from the gospel?
- Can you see that the legal/penal ideas have nothing to offer the medical work and are exposed as a fraud, thus Satan wants to separate the gospel from the medical work.
- And can you see how he has done this in the SDA church?

So how is it that a person with a serious medical condition dies if they refuse treatment? Is this how the wicked die if they refuse God's salvation? Here is a very powerful quotation that Karin Covi sent me this week written by EGW one of the founders of the SDA church, what do you think?

The Spirit of God keeps evil under the control of conscience. When people exalt themselves above the influence of the Spirit, they reap a harvest of iniquity.... Warnings have less and less power over them. They gradually lose their fear of God. **They sow to the flesh; they will reap corruption.** The harvest of the seed that they themselves have sown is ripening.... **Their heart of flesh becomes a heart of stone.** Resistance to truth confirms them in iniquity.... **All should be intelligent in regard to the agency by which the soul is destroyed. It is not because of any decree that God has sent out against men or women. He does not make them spiritually blind. God gives sufficient light and evidence to enable them to distinguish truth from error. But He does not force them to receive truth. He leaves them free to choose the good or to choose the evil. If people resist evidence that is sufficient to guide their judgment in the right direction and choose evil once, they will do this more readily the second time. The third time they will still more eagerly withdraw from God and choose to stand on the side of Satan. And in this course they will continue**



until they are confirmed in evil and believe the lie they have cherished as truth.—
Manuscript 126, 1901 (Sermons and Talks 2:183, 184). {CTr 103.4}

Read first paragraph, “One of the greatest promises...” Do you think Jesus wants to come again as soon as possible?

Then why has He not yet returned?

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 2Pet 3:9 NIV

Jesus said,

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. MT 24:14 NIV

What does this mean?

What kingdom? Would it be the kingdom of love? Has Christianity taken that message to the world, or has Christianity taken the message of a dictator god, who will use his power to torture and kill all who disobey him?

If God is waiting because He wants people to be saved, to be healed, to not perish, to repent and experience a new heart and right spirit within—can that be achieved by teaching people a false penal/legal view of God?

Or, does the penal/legal view actually obstruct the gospel and prevent hearts and minds from being healed?

It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. **At this time a message** from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. **His character is to be made known.** Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the **light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth...** **The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character** they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. {COL 415}

Is there anything we can do to hasten the coming of the Lord?

Would it not be to reject the false legal/penal view, embrace the truth of God’s design law and character of love, enter into a trust relationship with Him and reveal His character of love in how we live and treat others?



SUNDAY

The title is The Certainty of Christ's Return—does this give you hope or fear?

In the second paragraph the lesson quotes Enoch from the book of Jude:

“Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” vs 14,15

What do you hear? Does this sound like a healing message or a punishing message?

What is this judgment?

- Is it a determination of who is saved and who is lost?
- In other words, is the judge weighing forensic evidence and deciding who will be saved and who will be lost?
- Are our cases in the hands of the judge and it is up to the judge to decide whether we are saved or lost?
- Is it the decision of the judge that determines our eternal destiny?
- Or, is this judgment merely the final diagnosis, the final declaration of the actual condition of each person's character?

When God declares:

He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still. Rev 22:11

is God making it so, or is God merely stating what already is so? Who made the choices for some to be righteous and some to be unrighteous?

When God said in Hosea 4:17 that Ephraim is joined to idols, let him go, was that God making a judgment? Was God's judgment what caused it to be this way or simply the declaration that it was already this way?

In the judgment will God's declaration of our state make us that way or merely acknowledge and accept that we are the way we are?

How did we get that way? By either trusting God and opening the heart to receive the remedy Jesus has provided applied via the Holy Spirit, or by holding to lies and keeping our hearts closed and hardening in selfishness.



So, Enoch's words in Jude, from *The Remedy*:

"Be aware, the Lord is coming to earth with millions of his holy angels in order to bring about the accurate diagnosis of all things—to bring all selfish beings face to face with their own terminal condition, with the pain and suffering they have caused, and with all the lies about God they have told."

MONDAY

The Promise of Restoration—is this real or metaphor?

This is real—so when we talk in this class about healing, restoration, recreation we are not talking metaphor but the reality to which all the metaphors point.

Those who hold to the legal lie suggest that the healing view we teach is just one metaphor among many and that because they include all the metaphors along with the healing metaphor their view is richer and deeper. What is wrong with their position?

They have taken reality—restoration, healing, renewal, recreation and denied it is real and made it only a metaphor, so that people don't actually seek healing, they instead seek legal pardon and covering over their iniquity.

It would be like a person dying of cancer seeking to be forgiven for cancer and have the medical record altered to say there is no cancer, even though they are still terminal. It is a fraud and this is what the penal legal model does to people. This is why God is waiting. This is why we are not in our new earth, because millions of hearts and minds are trapped in a false view of God which keeps them in fear and insecurity.

We have a message for this time—the message of God's character and law of love to be shared to free hearts and minds to experience genuine renewal to be like Christ!

Do we believe that the home of the righteous will be a real physical place with physical bodies, and real earth, water, sky, and animals and people? Absolutely yes!

And what kind of place will the new earth be?

Will it be like it was before Adam's fall?

Here is one commentator's description of the earth before sin:

When God had formed the earth, there were mountains, hills, and plains, and interspersed among them were rivers and bodies of water. The earth was not one extensive plain, but the



monotony of the scenery was broken by hills and mountains, not high and ragged as they now are, but regular and beautiful in shape. **The bare, high rocks were never seen upon them, but lay beneath the surface, answering as bones to the earth.** The waters were regularly dispersed. The hills, mountains, and very beautiful plains, were adorned with plants and flowers, and tall, **majestic trees of every description, which were many times larger,** and much more beautiful, than trees now are. The air was pure and healthful, and the earth seemed like a noble palace. Angels beheld and rejoiced at the wonderful and beautiful works of God. {3SG 33.1}

A description of the earth after the fall and before the flood:

The curse did not change at once the appearance of the earth. It was still rich in the bounty God had provided for it. **There was gold and silver in abundance.** The race of men then living were of very great stature, and possessed wonderful strength. **The trees were vastly larger, and far surpassing in beauty and perfect proportions anything mortals can now look upon. The wood of these trees was of fine grain and hard substance--in this respect more like stone.** It required much more time and labor, even of that powerful race, to prepare the timber for building, than it requires in this degenerate age to prepare trees that are now growing upon the earth, even with the present weaker strength men now possess. **These trees were of great durability, and would know nothing of decay for very many years.** {3SG 61.2}

What about Adam's abilities before the fall? Do you think we have degenerated not only in physical ability, but mental ability? Do you think Adam had control over nature? Could Adam walk on water? Could Adam move things with his mind?

Here is a commentary for consideration:

While they remained true to God, Adam and his companion were to bear rule over the earth. **Unlimited control was given them over every living thing.** The lion and the lamb sported peacefully around them or lay down together at their feet. The happy birds flitted about them without fear; and as their glad songs ascended to the praise of their Creator, Adam and Eve united with them in thanksgiving to the Father and the Son. {PP 50.2}

TUESDAY

Will the earth made new be a physical place in which the righteous will live with real physical bodies?

Job said:

But I know there is someone in heaven
who will come at last to my defence.
Even after my skin is eaten by disease,
while still in this body I will see God.



I will see him with my own eyes,
and he will not be a stranger. Job 19:25-27

Paul of course describes the resurrection in 1Cor 15 and 1Thes 4 and our corruptible bodies will be changed to incorruptible bodies, these mortal bodies will be made immortal.

We can't conceive of what that will be like.

WEDNESDAY

Read the top paragraph, "For behold..." What does this mean?

Does this mean in heaven we won't have any memory of sin? Will the events on planet earth be wiped from the collective consciousness of all intelligent beings?

Will the memory of history be erased?

Why is this not possible?

What is it that makes us who we are as unique individuals?

It is our life experiences—identical twins are not identical people. Our biology doesn't make us who we are, it is our life experiences, which is embedded in our memories. To wipe out our memories would wipe out our identities—it cannot be done while preserving us.

And such an interpretation of this passage contradicts the rest of Scripture. What to these text describe:

- The 144,000 people stood before the throne, the four living creatures, and the elders; they were singing a new song, which only they could learn. Rev 14:3
 - What does this mean? Why can't others learn it? Because it is the song of their experience. Here is what the SDA Bible commentary says of this text:
 - The experience is of such a personal nature that only those who pass through it can appreciate its significance. To them the song is a treasured and comprehensive summation of the experiences through which they have passed in the closing stages of the conflict between good and evil.¹
 - What is required in order to sing a song of one's experience? That one remembers their experience!
- What about David, Bathsheba, Solomon and Uriah? Will they know each other, what will that mean?
- What did Jesus mean when he said "I tell you, then, the great love she has shown proves that her many sins have been forgiven. But whoever has been forgiven little shows only a little

¹ Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1980). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 7, p. 826). Review and Herald Publishing Association.



love.” Luke 7:47 GNB

- Does our memory of how much we have been forgiven impact our love?

What about this quote from the book *Maranatha*:

Every question of truth and error in the long-standing controversy has now been made plain. **The results of rebellion**, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, have been laid open to the view of all created intelligences. The working out of Satan's rule in contrast with the government of God has been presented to the whole universe. **Satan's own works have condemned him. God's wisdom, His justice, and His goodness stand fully vindicated.** It is seen that all His dealings in the great controversy have been conducted with respect to the eternal good of His people and the good of all the worlds that He has created. . . **The history of sin will stand to all eternity as a witness** that with the existence of God's law is bound up the happiness of all the beings He has created. With all the facts of the great controversy in view, the whole universe, both loyal and rebellious, with one accord declare: "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." {Mar 346.2}

The inhabitants of all worlds will be convinced of the justice of the law in the overthrow of rebellion and the eradication of sin. [What does this mean, do you hear it through imposed or design law lenses, keep reading] When man, beguiled by Satan's power, disobeyed the divine law, **God could not, even to save the lost race, change that law.** [Why not? Because God's law is design law, how He built the universe to operate, which is in harmony with His own character of love. To change the law would be to change His own character and destroy the foundation of life itself, notice what she says next] **God is love, and to change the law would be to deny Himself, to overthrow those principles with which are bound up the good of the universe.** [His laws are the principles, protocols, upon which life is built. All the legal imposed law views are Satan's lies] The working out of the plan of salvation reveals not only to men but to angels, the character of God, and **through the ages of eternity the malignant character of sin will be understood by the cost to the Father and the Son of the redemption of a rebel race.** [What will be understood for all eternity? Both the beauty and wonder of God's character of love and the malignant character of sin. How is it understood? By remembering exactly what happened when God's principles were set aside and Satan's imposed law methods practiced.] In Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, all worlds will behold the marks of the curse, and **angels as well as men will ascribe honour and glory to the Redeemer through whom they are all made secure from apostasy. The efficiency of the cross guards the redeemed race from the danger of a second fall.** [Why will there be no second fall? Because we all remember!] **The life and death of Christ effectually unveils the deceptions of Satan, and refutes his claims.** The sacrifice of Christ for a fallen world draws not only men, but angels unto Him bonds of indissoluble union. Through the plan of salvation the justice and mercy of God are fully vindicated, and **to all eternity rebellion will never again arise, affliction never again touch the universe of God.** {Messenger, June 7, 1893 par. 6}



But this eternal security is only possible if all intelligent beings remember. If we have our memories erased then we haven't learned the truth of the difference and we are vulnerable to having the rebellion arise again.

And who would teach the idea that memory would be erased? And what system of theology always includes this? The penal substitution system, which is further evidence of its false origins.

So what does the Isaiah text mean? Simply what it says, we won't think about, won't focus on it, it won't come to mind, but that doesn't mean we don't have memory of it. In fact, we will travel the universe to tell the wonderful story of redemption through Jesus, which will require we remember.

THURSDAY

Life on the New Earth—all things made new.

What about the New Jerusalem?

Compare the New Jerusalem with the Most Holy Place in the sanctuary:

Most Holy Place

Cube
covered gold
saved are at-one
God dwells there
High Priest cleanses
Surrounded by 12 tribes

New Jerusalem

Cube
paved gold
saved are at-one
God dwells there
High Priest cleanses hearts
Gates of 12 tribes

The New Jerusalem is the Bride of Christ—the church is the Bride of Christ and the people live in the New Jerusalem and are the shining living stones that beautify the city.

So is the New Jerusalem real? I think it is, but it is also an object lesson of our restored perfection and unity with Christ.

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, "The resurrection..." What does this mean? What is the blood of the Lamb that we wash our characters in?

Jesus is the Word made flesh and we are to eat the flesh of Jesus; what does this mean?

When Jesus said unless we eat his flesh and drink his blood we have no part with him, what does that mean?

What of this description?

“In the study of the Bible the converted soul eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God, which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words, that are spirit and life.” Fundamentals of Christian Education 378.1

“The leaven of truth works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. **By it [the truth] the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb.”** Christ’s Object Lessons 102

So, how do we understand the paragraph about washing our robes of character in the blood of Jesus?

What would happen if we conclude that it means we are to claim the legal payment of Jesus death, the blood, and present it by faith to the Father, and that will have our records expunged in the courtroom of heaven and we will be declared to be righteous even though we are not?

It would mean we put an idea into people’s minds that prevents them from experiencing the true washing of their robes. They accept a lie and their characters remain infected with fear and selfishness and they never even think to ask for the Holy Spirit to transform them to Christlikeness.

This is what the penal substitution lie does.

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2

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The Book of Revelation 1Q 201

The Gospel from Patmos

Introduction

In the second to the last paragraph there is a quote from *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 113 which says: “When we as a people understand what this book means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival. We do not understand fully the lessons that it teaches, notwithstanding the injunction given us to search and study it.”

What does this mean?

Does it mean that we have room to expand our understanding? That we should not be dogmatic about a certain interpretation? That we should allow for various views to be considered?

The introduction points out that in most of the Bible things should be taken literally unless there is clear reason to consider it symbolically, however, in Revelation things should be taken symbolically first and only literally if there is clear reason to do so.

Do you agree? We might need to come back to this principle throughout the quarter—let’s help each other do this.

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “The prophecies of Revelation...” What is the blessing that one receives from reading this book?

- Why are they blessed?
- Is it like a knighthood, something that is bestowed by a higher authority on their subject for some great achievement—so if we read the book God hands out a blessing?
- Is it some design law—some natural result that comes from reading it?
- Is there a blessing in enlightenment, in knowing the truth, in knowing the truth about God and His kingdom of love? Is there a blessing in having one’s mind freed from lies?
- So, what is the blessing one receives? Would it be healing of their heart and mind as the truth penetrates and wins them to trust in God?

But the lesson says it isn’t just reading that results in blessing, but obeying that results in blessing—what does that mean and again, why would obeying result in blessing?

Is the blessing that comes from obedience, like the knighthood, something that is bestowed by the Sovereign because of good performance?

Or, is the blessing from obedience that natural result of what occurs when one lives in harmony with



design law?

- Is there a blessing in obeying the doctor's instructions (assuming the instructions are correct)? From where does the blessing come?
- Is there a blessing in obeying the commandments not to murder, steal, commit adultery, bear false witness etc.? From where does the blessing come?
- Is there a blessing in worshipping the one and only true God—from where does the blessing come? Is it some imperial decree from God, or is a natural result of God's design law of worship?
 - What does Paul in Romans 1 say happens to people who exchange the truth of God for a lie? Their minds become depraved, darkened, and futile—why?
 - What happens to the minds of people who worship the true God?
 - Would the expansion of their mental faculties be a one-time event, or a continual event that expands with time?
 - Would that require we continue to study and expand our understanding?
 - Is this connected to the saying that sanctification is a work of a lifetime? Does that mean we only obtain it at the end of life, or that it is a part of living, we continue to grow in our knowledge of God and His methods and thus continue in our spiritual maturity as long as we are alive?

And what does it mean to obey? Is obedience in God's kingdom measured by how well one performs, or by the intention of the heart to comply?

It is the desire, the intent, not the actual performance that is the primary issue in obeying God. Why?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Revelation 1:1 states..." Why would Jesus need to reveal Himself?

Has Jesus been hidden from our understanding?

How and why has Jesus been hidden?

Does Jesus want to remain hidden?

What keeps Jesus from greater revelations of Himself today?

Was the message of Revelation only for the people of John's day, or perhaps even more for the people living at the end of time?

Would that mean that Jesus knew that before the second coming He would not be understood, that the truth about God would be obscured and He would have to provide a special revelation of Himself to reveal His true character and nature to us?



Paul wrote to Timothy about the end of time telling him that the people at the end of time would have a form of godliness but deny the power. They would not really know Jesus.

Do we find that in the world today there are many religions and religious people who have a view of God that is more like the character of Satan, a punishing being who requires some legal payment in order to buy him off?

Do you find in the book of Revelation a message from Jesus that is to refute this satanic view of God?

MONDAY

What is the purpose of Bible prophecy?

Read second paragraph, “The primary purpose...” What is God in control of?

- Is God in control of whether a person is saved or not saved? Why or why not?
 - If salvation is a legal problem, why can't God just legally pardon everyone and take everyone to heaven?
 - Doesn't God have the power to do so?
 - What would be the problem if He did?
 - Wouldn't it be that such an action would result in sinners who have sinful hearts being in heaven i.e. such a legal action would not fix the problem, it would not heal the heart, renew the mind, recreate the being in righteousness. The entire legal model is a fraud, a lie, and it is the primary reason the church has not fulfilled its mission in preparing the world for Christ's return!
- Is God in control of whether a person sins or doesn't sin? Why or why not?
- So, is God in control of whether good people get mistreated and abused? Why or why not?
- Is God in control of whether a man rapes a woman or not?
- Is God in control of whether a woman gets pregnant or not?
 - When God healed women in Bible times of infertility, did God then impregnate them, or did those women still have to have sexual relations with their husbands? Who chose to do that, God or those people?
 - So, what was God in control of?
- Is God in control of whether a child is born with some physical defect? Why or why not?
- Is God in control of what God does?
- Was God in control of whether Nebuchadnezzar threw the three worthies in the fiery furnace? Was God in control of whether He would intervene to save them?

So, what is the purpose of Bible prophecy? To teach us what? That God is in control of Himself, His laws, His designs and is working through human history to heal and restore all who cooperate with Him. That God is not caught by surprise and knows the events of the future before they happen.

Consider some prophecies of the OT:



- The multi-medal image and the beasts of Daniel, which describe the rise and fall of nations:
 - Do these prophecies mean that God caused these nations to rise and fall, and God wanted the wars to happen, or that God foreknew it would happen this way and so revealed it?
- When God gave conditional prophecies for the prosperity of Israel, what does that reveal?
 - Does it reveal God didn't really know what would happen and was covering His bases?
 - Or, that God revealed two possible futures to Israel that were dependent on the choices that Israel made? Like revealing two paths, but rather than two paths over geography that lead to two different destinations, these were two paths were through time that led to two different destinations. And just as with the fork in the geographic road, we could accurately predict where one will end up if they take either fork, so too God could accurately predict where Israel will end up if they take either fork—the one fork of loyalty to God would free God to take actions to bless them in ways they would not receive if they chose disloyalty to God.
 - Does that mean God didn't know which fork in the road of time they would take until they took it? No! Then why give both views? To show that they did have a choice, they were not predestined to end up where they did, to entice, woo, encourage them to take the right road, just as a parent would tell a child of all the benefits of taking the right road.
 - So we see that God does have foreknowledge, but we still have complete freedom

The lesson points out that in Dt 29:29 the Lord keeps some things secret, and asks us why the Lord does this?

Jesus said to his Apostles: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."
John 16:12

Does God keep some things secret because He wants us to be ignorant, or because of either our limited capacity or that we would be injured with the knowledge?

Do you ever keep things from your children? Why?

- To protect them?
- Because they are too immature to understand?
- Do we ever withhold information from our children out of embarrassment, guilt or shame—fear our children might reject us?
- God never withholds information for this third reason!

TUESDAY

The lesson emphasizes that Revelation and much of Bible prophecy is symbolic in nature—what does that mean?



It means that symbols stand for other ideas.

Consider the letters TREE, these are symbols that stand for a living organism—a tree. The letters TREE are not a tree, they are only a symbolic representation of a tree.

In the Bible we have letters that are symbolic representations of other symbolic representations.

For instance, the letters LAMB represent a docile animal, but that docile animal in Bible prophecy represents Jesus.

The problem in much of Bible prophecy is in determining what the symbol actually represents.

- What is the danger in failing to take a symbol symbolically?
- What is the danger in misinterpreting the meaning of the symbol?
- Any examples of this?
 - Taking the description of fire as combustion rather than the fire of God's life-giving glory—infinite truth and love
 - Taking the war and battle descriptions as physical battles rather than mental battles over ideas and beliefs—like the battle of Armageddon
 - Taking vials of wrath as plagues that literally come out from God rather than what happens when God surrenders sinners to their own selves.
 - Taking the descriptions of souls under the altar as living disembodied intelligences rather than symbols of beings who had been alive and are waiting for the resurrection and whose life-history and sacrifice call out through history for God to fix the sin problem

The lesson in the third paragraph states, “we must be careful not to impose on the text a meaning that comes out of human imagination or the current meanings of those symbols in our culture.”

Do you agree?

Does this only apply to physical objects like trees, beasts, rivers, angels, lamps, altars—or does this same rule apply to ideas, concepts, actions?

- Wrath and anger—do we apply modern human understanding, or realize these terms when applied to God are representative of His letting go, releasing people to their own choices?
- Atonement—do we apply the modern meaning of appeasement or realize it means unity, reconciliation, making at-one?
- Justification—do we apply the modern meaning of legal declaration, or do we realize it means setting things right in reality?
- Law—do we apply the human law concept of imposed rules, or realize God's laws are design protocols?



How much of Scripture and prophecy is misunderstood because we misunderstand the meaning of the terms?

Is there an overarching key for rightly interpreting Bible symbolism?

What about this idea?

The significance of the Jewish economy is not yet fully comprehended. [another system of symbols, which in the next paragraph is connected to Revelation] Truths vast and profound are shadowed forth in its rites and symbols. **The gospel is the key that unlocks its mysteries.** [What is the key?] Through a knowledge of the plan of redemption, its truths are opened to the understanding. Far more than we do, it is our privilege to understand these wonderful themes. We are to comprehend the deep things of God. Angels desire to look into the truths that are revealed to the people who with contrite hearts are searching the word of God, and praying for greater lengths and breadths and depths and heights of the knowledge which He alone can give. {COL 133.1}

As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study. The last book of the New Testament scriptures is full of truth that we need to understand. Satan has blinded the minds of many, so that they have been glad of any excuse for not making the Revelation their study. But Christ through His servant John has here declared what shall be in the last days, and He says, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." Revelation 1:3. {COL 133.2}

What is the key to unlock Bible mysteries? The gospel, if we misunderstand the gospel will we misunderstand the Bible symbols, so what is the gospel?

Consider this quote—do you agree?

No man can rightly present the law of God without the gospel, or the gospel without the law. **The law is the gospel embodied, and the gospel is the law unfolded. The law is the root, the gospel is the fragrant blossom and fruit which it bears.** {COL 128.2}

What does this mean?

- Does it mean that the legal penal proponents are right, that God imposes a law and only by getting the right set of rules with right obedience can we understand the gospel?
- Or does it refer to God's design law, the protocols upon which life is built and it is good news to live in harmony with God and His design, and God and Jesus have been working to restore us to that design?

And, can you see how important it will be to decide what law is the law that is the root?

So how do you describe God's law?

Consider this quote:

The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man. **The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. The laws that govern the heart's action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds.** Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action. For all the objects of His creation the condition is the same--**a life sustained by receiving the life of God, a life exercised in harmony with the Creator's will. To transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place one's self out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin.**
{Ed 99.2}

What kind of law is this?

Can you see what will happen if we replace God's design law with Satan's imperial/imposed law? **Then the gospel is perverted and we take a false gospel to the world—which is exactly what has happened to all of Christianity.**

So, why is the law the root and the gospel the fruit?

What is the law? The law of God is the principle of love upon which life is built, and the gospel is the good news that God is love and love is the outward movement of God toward the healing and saving of His creation. Thus, we see manifest in Christ the character of God, the movement of love toward a fallen race, to bring the truth about God back to our awareness while simultaneously taking up the sickness of sin in order to cure the condition and provide remedy to our terminal state.

But Satan has worked to replace God's design law with imposed law and to get humans to misinterpret God as a being of stern justice, who must inflict punishment for breaking the law, and the cross is perverted as a means of legal payment and propitiation of divine wrath.

Thus, the world languishes, darkness covers the people a gross and disgusting darkness and this darkness constantly spews forth from pulpits and religious publications, including those of the SDA church.

If we want to see Christ return, then we must reject the false law with its penal substitution theology and start promoting the truth about Our Creator God and His design law and the true gospel of His kingdom of love!

WEDNESDAY

The lesson points out that the three members of the Godhead are described in the first chapter of



Revelation:

From John to the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace be yours from God, who is, who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits in front of his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first to be raised from death and who is also the ruler of the kings of the world. vs 4,5.

Read the fifth paragraph, “Jesus Christ is identified by...” What was washed by His blood?

- Is this literal or symbolic?
- What is it symbolic of?
- What does the blood represent?
- How are we washed in the blood?

When Jesus said unless we eat his flesh and drink his blood we have no part with him, what does that mean?

Jesus is the Word made flesh and we are to eat the flesh of Jesus; what does this mean?

What of this description?

“In the study of the Bible the converted soul eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God, which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words, that are spirit and life.” Fundamentals of Christian Education 378.1

“The leaven of truth works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. **By it [the truth] the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb.**” Christ’s Object Lessons 102

So, how do we understand the paragraph about being washed in the blood of Jesus?

What would happen if we conclude that it means we are to claim the legal payment of Jesus death, the blood, and present it by faith to the Father, and that will have our records expunged in the courtroom of heaven and we will be declared to be righteous even though we are not?

It would mean we put an idea into people’s minds that prevents them from experiencing the true washing of their robes. They accept a lie and their characters remain infected with fear and selfishness and they never even think to ask for the Holy Spirit to transform them to Christlikeness.

This is what the penal substitution lie does.

Read last paragraph, “In the original Greek...” What does it mean? How are we released from our sins? Is it talking about being released from the penalty and punishment for sin, or being released from sinfulness—being cured?



What does it mean He provided the perfect atonement for our sins? Does this mean a legal payment to a punishing god that would otherwise kill us if this god isn't placated with a human sacrifice?

Or does it mean that He restored God's design into humanity and provides the remedy we need to fix what is broken in us?

THURSDAY

The lesson points out that the end point in history to which all the prophecy points is the second coming of Christ and the eradication of sin, sickness, and death.

Why, has Christ not returned?

Is there anything currently happening within Christianity that is obstructing Christ's return?

Is there anything Christianity could be doing that can hasten the day of Christ's return?

Is there a message that is to be given before Christ returns and is Christianity giving it?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions

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The Book of Revelation 2Q 2019 Among the Lampstands

By Dr. Tim Jennings

Before we get into today's lesson, I wanted to follow up with where we ended last week's lesson. The question:

Is there an overarching key for rightly interpreting Bible symbolism?

What about this idea?

The significance of the Jewish economy is not yet fully comprehended. [another system of symbols, which in the next paragraph is connected to Revelation] Truths vast and profound are shadowed forth in its rites and symbols. **The gospel is the key that unlocks its mysteries. [What is the key?]** Through a knowledge of the plan of redemption, its truths are opened to the understanding. Far more than we do, it is our privilege to understand these wonderful themes. We are to comprehend the deep things of God. Angels desire to look into the truths that are revealed to the people who with contrite hearts are searching the word of God, and praying for greater lengths and breadths and depths and heights of the knowledge which He alone can give. {COL 133.1}

As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study. The last book of the New Testament scriptures is full of truth that we need to understand. Satan has blinded the minds of many, so that they have been glad of any excuse for not making the Revelation their study. But Christ through His servant John has here declared what shall be in the last days, and He says, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." Revelation 1:3. {COL 133.2}

What is the key to unlock Bible mysteries? The gospel, if we misunderstand the gospel we will misunderstand the Bible symbols, so what is the gospel?

Consider this quote—do you agree?

No man can rightly present the law of God without the gospel, or the gospel without the law. **The law is the gospel embodied, and the gospel is the law unfolded. The law is the root, the gospel is the fragrant blossom and fruit which it bears.** {COL 128.2}

What does this mean?

- Does it mean that the legal penal proponents are right, that God imposes a law and only by getting the right set of rules with right obedience can we understand the gospel?
- Or does this mean that when we correctly understand the gospel, that we understand correctly



the law—all law, the design law upon which life is built, but also God's use of written law and if we fail to correctly understand the gospel we will misunderstand God's law?

And, can you see how important it will be to decide what is the gospel and what is the law?

"To fulfil the law." In His own life the Saviour gave the children of men an example of perfect obedience. In His teachings He made clear and distinct every precept of the divine law; He swept away the rubbish of erroneous tradition with which the Jews had encumbered it; **He illustrated and enforced its principles**, and showed in all its particulars the length and breadth and height and depth of **the righteousness required by the law of God.** {BEcho, April 16, 1894 par. 5} [why does the law require righteousness? For the same reason the law of respiration require we breathe, it is how life is built to exist]

The Pharisees were dissatisfied with the teachings of Christ. The practical godliness which He enjoined condemned them. They desired Him to dwell upon the external observances of the ceremonial law, and the customs and traditions of the fathers. **But Jesus taught the spiritual nature of the law, and made clear its far reaching claims. Love to God and to men must live in the heart and control the life, as the spring of every thought and every action.** {BEcho, April 16, 1894 par. 6} [What kind of law can do this? Can this be achieved by imperial rules enforced by threats of punishment?]

There is perfect harmony between the law of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ. "I and My Father are one," says the great Teacher. **The gospel is the good news of grace, or favour, by which man may be released from the condemnation of sin, and enabled to render acceptable obedience to the law.** [What does this sound like to you? Think it through—does it sound penal legal or healing restorative? How are we released from condemnation, by a legal payment or by healing and recreation? Does a legal payment enable us to obey the law? Does restoring Godliness within us enable us to obey the law, so which is it? If Godliness is resorted within use and sinfulness removed, then will the law condemn us? So, this is healing and restoration not legal payment.] The gospel points to the moral code as a rule of life. That law, by its demands for undeviating obedience, is continually pointing the sinner to the gospel for pardon and peace. {BEcho, April 16, 1894 par. 7} [Does this sound legal? How do we understand it?]

As penitent sinners, contrite before God, [heart change takes place first] discern Christ's atonement in their behalf, **and accept this atonement** as their only hope in this life and the future life, **their sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith.** ... (CTr 150.3)

Justification is the opposite of condemnation. ... (CTr 150.4)

David was pardoned of his transgression because he humbled his heart before God in repentance and contrition of soul and believed that God's promise to forgive would be



fulfilled. [Heart change happens first.] (Manuscript 21, 1891; Manuscript Releases, vol. 9, pp. 300, 301; CTr 150.5)

But while God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ's righteousness while practicing known sins or neglecting known duties. *God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; [again, heart change before justification]* and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul. (FW 100.1)

The only way this makes sense is design law and we are talking about surrender to allow healing of heart and mind. Healing of heart and mind does not happen without our trust in God. We must be won to trust in God first and invite Him in and this sets the heart right with God and He dwells in us and we follow the leading of God in our daily lives growing in godliness.

So how do you describe God's law?

Consider this quote:

The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man. **The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. The laws that govern the heart's action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds.** Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action. For all the objects of His creation the condition is the same--**a life sustained by receiving the life of God, a life exercised in harmony with the Creator's will. To transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place one's self out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin.** {Ed 99.2}

What kind of law is this?

Can you see what will happen if we replace God's design law with Satan's imperial/imposed law? **Then the gospel is perverted and we take a false gospel to the world—which is exactly what has happened to all of Christianity.**

This is the primary reason Christ has not returned because He is waiting for the gospel to go to the world and we have yet to take it. Further, within the SDA church much of what the Bible has to teach us has been misunderstood because it has been filtered through the false law lens.

So, why is the law the root and the gospel the fruit?

Keep in mind the quote just read and consider these quotes:



Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the **glory of self-sacrificing love**. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that **the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God**; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. {DA 19.2}

But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that **it is the glory of our God to give**. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth **the great principle which is the law of life for the universe**. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the **Father's life flows out to all**; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the **circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life**. {DA 21.2}

In heaven itself this law was broken. Sin originated in self-seeking. Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator, and to win their homage to himself. **Therefore he misrepresented God, attributing to Him the desire for self-exaltation. With his own evil characteristics he sought to invest the loving Creator. Thus he deceived angels. Thus he deceived men.** He led them to doubt the word of God, and to distrust His goodness. Because God is a God of justice and terrible majesty, Satan caused them to look upon Him as severe and unforgiving. Thus he drew men to join him in rebellion against God, and the night of woe settled down upon the world. {DA 21.3}

How did Satan do this specifically? He lied about God's law:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan**; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. {DA 761.4}

Why is the law the root and the gospel the fruit?

The law of God is the principle of love upon which life is built, and the gospel is the good news that God is love and love is the outward movement of God toward the healing and saving of His creation. Thus, we see manifest in Christ the character of God, the movement of love toward a fallen race, to bring the truth about God back to our awareness while simultaneously taking up the sickness of sin in order to cure the condition and provide remedy to our terminal state.



The gospel is what love does, how love acts, the way love functions—which is the law of life in operation!

But Satan has worked to replace God's design law with imposed law and to get humans to misinterpret God as a being of stern justice, who must inflict punishment for breaking the law, and the cross is perverted as a means of legal payment and propitiation of divine wrath.

Thus, the world languishes, darkness covers the people a gross and disgusting darkness and this darkness constantly spews forth from pulpits and religious publications, including those of the SDA church.

If we want to see Christ return, then we must reject the false law with its penal substitution theology and start promoting the truth about Our Creator God and His design law and the true gospel of His kingdom of love!

SABBATH

The Title for this week's lesson is *Among the Lampstands*: Read second paragraph, "Centuries later..."

The lesson points out that John was given a vision of the resurrected Christ in the heavenly sanctuary—I find this very interesting for a couple of reasons.

Why do the author's say John was given a vision of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary? Because He is walking among the lampstands. Okay, in last week's lesson the lesson said we should take Revelation as symbolic unless specific reasons to take it literal.

Is the sanctuary imagery of a literal physical building, or is it symbolic of something else?

Hmmm... what about the lampstands that Christ is walking amongst, are they literal pieces of gold with combustion flames, or are they symbolic?

Read Revelation 1:20:

This is the secret meaning of the seven stars that you see in my right hand, and of the seven gold lamp-stands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lamp-stands are the seven churches. (GNB)

In **TUESDAY's** lesson we read, "In Revelation, the lampstands represent the seven churches in Asia to which Revelation was originally sent and the lampstands also symbolize God's church throughout history."



So, should we take the lampstands as literal pieces of gold, or as symbolic of the seven churches? And are the seven churches seven buildings made of brick and mortar or the saints of God?

So, if the lampstands are symbolic of the people of God, and the image was that of Christ walking in the heavenly sanctuary, what would that say about the heavenly sanctuary? From what is the sanctuary in heaven constructed if we accept Jesus's words here?

And then if this is the heavenly sanctuary, constructed of the seven churches, which means the people of God through all time, then what would Christ be cleansing in the heavenly sanctuary?

Why do you think there is so much resistance in the SDA church to accepting what Jesus revealed in Revelation about the heavenly sanctuary?

Because the church is infected with a false law lens and with that false law lens they misinterpret the meaning to be legal and penal rather than healing and restorative. With the design law lens of love we realize that Jesus is working in human beings to heal and restore us to righteousness!

We must stop going along with the legal lie.

MONDAY

The Lord's day, which is what day of the week? Why is the seventh-day Sabbath the Lord's day?

Is the most important aspect of the Sabbath to realize which day in the seven-day cycle it is? Or, is it to realize its purpose, what it was created for?

What happens if we defined accurately which of the week is the Sabbath day, but we then understand its significance through the imposed law lens? Then we have the right day but the wrong meaning, and get the wrong god, and could end up killing the God of the Sabbath and want Him off the cross to worship on the Sabbath.

Sadly, the fourth commandment has been translated through the lens of imposed law causing the commandment to sound like some prohibition.

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping **it** holy (Exodus 20:8)

The key word in this verse is "it" the Hebrew translate "it" is: **הוא, היא** [*huw' , beyond, Pentateuch*), *hiy' /hoo/* pron 3p s. A primitive word; TWOT 480; GK 2085 and 2115; 38 occurrences; AV translates as "that", "him", "same", "this", "he", "which", "who", "such", and "wherein". **1** he, she, it.



1a himself (with emphasis).¹

This allows for a completely different interpretation: *Remember the Sabbath day keeping yourself holy. Or, Remember the Sabbath day in order to stay holy.*

Think about it, if we were to build a golden calf and have an orgy of pagan worship during the Sabbath hours have we made the Sabbath less holy? If we spent the Sabbath hours in total righteous living, would we make the Sabbath more holy? We cannot keep the Sabbath holy for we didn't make it holy and we can't make it unholy—we can only keep ourselves holy. And can a person keep themselves holy only one day in seven?

The Sabbath was made for man—for what reason? To aide humankind in holiness, in keeping themselves holy!

And what is holiness? Holiness is the state of being holy—which is what? I would like to suggest being holy is being in harmony with God in all aspects of our being. Thus, being holy is living in harmony with God's character, protocols, methods—His design laws!

And how is the Sabbath related to this?

When was the Sabbath created (remember the Sabbath was *made* for man)?

At the end of creation of planet earth and this solar system.

What was happening in the rest of the universe during that week?

War—what kind of war and over what?

And there was **war** in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Revelation 12:7-9

The Greek translated “war” is **πόλεμος** [*polemos* /**pol**-em-os/], from which we get polemic—it is a war of words, a war of ideas. And Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44).

And what has been the focus or target of Satan's lies and where is this war fought?

For though we live in the world, we do not **wage war** as the world does.⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to

¹ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up **against the knowledge of God**, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.
2Corinthians 10:3-5.

The war is over the truth about God—whether we can trust God, whether God is worthy of our love, devotion, loyalty.

God wants our love, trust, loyalty and devotion—can any being get this from another by threat, by coercion, by infliction of punishment? In fact, what happens to love, trust, loyalty and devotion when one threatens and coerces another? Love and trust are broken and rebellion ensues.

So, if Satan could get intelligent beings to believe God is coercive, threatening, the source of inflicted pain, suffering, torture and death then love and trust would break down and rebellion against God ensue.

How could Satan get intelligent beings to conclude this about God? By alleging God's laws are not the design protocols the Creator built life to operate upon, but instead function no differently than the rules enacted by human beings—imperial laws that require the ruling authority to inflict punishment for disobedience.

Then how does the Sabbath fit in?

What does it say about God, that in the context of an assault on His right to rule, rather than using His power to force all beings to bow to Him, He instead creates a day of freedom to think?

And after six days of overwhelming display of creative power, the Godhead says to all the watching beings, "You have heard the allegations against us, you have seen the evidence we have just given, now universe—We rest our case! Take 24 hours aside and think for yourselves, come to your own conclusions and decide who you are going to trust."

Days one through six of creation week we learn God has incredible power, but God doesn't want His intelligent creatures to be intimidated, to be afraid, to follow Him because of power. God wants His creatures to love Him, trust Him, and be devoted to Him in loyal admiration. Thus, after six days of creation, God created a day of freedom, **a day where God stops using power** and steps back giving His creatures space and time to consider and think. Day seven reveals the character of the One who wields the power: God presented evidence (truth), in love, while leaving His creatures free to decide for themselves. No coercion, to intimidation, no pressure—freedom!

Then what is the Sabbath commandment about? It is about how one lives their life—in harmony with God and His design for life—do we present truth in love and leave others free or do we use imperial rules and coerce others with threats of punishment?

All week long we are to *Remember the Sabbath to keep ourselves holy*. We are to be beings who



present truth in love while leaving others free. Only those who practice these principles of God in their lives are true Sabbath keepers. Those who crucified Christ had the right day of the week, but did not have God's principles written into their characters. They were not Sabbath keepers.

With this in mind we realize God is Creator and His laws are the protocols upon which all life is built to operate. As the Creator of time God built into time a day for human health, holiness, growth, development; a day of evidence to reveal truth about how God governs. Every seven days every human being passes through this day, this reminder, this piece of evidence, this opportunity for healing, growth, renewal, transformation, contemplation, and freedom from the lies about God.

We can only experience these blessings if we throw off the lies about God and His law and accept His design protocols for life. But, if we insist on viewing the Sabbath as a "test of obedience" as a rule enacted by a powerful potentate who is watching to see if we break his rule, then the Sabbath becomes, not a sign of godliness, but a mark of beastliness.

The historic two days of worship within Christianity—Sabbath and Sunday—stand as two banners, signs, flags, marks, pennants that represent two divergent systems of governing.

Just as the US Flag, the grand old Stars and Stripes, is a symbol or sign of the United States of America so these two days of worship are signs of two different systems of governing. However, the flag is not the reality for which it stands. The US flag is only a symbol of the USA. And a person can wave the flag of America while being an enemy of the US. During WWII German soldiers donned American uniforms with the US flag and infiltrated American lines to sow discord and disrupt the US war effort. Just because someone waves the flag doesn't mean they support what the flag actually stands for.

Likewise, with Sabbath and Sunday, these two days are signs of two different systems of governing. The Sabbath is a day of rest by its creation; it was *made* by God for this purpose at the end of creation week. The Sabbath is an evidence of design law—truth, presented in love while leaving others free—and is a sign of God's method of governing.

Sunday, however, became a day of rest by legislative action, by human authorities making rules. Therefore, Sunday is a mark of imperialism, of law and government that functions like sinful humans—imposed rules that require infliction of punishment for disobedience.

But these days of worship, with their origins establishing their significance, are just like the US flag—symbols, signs, marks—they are not the governments they represent. So, a person could be a Sabbath keeper, but practice the imposed law model and teach that Sabbath breaking requires God to inflict punishment on the violator; that person would be like the German soldiers described above, infiltrating God's church to sow discord and confusion. They would not be on God's team, but actually promoting the methods of the beast. These religious traitors to God's kingdom would be most powerfully exemplified by the Sabbath keepers who crucified the Lord of the Sabbath.



Conversely, a person who worships on Sunday, but promotes truth in love while leaving others free is promoting the principles of the Sabbath and is on God's team.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, "Moreover, the picture..." Where does Jesus intercede?

If the lamps represent the church, and the High Priest represents Jesus and the High Priest trims the wick of the lamp so it burns more brightly, and we are the light of God in this dark world, then where is Jesus interceding?

When you think of Jesus's intercessions in the heavenly sanctuary do you think of your heart and mind, cutting away the lies, bad habits, misunderstandings, unhealthy longings, so that we will burn more brightly for God's kingdom? If we do not think this way why not?

Because we have been lied to and told God's law is like human law, imposed rules that require judicial oversight. Therefore, our heavenly High Priest is NOT interceding in our hearts and minds, but in a heavenly courtroom with God in order to protect us from the heavenly judge. What does such an idea do in OUR minds and hearts? It incites fear, doubt, insecurity, and obstructs the growth of love and goodness. Thus the light within us, the light of heavenly truth and love is hidden or extinguished in this false legal system.

One of God's laws is the law of worship, by beholding we are changed. When we accept lies about God and view Him in Satan's mold we become more authoritarian, less compassionate and more willing to use beastly methods of coercion.

With whom is our High Priest interceding?

When we reject the imposed law lie and return to design law—God intercedes in three places:

- Gen 3, intercedes in our hearts to break up the unity sinful humans would have with Satan and fallen angels. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman..."
- He intercedes with the principalities and powers of darkness, protective hedge (Elisha, Job etc.)
- He interceded in the natural course of what sin would do to humanity, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." 2Cor 5:21

Then what do we do with statements like this one, because those who prefer the human imposed law view and falsely believe Jesus must plead to his Father for us, will throw statements like this at you:

In the sacrificial offering on every altar was seen a Redeemer. With the cloud of incense arose from every contrite heart the prayer that God would accept their offerings as showing faith in



the coming Saviour. **Our Saviour has come and shed his blood as a sacrifice, and now he pleads that blood before his Father in the sanctuary in heaven. It is now, as anciently, only through the merits of that blood that the transgressor of God's law can find pardon.** It is by exercising repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. {RH, March 2, 1886 par. 11}

What do we believe the sanctuary in heaven is constructed out of? Do we believe Jesus's words in Revelation that the lampstands are the churches? Then He pleads His blood before His Father in the churches?

If the Holy Spirit leads a person to promote a message, will that message disagree with Jesus and what Jesus taught?

Jesus said:

In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf.
²⁷ No, the Father himself loves you... John 16:26,27

Do we believe Jesus? Are there more texts to support what Jesus said here?

- Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. Jn 14:9
- I and the Father are one." John 10:30
- For God so loved the world...John 3:16

Does Jesus need to plead with the Father? Does the Father need some convincing in order to save us?

Who needs to be convinced? We do!

Jesus said:

"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. **He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears,** and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will bring glory to me **by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.** Jn 16:12-14

What is being described?

To whom is the Holy Spirit listening? If the Holy Spirit is not speaking on His own, then for whom is He speaking? Jesus! And what is another metaphor for the Holy Spirit? Oil and where do we find the oil? In the lampstands, which represent what?

Then, if Jesus is in heavenly sanctuary before God pleading—to whom is He pleading? To you and me! The Holy Spirit takes the pleas of Christ and brings them to your heart and mind—Jesus, via the Holy Spirit, knocks on the door to your heart, pleading to you for you to let Him in to heal and restore

you to righteousness.

Biblical evidence?

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. 2 The Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?”

3 Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. 4 The angel said to those who were standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes.”

Then he said to Joshua, “See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you.”

5 Then I said, “Put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood by. Zech 3:1-5

Notice, Satan accuses—to whom is Satan accusing?

Does God listen to what Satan says? Does God get confused by Satan’s arguments and need Jesus there to present the truth in order to get it right? Does God say to Jesus, “Wow thank you Son, I almost believed what Satan was saying, if you hadn’t been here to present the truth I wouldn’t have been able to know it?”

Who does get confused by Satan’s arguments, allegations, lies? Who listens to the devil and gets discouraged, guilt ridden, overcome with shame such that they think they are beyond salvation, beyond healing, too sinful, too awful for God to love and for God to save? Human beings! We are the ones to whom Satan makes allegations—then to whom is Christ pleading the power of His blood, the power of His grace, the power of His goodness, the power of the gospel? To you and to me!

So, one of the founders of the SDA church:

Through the plan of salvation, **Jesus is breaking Satan's hold upon the human family and rescuing souls from his power.** All the hatred and malignity of the archrebel is stirred as he beholds the evidence of Christ's supremacy, and with fiendish power and cunning he works to wrest from Him the remnant of the children of men who have accepted His salvation. {LHU 234.2}

He leads men into skepticism, causing them to lose confidence in God and to separate from His love; he tempts them to break His law, and then he claims them as his captives and contests the right of Christ to take them from him. He knows that those who seek God earnestly for pardon and grace will obtain it; **therefore he presents their sins *before them to discourage them*.** He is constantly seeking occasion against those who are trying to obey God.



Even their best and most acceptable services he seeks to make appear corrupt. **By countless devices, the most subtle and the most cruel, he endeavors to secure their condemnation.** [by whom? Whom does Satan seek to get us condemned? Is it not in our own minds, that we conclude we are beyond salvation, too sinful to be loved?] Man cannot meet these charges himself. In his sin-stained garments, confessing his guilt, he stands before God. **But Jesus our Advocate presents an effectual plea in behalf of all who by repentance and faith have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. He pleads their cause and vanquishes their accuser by the mighty arguments of Calvary.** [To whom is Jesus pleading? Who needs to have the allegations of Satan refuted? Who needs to believe that God loves them and Jesus' righteousness is sufficient for them? Does God need to be persuaded that Jesus' righteousness is sufficient to save a sinner? Who doubts? It is you and me that need to hear Jesus' plea!] His perfect obedience to God's law, even unto the death of the cross, has given Him all power in heaven and in earth, and He claims of His Father mercy and reconciliation for guilty man. [notice now to whom Jesus speaks] **To the accuser of His people He declares: "'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.' These are the purchase of My blood, brands plucked from the burning."** Those who rely upon Him in faith receive the comforting assurance: "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." [to whom is Jesus pleading? He rebukes the accuser and pleads for us not to listen to his lies and to trust in Him!] All that have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness will stand before Him as chosen and faithful and true. Satan has no power to pluck them out of the hand of Christ. . . . **We cannot answer the charges of Satan against us. Christ alone can make an effectual plea in our behalf. He is able to silence the accuser with arguments founded not upon our merits, but on His own** (Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 470-472). [To whom does Christ's plea need to effect? you and me!]

Jesus pleads before the Father, carrying out the Father's purpose to save sinners, the Holy Spirit listens to Christ and works in you and me communicating the love, grace and pleas of Christ to you and me to win us back to trust, so we will open the door to our hearts and let Him save us from fear and selfishness!

Read last paragraph, "Jesus identified Himself..." What are the keys to death and the grave? Why does Jesus's death and resurrection hold the power over death and the grave?

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. Heb 2:14,15 NIV84

What does this mean and how is it related to Christ's victory and the keys to death and the grave?

- What is life eternal? John 17:3: live eternal = knowing God
- Then what is eternal death? Not knowing God
- Then what is Satan's power of death? Lies about God that we believe, which results in broken love/trust and inciting fear and selfishness-the carnal drives, also known as the law of sin and death



- Then how does Christ's death and resurrection gain the keys to death and the grave and have the authority to overrule death?
 - Christ revealed truth to destroy lies, thus destroying Satan's power and winning all who accept the truth about God He reveals back to trust and
 - Christ developed a perfect sinless human character restoring God's design law of love back into humanity while simultaneously destroying, in His humanity, the infection of fear and selfishness. Thus, He arises with a perfect humanity that becomes the source of salvation for all who obey Him. Those won to trust experience the infusion of Christ's perfection and have the infection of fear and selfishness removed.

The keys are the actual elements that are required by the reality of God's character and how He built life to operate. It isn't a legal achievement, but an actual accomplishing of what is necessary for death to be defeated—destroying the cause of death—lies, fear and selfishness—in all who trust Him.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson points out the literal and symbolic nature of the seven churches in Revelation that there is a:

- Historical application to the churches in John's day
- Prophetic application to periods of time corresponding to each church
- Universal application that some people will identify with one of each of these messages no matter what time they exist

THURSDAY

Read the message to the church of Ephesus, from *The Remedy*:

¹"Write to the messenger to my recovering children in the church in Ephesus: This message comes from Jesus, who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven lampstands.² I know you—your choices, actions, works, determination, and commitment. I know that your hearts are repulsed by wickedness in humanity, and that you have examined those who claim to be my ambassadors but are not; and you rightly determined them to be false.³ I know that you have stayed true, revealing my character of love despite persecution, and have not given up.

⁴"Yet I have diagnosed you with one serious problem: You have let go of your first love.⁵ I implore you, remember the pinnacle of purity from which you have fallen! Turn back to your first love and practice again the methods you did then. If you do not turn back, the light of truth will be lost to you and your minds will be darkened.⁶ To your advantage, you have hated the hedonistic practices of the Nicolaitans that so damage the mind—which I also hate.



⁷ "Those whose minds are open to truth will understand what the Spirit reveals to the churches. Those who overcome—complete the treatment and are renewed in love—will eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

thoughts?

What contributes to love waning?

Read story beginning page 77 in *The God-Shaped Heart*

Linda was eager to be married, to have someone special to spend her life with, but there were not many prospects on the horizon. Then one day she met Herman. He treated her so nicely. He opened the door for her, held her hand as they walked, and pulled her chair out as she sat down. After months of courtship, Herman proposed. Joyfully, she immediately said yes, and they were married.

For the honeymoon Herman took her to a very nice place. They had a wonderful time, but all too quickly the honeymoon was over. Their first morning home Linda was awakened early at 5 a.m. by a bright light. She opened her eyes and there stood Herman saying, "Rise and shine. The honeymoon is over, and we need to get down to real life."

She noticed he was holding a piece of paper in his hand, and he presented to her the first of many lists to come. He had spelled out in great detail her responsibilities in two-week segments.

March 1–14:

5:30 rise and shower

6:00 begin breakfast; see attached menu

6:15 awaken Hermie-cuddles with a gentle kiss and turn on his shower

6:45 serve breakfast (do not forget grapefruit)

7:15 begin breakfast cleanup while husband brushes teeth

7:25 meet Hermie-cuddles at the door with appropriate jacket (be sure to pay attention to the weather), and say good-bye with a smile and a kiss

7:30 finish breakfast cleanup

8:00 free time

8:15 housecleaning; see attached cleaning supply list and detailed instructions

M—north rooms

T—east rooms

W—south rooms

TH—west rooms

F—the garage



11:00 balance checkbook
12:00 lunch, whatever you like except marked items; check list
12:30 miscellaneous duties

M—car maintenance and wash car
T—dry cleaning and banking
W—shopping
TH—wash windows
F—yard work

3:30 dinner prep; see attached menu
4:30 meet husband at door with kiss and hang up his coat
5:00 serve dinner
5:45 dinner cleanup
6:15 free time; see list of suggestions
6:45 draw Hermie-cuddles's bath
7:00 do next day's ironing
7:45 hand husband towel as he exits bath
8:00 neck and back massage for the man of your dreams
9:00 lights out, pleasant dreams sweetheart

Linda was given a new list with slight variations every two weeks without fail. As the years dragged on—and they were dragging—ten years into the relationship Hermie-cuddles dropped dead of an unknown cause. Linda's first reaction was to praise God! She didn't know whether to rejoice or grieve.

She made a vow that she would never, ever, get married again. But after three years of being single, she met a guy named Michael. He was like Herman in some ways. He opened the door for a lady to walk through. He was polite and courteous. He pulled out her chair as she sat and enjoyed holding her hand. And she kept telling herself, "No way, no way, no way." Then one day Michael popped the question, and she said yes.

They had a wonderful honeymoon. The first day back she woke up with a start at 5:30 a.m. and saw Michael standing at the end of the bed with a piece of paper in his hand. Immediately, she jumped into a karate stance, yelled "no way," and yanked the paper from him ripping it in two. Michael, with a sad and surprised look, said, "Linda that was a poem I wrote for you after you fell asleep last night."

As his words sank in, she felt bad about her reaction. She picked up the pieces and read his beautiful expression of love, and it broke her heart. While she was reading, Michael came in and served her breakfast in bed. And no list was forthcoming. Ten years passed being married



to this wonderful man. One spring day while cleaning in the attic she came across an old shoebox filled with lists given to her by Herman the horrible.

She pulled out one of the lists and began to read. The strangest realization came over her. She said quietly to herself, “Wow, I do all of these things for Michael, and I never think about it.”

What happened to Linda’s love? Is there a lesson for us in the history of Christianity? What happens when we replace design law with a list of rules?

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

February 2-3, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking Christ’s Church of Oronogo, MO.

February 22-March 9, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be in Australia speaking in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Adelaide, Avondale, Sydney, Livingston, Perth, and Melbourne.

April 3-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Sophia Bulgaria.



The Book of Revelation Lesson 3 1Q 2019

Jesus' Messages to the Seven Churches

SABBATH

Let's start with Ephesus which was in last week's lesson:

Read the message to the church of Ephesus, from *The Remedy*:

¹"Write to the messenger to my recovering children in the church in Ephesus: This message comes from Jesus, who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven lampstands:² I know you—your choices, actions, works, determination, and commitment. I know that your hearts are repulsed by wickedness in humanity, and that you have examined those who claim to be my ambassadors but are not; and you rightly determined them to be false.³ I know that you have stayed true, revealing my character of love despite persecution, and have not given up.

⁴"Yet I have diagnosed you with one serious problem: You have let go of your first love.⁵ I implore you, remember the pinnacle of purity from which you have fallen! Turn back to your first love and practice again the methods you did then. If you do not turn back, the light of truth will be lost to you and your minds will be darkened.⁶ To your advantage, you have hated the hedonistic practices of the Nicolaitans that so damage the mind—which I also hate.

⁷"Those whose minds are open to truth will understand what the Spirit reveals to the churches. Those who overcome—complete the treatment and are renewed in love—will eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

What do the lampstands represent? What contributes to love waning?

- lies believed break the circle of love and trust—were there any lies about God being told in the first century of Christianity?
- what happens to love when actions become legal requirements?
- can injury, betrayal, hardship damage love?

Why did Jesus say that if they don't turn back the light of truth they have will be lost and their minds will be darkened?

Is it that God uses His divine power to make a mind misunderstand and lose the wisdom, knowledge, understanding of God's kingdom that the person once had? Or, is this a design law—if you don't use it you lose it? If you exercise circuits that promote falsehood, selfishness, fear, close the mind to light and truth what happens in that person? Because truth is unfolding if we stop advancing in truth what we once understood will become perverted with lies.



Consider this quote from the book *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*:

The same law obtains in the spiritual as in the natural world. [Now this author understood design law and understood that violations of God's law are violations of the protocols upon which life is built. There is no legal courtroom in the natural world and neither is there a legal courtroom in heaven in which legal punishments are being tallied up to be inflicted by a heavenly judge. That view is a lie.] He who abides in darkness will at last lose the power of vision. He is shut in by a deeper than midnight blackness; and to him the brightest noontide can bring no light. He "walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." 1 John 2:11. **Through persistently cherishing evil, willfully disregarding the pleadings of divine love, the sinner loses the love for good, the desire for God, the very capacity to receive the light of heaven. [What is happening? Is God using power to inflict this? Or is this the natural result of the choices of the person?] The invitation of mercy is still full of love, the light is shining as brightly as when it first dawned upon his soul; but the voice falls on deaf ears, the light on blinded eyes. [Did God change or is love and light still flowing from God? Then what happened?] {MB 92.3}**

No soul is ever finally deserted of God, given up to his own ways, so long as there is any hope of his salvation. "Man turns from God, not God from him." Our heavenly Father follows us with appeals and warnings and assurances of compassion, **until further opportunities and privileges would be wholly in vain. The responsibility rests with the sinner.** By resisting the Spirit of God today, he prepares the way for a second resistance of light when it comes with mightier power. **Thus he passes on from one stage of resistance to another, until at last the light will fail to impress, and he will cease to respond in any measure to the Spirit of God.** Then even "the light that is in thee" has become darkness. **The very truth we do know has become so perverted as to increase the blindness of the soul. {MB 93.1}**

What happens to the light if we refuse to move forward in advancing truth? Why does it happen?

SUNDAY

Read Revelation 2:8-11 from *The Remedy*:

"To the messenger to my recovering children in the church in Smyrna, write:

This message comes from Jesus, who is the Beginning and the Ending, the Origin and Completion; who died, but in so doing destroyed death and now lives again:⁹ I know about your suffering and poverty, but in reality, you are incredibly rich in what heaven values! I know that you have been misrepresented by those who claim to be loyal to God but really are not; they have enthroned Satan in their hearts—their spirit temples.¹⁰ Don't fear the coming trials. Satan will put some of you in prison, and your faith will be tried; and some will be persecuted for ten days. Trust me—even if threatened with death—and I will give you eternal life.



¹¹"Those whose minds are open to truth will understand what the Spirit reveals to the churches. Those who prevail by completing the treatment and by being renewed in love cannot be harmed by the second, eternal death.

The messages to the seven churches have 3 applications:

- Historic—to the churches in John's day
- Prophetic—to time periods
- Universal—to Christians in every age

The prophetic period of Ephesus was CE 31 to around 100 CE, and the prophetic period of Smyrna was 100 – 313 CE.

But as we consider the "time" of these periods we should remember that the messages to the 7 churches were not time prophecies, so the years suggested when these eras applied are general and not specific.

Regarding the 10 days of persecution, the lesson utilizes the prophetic application of 10 years of persecution under Diocletian which ended in 313 when Constantine legalized Christianity. However, other commentators suggest that because the prisons are literal, Satan is literal, that the time period should be literal and apply it to the historic church of Smyrna during the first century CE.

But what is most likely is that, as in many places in the Bible it is not either/or, but both.

What is the message to Smyrna that applies to us today?

- Jesus is the Creator and Savior who has destroyed the cause of death and has the remedy that provides eternal life for all who trust Him
- If you value what heaven values—which is—Godly character, principles and methods—then you will be misrepresented and mistreated
- We don't need to fear earthly trials as long as we trust Jesus

Read Revelation 2:12-18 from *The Remedy*:

¹²"To the messenger to my recovering children in the church in Pergamum, write:

This message comes from Jesus—the source of truth as sharp as a double-edged sword:¹³I know you live, where Satan has enthroned himself, yet you have continued to live in harmony with my character, methods, and principles. You did not reject me, even when Antipas, my trustworthy witness, was executed in the place where Satan lives.

¹⁴"Yet I have diagnosed a few serious problems: Some of you are like Balaam, seeking to empower and enrich yourselves. You have infected the Remedy with appeasement theology, and you promote sexual practices deviant from my design in Eden.¹⁵ And as if this isn't bad



enough, you have those who advocate the hedonistic practices of the Nicolaitans, which destroy the mind.¹⁶ Reject these falsehoods and return to my methods! Otherwise, I will come and fight against these distortions with the sword of truth spoken from my mouth.

¹⁷"Those whose minds are open to truth will understand what the Spirit reveals to the churches. To everyone who prevails by completing the treatment and being renewed in love, I will give some of the hidden manna—my nature and character of love. I will recreate them in my likeness, with their own unique individuality purified by my character. They will be like pure-white stones, each stamped with their own unique self, signed by me.

What are the lessons for today from the message to Pergamum?

- Be careful not to fall into the trap of Balaam seeking to empower oneself by working against God's plan yet claiming to be God's representative
- Be careful not to pervert God's design for life
- We are promised the character of Christ to be renewed in heart and mind and sealed by God if we trust Him

Read the fourth paragraph, "The Christians in Pergamum..." What does it mean to compromise our faith?

- Is it a compromise of our faith to have faith in the wrong thing? Or is that a corruption of our faith?
- Is it a compromise to be deceived into a lie—or is a compromise when one willingly settles for something less than the truth they know?
- Is it a compromise to go along with something we know is wrong?
- What is the true standard of righteousness—to be able to tell if we are compromising our faith?

Consider this quote from *Our High Calling*:

Our Redeemer testifies: "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." Revelation 3:8. Through this open door into the temple of God, **we see the royal law, deposited in the ark of the testament. Through this open door, light shines from that holy, just, and good law, presenting to man the true standard of righteousness**, that he may make no mistake in **the formation of a character that will meet the requirements of God.** [why does God require a righteous character? Because that is how He built life to exist] Sin is condemned by that law; we must put it away. Pride and selfishness can find no place in the character without crowding out Him who was meek and lowly of heart. {OHC 138.2}

The law of God is the standard by which character is to be tested; if we erect a standard to suit ourselves, and attempt to follow a criterion of our own devising, we shall utterly fail to secure heaven at last. . . . {OHC 138.3} [What law lens are you thinking through when you hear quotes like this, design or imposed? Is the law which is the standard of character a list of rules without inherent consequence or is it the protocol upon which life is built?]



The mind must yield obedience to the royal law of liberty, the law which the Spirit of God impresses upon the heart, and makes plain to the understanding. [Can an imposed law change the heart and provide genuine freedom while enlightening the mind? No! Only God's design realities can!] **The expulsion of sin must be the act of the soul itself, in calling into exercise its noblest powers.** [How can the soul expel sin? The remedy to sin is not found in the soul itself, the power to overcome sin is not found in the soul itself, so how can the soul expel sin? Note the key work is the **act**, or action, of the soul to expel sin and what is that act or action? It is the choice to reject the lie, to say yes to the truth, to surrender to Jesus, thus we are required to think to reason, to come to a conclusion—is God like Jesus revealed or is He like Satan alleges? What kind of law does God use to govern His universe?] **The only freedom a finite will can enjoy, consists in coming into harmony with the will of God, complying with the conditions that make man a partaker of the divine nature.** {OHC 138.4} [What are those conditions? It is the conditions of God's reality—how He constructed His universe to operate, which is design law. When we substitute His law of love, liberty and truth for human imposed law then we become slaves, not free beings—just like the Pharisees in Christ's day!]

The law of God given from Sinai is a copy of the mind and will of the Infinite God. [Does this mean the 10 commandments were always in existence, or the principles of love and liberty were always in existence and when humanity became sinful God distilled these principles into a form specifically for the need of sinful humans? From the same author "The law of God existed before the creation of man or else Adam could not have sinned. **After the transgression of Adam the principles of the law were not changed, but were definitely arranged and expressed to meet man in his fallen condition.**" {ISM 230.1} It is sacredly revered by the holy angels. **Obedience to its requirements will perfect Christian character, and restore man, through Christ, to his condition before the Fall.** [Is this true? When we understand design law it makes perfect sense—a doctor cannot get patients well in violations of the laws of health. All violations of the laws of health injure and undermine life. However, harmony with the laws of health heal. We cannot avoid the damage for violating God's law, likewise we cannot avoid the blessings for harmonizing with His design law!] The sins forbidden in the law could never find place in heaven. {OHC 138.5}

It was the love of God to man that prompted Him to express His will in the ten precepts of the Decalogue. . . . God has given man a complete rule of life in His law. Obeyed, he shall live by it, through the merits of Christ. Transgressed, it has power to condemn. **The law sends men to Christ, and Christ points them back to the law.** [The law diagnoses us as sick, which sends us to Christ, who procured the remedy, and in trust we open the heart and have our desires, motives, attitudes change and we receive the indwelling Spirit, then we begin to choose differently and as we choose differently we receive greater enlightenment, and transformation which comes from Christ through the working of the Spirit!] {OHC 138.6}

But Satan doesn't want us to understand the truth about God's law, he wants us to believe the lie that it is like human law, a legal system that requires imposition of punishments and legal payments. Consider this insight from the book *Prophets and Kings*:



In Isaiah's day the spiritual understanding of mankind was dark through misapprehension of God. **Long had Satan sought to lead men to look upon their Creator as the author of sin and suffering and death.** [How? By teaching them that sin requires punishment and God in order to be just must execute sinners] Those whom he had thus deceived, imagined that God was hard and exacting. **They regarded Him as watching to denounce and condemn, unwilling to receive the sinner so long as there was a legal excuse for not helping him.** [What is the lie? What is the common view taught in Christianity today?] **The law of love by which heaven is ruled had been misrepresented by the archdeceiver as a restriction upon men's happiness, a burdensome yoke from which they should be glad to escape. He declared that its precepts could not be obeyed and that the penalties of transgression were bestowed arbitrarily.** p. 311 [What is the law that heaven is ruled by? The law of love and what kind of law is this? Design law, and are there penalties for breaking it? Yes, but how are they bestowed? They are the natural results of stepping out of harmony with how God constructed reality to exist. What kind of law has arbitrary penalties? Imposed human law—which is what Christianity has been infected with and why we have failed to prepare people for Christ's return!]

MONDAY

Read Revelation 2:18-29 from *The Remedy*:

¹⁸"To the messenger to my recovering children in the church in Thyatira, write: This message is from Jesus—the Son of God—whose eyes shine brightly like a fire, and whose feet glow like metal in a furnace.¹⁹ I know the choices you have made, your love and devotion, your service and dedication, and how your healing progresses as you are achieving more now than when you first took the Remedy.

²⁰"Yet I have diagnosed this problem: You have accepted the teachings of Jezebel, which make me look like Baal—a being who imposes law, inflicts torture, and must be appeased. Her teachings mislead people into internalizing pagan ideas about God—including God being like Baal and requiring bloody payments—and thus committing spiritual adultery by giving their hearts to a false god.²¹ I have given her time to turn away from the lies about God, but she refuses;²² so I will let her reap the suffering that comes from operating outside my design for life. And all those who accept her view of God commit adultery with her and will suffer terribly unless they reject the lies and return to the truth about God and his methods of love.²³ I will destroy her offshoots—then all my children will know that I diagnose perfectly the condition of hearts and minds—and I will provide to each person what is in accord with their own choice.²⁴ Now for the rest of you in Thyatira: Those who have rejected the lies about me and refused to believe that I am like Satan alleges—no other burden will come upon you;²⁵ just hold true to what you currently know until I return.



²⁶Everyone who prevails by completing the treatment and lives in harmony with my methods of love until the end, I will free from the power and authority of the nations.

²⁷He will intervene with an unbreakable shepherd's rod; he will destroy the nation's ability to coerce and deceive, like iron crushing pottery.' I will give them the same power to break free as I received from my Father.²⁸I will give them the morning star—I will give them all of myself.

²⁹"Those whose minds are open to truth will understand what the Spirit reveals to the churches.

What are the lessons for us today?

- God is working through Jesus to heal all who trust Him, but God has been misrepresented in the church to be like Baal
- We are to reject this false version of God and stay true to Jesus and we will receive His indwelling and transforming presence

The general time period covered in the prophetic application is 538 CE until 1565 CE.

What does the name Jezebel refer to in this prophecy?

Jezebel was queen of Baal worship, and who was Baal?

- Son of El
- God of weather, rain, lightning which refreshed the earth and brought the harvest
- Fought against the leviathan the great serpent
- Fought against Mot the God of death and in this battle dies and rises again to bring life to the land

So what was wrong with Baal worship? Baal required appeasement, a blood payment in order to appease anger and bring blessings.

Baal became:

- Zeus to the Greeks
- Jupiter to the Romans
- Thor to the Norse
- Jesus Christ to Christians who worship an angry god who requires the blood of a human sacrifice to propitiate his wrath

Thus the prophecy to Thyatira, that during the Middle and Dark Ages the imperial law lie become orthodoxy within Christianity and the view of God that God functions like Baal would take root. And that lie has yet to be eliminated from Christianity and is the final lie to be confronted and rejected in order to complete the Reformation.



TUESDAY

Read Revelation 3:1-6 from *The Remedy*:

¹"To the messenger to my children in the church in Sardis, write:

This message is from Jesus, who directs the seven intelligent beings standing before the throne of God, and the seven messengers who are—like bright stars—shining forth the truth: I know your choices. You appear to be alive—living in harmony with the law of love—but you are dead in fear and self-centeredness.²Wake up before it is too late! Heal what remains viable but is about to die if you don't take action soon, for despite all your rituals and religious acts, you are devoid of love in the sight of my Father.³Remember the Remedy you have received: accept it, apply it to your lives, and turn away from the ways of the world. But if you refuse to wake up to your condition and embrace the truth, you will be unaware of what is happening, and my coming will be like a thief's—you will not know the time I will come to you.

⁴"Yet you still have a few faithful people in Sardis whose characters have not been stained with selfishness. They will walk by my side, dressed in the perfection of my character of love—pure and white—for they are healed.⁵Everyone who prevails by completing the treatment and lives in harmony with my methods of love until the end will also have character perfect and pure. I will never remove them from the book of life, but proclaim to my Father and his angels that they have been completely healed.⁶Those whose minds are open to truth will understand what the Spirit reveals to the churches.

What are the lessons for us today?

- God wants to heal and transform us in heart, mind and character
- If we refuse to trust Him He lets us go to die of our terminal condition
- Religious organization and structure do not save and often obstruct God's healing plan

The prophetic time period application is from 1565 CE – 1740 CE, the post-Reformation period.

The SDA Bible Commentary has the following regarding the time period of the church in Sardis:

Some decades after the beginning of the Reformation the new churches experienced a period of violent doctrinal controversy. **Eventually, differences of opinion were settled by the adoption of definitive creeds that tended to discourage the search for additional truth. By a similar process the Roman Catholic Church, in the early centuries of its history, had crystallized much of its theology. Protected by the power and prestige of the state, and ensconced within the shelter of rigid creedal confessions, the national churches of the Protestant world generally came to content themselves with the form of godliness without its power.** Another important factor that contributed to apathy toward spiritual things was the rise of rationalism in the 17th and 18th centuries. Under the impact of scientific discovery, many scholars came to believe that natural law was sufficient to account for the workings of



the universe. **Often they concluded that God's chief function in relation to this world is only that of a first cause, and that since His initial act of creation, the world has functioned more or less independently of Him.** Thinking men who found the avenues of independent theological thought closed to them by the rigid formulas of Protestant orthodoxy turned, in some instances, to the new philosophical rationalism. Although rationalism produced much high idealism and commendable thinking in such fields as political science and humanitarianism, its presuppositions when applied to religion went far to encourage the spiritual coldness that characterized much of Protestantism in the centuries following the Reformation.¹

First, what is suggested as shutting down growth in advancing truth in the churches? Creeds with centralized authority to enforce those creeds—and what is happening in the SDA church now? Not only has the SDA developed its own creed, it is now in the process of centralizing authority to enforce its creeds.

What about rationalism—what is wrong with rationalism and how is it NOT what we teach in this class about God's design law?

Rationalism has a Creator who built reality and then left it alone to run on its own upon the laws of nature without God involved any more. This is quite distinct from understanding that all God's design laws are the outflow and working of God's divine presence and purpose through His universe.

From EGW:

Upon all created things is seen the impress of the Deity. Nature testifies of God. The susceptible mind, brought in contact with the miracle and mystery of the universe, cannot but recognize the working of infinite power. **Not by its own inherent energy does the earth produce its bounties,** and year by year continue its motion around the sun. **An unseen hand guides the planets in their circuit of the heavens. A mysterious life pervades all nature--a life that sustains the unnumbered worlds throughout immensity,** that lives in the insect atom which floats in the summer breeze, that wings the flight of the swallow and feeds the young ravens which cry, that brings the bud to blossom and the flower to fruit. {Ed 99.1}

The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man. The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. **The laws that govern the heart's action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds. Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action.** For all the objects of His creation the condition is the same--a life sustained by receiving the life of God, a life exercised in harmony with the Creator's will. To transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place

¹ Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1980). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 7, p. 756). Review and Herald Publishing Association.



one's self out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin. {Ed 99.2}

It is God's plan **that every part of His government shall depend on every other part, the whole as a wheel within a wheel, working with entire harmony. He moves upon human forces, causing His Spirit to touch invisible chords, and the vibration rings to the extremity of the universe.**--Manuscript 22, 1897. {Ev 93.1}

This is quantum physics described—God the source of life, connected to every aspect of His universe as the life source and energy that sustains it all and only in harmony with Him is there life and health. Thus, we cannot simply by following the laws of nature, separate from the God who created and built nature and sustains its function, find life.

WEDNESDAY

Read Revelation 3:7-13 from *The Remedy*:

⁷"To the messenger to my children in the church in Philadelphia, write:

This message is from Jesus, who is holy and true, and who is the Key from David's line—the door to restoration, which he opens, no one can shut; and the doors he shuts no one can open.⁸ I know your choices. Recognize that I have opened before you a door for your healing, that no one can shut. I know you are exhausted, but you have not given up. You have lived in harmony with my methods and have not rejected my character of love.⁹ But those whose minds have become a sanctuary for Satan—who claim to be my children but are liars, as their characters are like Satan's—I will make them see the truth, and they will fall down at your feet and acknowledge that what I love is my children being healed, like you.¹⁰ Since you have unwaveringly followed my instructions and lived in harmony with my methods, I will heal your characters, and you will have nothing to fear during the difficult time to come upon the world, which will differentiate the true nature of those who live on the earth.

¹¹"I am returning soon. Hold on to the Remedy you have received, and no one will trick you out of eternal life.¹² Everyone who prevails by completing the treatment and lives in harmony with my methods of love until the end, I will make a pillar, a living stone, in the heavenly temple of my God—a community of holy beings. Their connection with God will never be severed and I will write in their beings the character of my God, and they will be marked by me as citizens of the New Jerusalem which is coming down out of heaven from my God. I will also write my name upon their hearts and minds.¹³ Those whose minds are open to truth will understand what the Spirit reveals to the churches.

What are the lessons for us today?

- God's plan of salvation is to heal and restore His character in human beings
- We either become a sanctuary for God and reveal His character of love or a sanctuary for Satan and reveal his character of selfishness



The prophetic application is from 1740 until 1844, the Great Awakening.

What do you think of the open and shut door metaphor?

Is it referring to a literal door made of matter, or a door of ideas, the path of truth, a door in our hearts and minds that we must choose to follow through?

From one of the founders of the SDA church:

I am still a believer in the shut-door theory, but not in the sense in which we at first employed the term or in which it is employed by my opponents. {1SM 63.2}

There was a shut door in Noah's day. There was at that time a withdrawal of the Spirit of God from the sinful race that perished in the waters of the Flood. God Himself gave the shut-door message to Noah: {1SM 63.3} [What kept them off the ark? They shut their hearts to the message of Noah. Their hearts were shut]

"My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (Genesis 6:3). {1SM 63.4}

There was a shut door in the days of Abraham. Mercy ceased to plead with the inhabitants of Sodom, and all but Lot, with his wife and two daughters, were consumed by the fire sent down from heaven. {1SM 63.5} [What caused the condition of things in Sodom? Their hearts were shut to the Spirit of God.]

There was a shut door in Christ's day. The Son of God declared to the unbelieving Jews of that generation, "Your house is left unto you desolate" (Matthew 23:38). {1SM 63.6} [Who caused their house to be left like this? Their hearts and minds were shut to Jesus! Who shut the door to their hearts?]

Looking down the stream of time to the last days, the same infinite power proclaimed through John: {1SM 63.7}

"These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth" (Revelation 3:7). {1SM 63.8} [So what door do you think Revelation is referring to when it says a door opens and a door shuts? Is it not a door of understanding and some accept the light and move forward with Christ and some reject and the light of truth moves on without them.]

I was shown in vision, and I still believe, that there was a shut door in 1844. All who saw the light of the first and second angels' messages and rejected that light, were left in darkness. [they shut the door to their own hearts by rejecting truth] And those who accepted



it and received the Holy Spirit [the door was open to their hearts] which attended the proclamation of the message from heaven, and who afterward renounced their faith and pronounced their experience a delusion, **thereby rejected the Spirit of God, and it no longer pleaded with them.** {1SM 63.9} [they closed the door to their hearts to God's Spirit]

Those who did not see the light, had not the guilt of its rejection. It was only the class who had despised the light from heaven that the Spirit of God could not reach. [the doors of their heart were still open to truth having not decided to reject it] And this class included, as I have stated, both those who refused to accept the message when it was presented to them, and also those who, having received it, afterward renounced their faith. These might have a form of godliness, and profess to be followers of Christ; but having no living connection with God, **they would be taken captive by the delusions of Satan.** [their minds become the synagogue of Satan, i.e. he sets himself up in God's temple...] These two classes are brought to view in the vision--those who declared the light which they had followed a delusion, and the wicked of the world who, having rejected the light, had been rejected of God. No reference is made to those who had not seen the light, and therefore were not guilty of its rejection. {1SM 63.10}

So, what type of door do you think is referred to in Revelation? Is it not the door to our hearts and whether we are lovers of truth and willing to follow it where it leads?

And what is the truth of the Three Angel's? Is it not the truth of God's character of love and design law of love? This is the message God is working through Christ to free us from all the lies about Him and heal us to be able to live in His presence.

THURSDAY

Read Revelation 3:14-22 from *The Remedy*:

¹⁴"To the messenger to my children in the church in Laodicea, write:

This message is from Jesus—the consistent, reliable, faithful and true Witness—who is the origin of God's creation:¹⁵I know your choices. I know that you are neither on fire with love, nor do you appear cold with selfishness. I wish you were either on fire for my kingdom, or clearly opposed to it!¹⁶But because you are a lukewarm mix of cold hearts practicing selfish methods while appearing to be on fire for my kingdom, you misrepresent me and make me sick to my stomach. I am about to vomit you out.¹⁷You claim to be spiritually rich and full of heavenly treasure, thinking you have the truth and are in need of nothing, but you are so self-deceived that you don't realize you are devoid of my character of love. You are decrepit, pathetic, bereft of true godliness, with minds so closed that you can't even comprehend truth. You stand naked and exposed.¹⁸My prescription for you is to exchange your corrupt motives for the gold of godly love purified through fiery trials, so that you can be rich in what heaven values. Exchange your filthy, selfish characters for the perfect character of Christ—pure and white—so that you can cover the shame of your imperfection. And apply the salve of the Holy Spirit to



your minds, so that you can see and understand the reality of your own condition, and that of God's kingdom of love.

¹⁹"It is those whom I love that I diagnose and provide these therapeutic interventions, so take ownership of yourselves: turn away from destruction, and apply the Remedy. ²⁰I am here now! I am standing at the door to your hearts, knocking with truth and love. If any hear my voice and open their hearts, I will come in and commune with them, and they with me.

²¹"Everyone who prevails by completing the treatment, and lives in harmony with my methods of love until the end, will sit enthroned with me—just as I overcame, and sit enthroned with my Father. ²²Those whose minds are open to truth will understand what the Spirit reveals to the churches."

What is the message for us today?

- A form of godliness without heart change is nauseating
- God wants to heal our hearts and minds to be ready to stand in His presence

This prophetic time period is from 1844 until Christ returns.

What do the gold, eye salve and white garment symbolize?

How do we buy them from Jesus?

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

February 2-3, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking Christ's Church of Oronogo, MO.

February 22-March 9, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be in Australia speaking in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Adelaide, Avondale, Sydney, Livingston, Perth, and Melbourne.

April 3-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Sophia Bulgaria.



The Book of Revelation Lesson 4 1Q 2019

Worthy is the Lamb

by Tim Jennings

SABBATH

Read second paragraph, “The vision of chapters 4...” What does this mean, “God’s control of history and of the plan of salvation.”

Does God control history?

In what way does God control history and in what way does God not control history?

Are people puppets on strings that God pulls and makes them do what He wants?

As we read about the rise and fall of nations as foretold in Scripture, does that mean God made it happen this way? Does it mean that the rulers of Babylon had no desire for conquest, for riches, for domination of others, but God inspired and moved on their hearts to incite them to war, pillaging, rape, killing, enslaving and abusing others as all nations did during war?

So, if God did not inspire them to such acts, what do we mean by God being in control of history?

Is there a difference between God being in control of history and God being in control of the plan of salvation? Yes, why? Because the plan of salvation is God’s initiative, God’s action, God’s intervention and thus originates and flows out from God. It is God in governance of Himself.

But what about human history—does God control it? Has God make history happen the way it has happened? Was God in control of Adam and Eve’s rebellion into sin? Was God in control of the violence before the flood and the refusal of all but 8 to get on the ark? Was God in control of David’s seduction of Bathsheba and murder of Uriah? Was God in control of Egypt enslaving the Hebrews?

Consider this quote from EGW in the *SDA Bible Commentary*:

The Lord is regarded as cruel by many in requiring His people to make war with other nations. They say that it is contrary to His benevolent character. But He who made the world, and formed man to dwell upon the earth, **has unlimited control over all the works of His hands**, and it is His right to do as He pleases, and what He pleases with the work of His hands. Man has no right to say to his Maker, Why doest Thou thus? There is no injustice in His character. He is the Ruler of the world, and a large portion of His subjects have rebelled against His authority, and have trampled upon His law. . . . He has used His people as instruments of His wrath, to punish wicked nations, who have vexed them, and seduced them into idolatry (Ibid., 50, 51). {1BC 1117.2}



So, is God in control of the nations? If so, then why not just have the wicked nations be holy nations to start with and avoid all the conflict, war and need for any type of wrath?

Doesn't the fact that nations rebel against God indicate He is not in control of what they are doing?

Then what does it mean he has unlimited control over all the works of His hands?

While God is not in control of what *the people* are doing, He remains in control of all the laws upon which the universe operates, which enables them to do what they do. One of those laws, is the law of liberty—God grants His intelligent beings genuine freedom—even if that freedom is a violation of His design, law, will and purpose.

So, God is in control of reality—the laws and protocols upon which it all operates, but does not control the actual choices of people.

From the same author:

God never forces the will or the conscience; but Satan's constant resort—to gain control of those whom he cannot otherwise seduce—is compulsion by cruelty. Through fear or force he endeavors to rule the conscience, and to secure homage to himself. To accomplish this, he works through both religious and secular authorities, moving them to the enforcement of human laws in defiance of the law of God. {GC88 591.3}

What kind of law is being described that Satan uses to achieve his ends? Imperial, imposed law.

Is there a theology that uses force and fear to rule consciences? Penal Substitution Theology—the god of penal theology uses power to punish, torture, kill and calls it justice, this incites fear and coerces the conscience. Thus, Satan sets himself up in God's temple—the hearts and minds of people—proclaiming himself to be God.

How are we to mature, to grow, to train and teach our children to obey? Are we to teach them to live in an imperial law model, in which they fear breaking a rule lest some punishment be inflicted upon them? To learn the right lists of do's and don'ts so that they no longer think of how reality works, but merely abide by a codified system of conformity?

Consider these quotes:

The discipline [which means education, discipling] of a human being who has reached the years of intelligence should differ from the training of a dumb animal. The beast is taught only submission to its master. For the beast, the master is mind, judgement, and will. This method, sometimes employed in the training of children, makes them little more than automatons. Mind, will, conscience, are under the control of another. {2MCP 707.1}



In matters of conscience the soul must be left untrammelled. No one is to control another's mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think and to follow his own convictions. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). No one has a right to merge his own individuality in that of another. **In all matters where principle is involved, "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind"** (verse 5). **In Christ's kingdom there is no lordly oppression, no compulsion of manner.**--DA 550, 551 (1898). {2MCP 707.3}

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. {DA 466.4}

So, in what way is God in control?

- In control of Himself, His actions, designs, methods and the sustaining of His laws
- Because His laws are the laws upon which reality exist, as people pass beyond the point of responding to the movements of God (truth and love) and God releases them to their choice, they suffer the results of being out of harmony with God and His design for life and ultimately, all deviations from God's design (sin) will be eliminated and God's perfection restored through God's methods of truth, love and freedom.

SUNDAY

Read second and third paragraph, "The apostle looked through..." In Ezekiel 10 we see the throne of God, which is a sapphire throne and below the sapphire throne are cherubim and wheels within wheels.

What does this symbolize?

Remember that the Ten Commandments were initially written on Sapphire:

Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. Exodus 24:9, 10

Note two verses later:

The Lord said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction." Exodus 24:12

Literal reading, "Tablets of THE stone..."



What stone, *the* only stone referenced in the text, which was two verses before, the sapphire stone.

Now, note Numbers 15:37-39:

Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁸ “Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a **blue thread in the tassels of the corners.** ³⁹ And you shall have the **tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them...**

What was the thread to remind them of? God’s commandments! and Why blue thread? Because the 10 Commandments were written on Sapphire, blue stone!

And the commandments were not imposed, imperial laws like humans make, but the communication of the law of love, God’s design law for human health and happiness. It is Satan who has clouded the minds of men to consider that God’s law functions like human law, thus He removes the law of love from religion and replaces it with imperialism.

The Harlot of Revelation:

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

³ So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast *which was* full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ **The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold** and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. ⁵ And on her forehead a name *was* written:

MYSTERY,
BABYLON THE GREAT,
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.
Rev 17:1-5

The false church, the harlot woman is adorned in Purple, Scarlet and Gold:

But the High Priest of God wore four colors:

“They shall take the **gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread**, and the fine linen, ⁶ and they shall make the ephod of **gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread**, and fine woven linen, artistically worked. Exodus 28: 5,6



What color does the Harlot not have? Blue—which means the false church rejects the law of God, which means she rejects the law of love, design law and have imposed law instead.

But note what the breast plate of the High Priest, which contained the 12 stones which represents the peoples of the earth, tied to the heart, the chest of the High Priest, was bound to the High Priest by what?

They shall bind the breastplate by means of its rings to the rings of the ephod, **using a blue cord**, so that it is above the intricately woven band of the ephod, and so that the breastplate does not come loose from the ephod. Exodus 28:28

Which represents the law of love! God's law of love is what binds us to Him, only His design does this.

The false religions of the world, including false Christianity deny God's law of love, they don't deny the Ten Commandments, but teach them as imposed rules rather than principles of love. Thus no blue thread.

So, what does a throne of sapphire represent? God's government of love—and what is the throne above, in other words, what is below the throne? A wheel within a wheel rotating, which are symbolic representations of what? The law of love in action, the principle of giving, the never ending circle of love.

And the cherubim—amongst the wheels symbolic of God's intelligent creatures operating in harmony with His law of love under the governance of God's kingdom of love.

The lesson notes that the central issue in the great controversy between God and Satan is about who has the right to rule.

How has Satan's attack on God's right to rule been advanced? What is the core, underlying issue that Satan alleged in heaven that caused disaffection and led angels and humans into rebellion against God?

Here is a commentary in the book *The Desire of Ages* what do you think?

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. {DA 761.4}



What kind of law requires the infliction of punishment? Imperial/imposed law, the types we sinners make up. Breaking design law does not require punishment, it requires healing lest suffering and death naturally result.

But, if Satan is correct, and God's law does require God to use power to inflict punishment for disobedience, then from where does pain, suffering and death originate? From God, and God is the one from whom we must be protected. This is the lie of Satan.

It violates God's design law of liberty—love can only exist in an atmosphere of freedom. Threaten someone with punishment for not loving you and love is destroyed and rebellion ensues.

Understand this—rebellion from oppression, from coercion, from compelling of conscience, from threat that violate individuality is Godly! Because if we surrender to the oppression, the coercion we will have our individuality destroyed and be unfit for heaven, thus to rebel against such treatment that results in restored liberty and autonomy is Godly.

Consider if someone is drowning you, it is Godly to rebel against that, without seeking to dominate or destroy the other person, and get your head above water. If someone is submerging your individuality under theirs it is Godly to rebel against that treatment and get your freedom back.

This is design law, we cannot avoid the damaging consequences to being drowned, either in water, or under the unhealthy control and domination of another.

Consider this quote from EGW, notice the design law realities described, see if you agree or disagree:

If we mistake the wisdom of man for the wisdom of God we are led astray by the foolishness of man's wisdom. [I would submit the core to human wisdom is imposed law with is authoritarian control—all human systems operate in this way—this is man's wisdom, surrendering to some high authority for fear of punishment] Here is the great danger of many in ----- **They have not an experience for themselves.** They have not been in the habit of prayerfully **considering for themselves**, with unprejudiced, unbiased judgment, questions and subjects that are new and that are ever liable to arise. **They wait to see what others will think.** If these dissent, that is all that is needed to convince them that the subject under consideration is of no account whatever. Although this class is large, it does not change the fact that they are inexperienced and weak-minded **through long yielding to the enemy, and will always be as sickly as babes, walking by others' light, living on others' experience, feeling as others feel, and acting as others act.** They act as though they had not an individuality. **Their identity is submerged in others; they are merely shadows of those whom they think [are] right. Unless these become sensible of their wavering character and correct it, they will all fail of everlasting life; they will be unable to cope with the perils of the last days. They will possess no stamina to resist the devil, for they do not know that it is he. Someone must be at their side to inform them whether a foe or a friend is approaching.** They are



not spiritual, therefore spiritual things are not discerned. They are not wise in those things which relate to the kingdom of God. {2T 129.2}

So, what is God wanting for us and from us? For us to think, to reason with Him, to understand His character, His methods, His principles, His design laws and choose to trust Him and follow Him in how we live. This means we must reject the human law model, the imposed law model, the penal/legal model. This view has darkened the minds of humanity and has prevented the final message of mercy from going to the world. Thus Jesus waits for us to wake up from our slumber and embrace Him and His true kingdom of love.

MONDAY

Read Revelation Chapter 4:6 to 5 from NIV84:

⁶ Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. ⁷ The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. ⁸ Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying:

“Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God Almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come.”

⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

¹¹ “You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being.”

^{5:1} Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. ² And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” ³ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. ⁴ I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. ⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

⁶ Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ He came and took the scroll from the



right hand of him who sat on the throne. ⁸ And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song:

“You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased men for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation.

¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,
and they will reign on the earth.”

¹¹ Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. ¹² In a loud voice they sang:

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!”

¹³ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!”

¹⁴ The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

What is being described?

Jesus is coming to take the throne, be recognized as worthy to rule, is being worshipped and he takes a book and opens it.

Does this sound familiar from some other previous description in the Bible?

Read Daniel 7:9,10, 13,14

⁹ “As I looked,
“thrones were set in place,
and the Ancient of Days took his seat.
His clothing was as white as snow;
the hair of his head was white like wool.
His throne was flaming with fire,
and its wheels were all ablaze.
¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing,
coming out from before him.
Thousands upon thousands attended him;



ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.

The court was seated,

and the books were opened.

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

What is being described?

Are both Daniel and Revelation are describing the coronation of Christ as the ruler of heaven and earth and the opening of the book with seven seals?

The lesson asks about the 24 elders, wondering what they represent?

Hmmm... Is there anything else in Scripture in which we have 24 elders or leaders of God's people mentioned?

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹ It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹² It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. **On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.** ¹³ There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. ¹⁴ **The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.** Rev 21:10-14

We have New Jerusalem with 12 gates and on the name of each gate were the twelve tribes of Israel, 3 on each side—what is being depicted here?

In the OT Israel were the actors in God's system to act out the plan of salvation. The 12 tribes represented the peoples of the entire world, those from the East, West, North and South. God has people from the entire world, from all people groups, who are part of His church, the Holy City, represented by the 12 tribes.

But, the Holy City is also described as being built on 12 foundations:

The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Rev 21:14

And the twelve apostles represent all those who have founded their lives upon Jesus Christ.



Thus the Holy City is composed of the saved from all human history from all over the world who have been renewed into Christlikeness and the 24 elders may represent these people who have returned to God through the various human agencies that have taken the gospel to the world.

Then, what is the New Jerusalem?

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. Rev 21:2

Who is the bride of Christ?

TUESDAY

What is contained in the book sealed with seven seals? Read second paragraph, "In the words of..." Do you agree?

Revelation 5:1-3 from *The Remedy*:

Then I looked, and I saw that he who sits on the throne had written out the history of the world before the world began, and sealed it up. It was symbolized by a book in his right hand, with writing within, and sealed with seven seals.² And I watched as a mighty angel asked in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the book of God's foreknowledge, and intervene in human history?"

My view is that the book is the book of God's foreknowledge, of what would happen before anything was created, which God recorded and sealed. Then God created angels and directed some of them to begin accurately recording history as it unfolded. Then, at the proper point in time, which I believe was in the recent past, Jesus began opening the book sealed with seven seals and revealing God's foreknowledge of history and all beings compare it with what the angels recorded and it is demonstrated that they are exactly the same.

Why would this be necessary? What might be a benefit of this?

To reveal that God's foreknowledge is perfect and yet we all still have absolute freedom. God's character, government, methods, design laws are all revealed to be perfect.

WEDNESDAY

Why is the Lamb found to be worthy? Because He was slain—what does this mean?

Why is the Lamb worthy because He was slain, yet Peter who was also slain or Stephen who was slain are not worthy?



Because, Jesus not only was slain, but had all power available to Him, the others did not.

So, what is revealed uniquely about Jesus being slain that is not revealed about other mere humans who have been slain?

Have you heard that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely?

This is true for all those who operate on Satan's principles of fear, selfishness and imposed law with coercive inflicted punishments. And Satan has alleged that God is just like this, requiring sacrifice from others, but not willing to sacrifice Himself.

Consider this quote from *The Desire of Ages*:

In the light of the Saviour's life, the hearts of all, even from the Creator to the prince of darkness, are revealed. **Satan has represented God as selfish and oppressive, as claiming all, and giving nothing, as requiring the service of His creatures for His own glory, and making no sacrifice for their good.** But the gift of Christ reveals the Father's heart. It testifies that the thoughts of God toward us are "thoughts of peace, and not of evil." Jeremiah 29:11. {DA 57.1}

What did Jesus' death reveal? That not only is God willing to sacrifice Himself for the good of His creatures but that all power does not corrupt Him. That He would even allow His creatures to torture and kill Him rather than use His power to stop them.

Is Jesus safe with all power? Is He worthy of all power?

Read first paragraph, "As Christ the Lamb..." All authority was given to Christ—can you think of another time in the Scripture when this was said to have happened?

Jesus knew that the **Father had given him authority over everything** and that he had come from God and would return to God. ⁴ So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, ⁵ and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him. John 13:3-5 NLV

Some version say all power was given to Jesus, but regardless, when all authority, or all power was given to Jesus in this passage what did He do with it?

He washed dirty feet—what is this symbolic of? This is symbolic of washing away sin.

What do you think Jesus does in Daniel 7 and Rev 4/5 when all authority is given to Him?



He is in His heavenly sanctuary and begins washing away sin—what does this mean? He begins removing recorded history? No! He cleanses hearts and minds preparing us to meet God face to face. This is what Jesus does with His authority or power.

Second paragraph states, “With His blood, He has paid the ransom for fallen human beings and offers them all the hope of redemption and the promise of a future we barely can imaging.”

What does this mean?

To whom is the ransom paid?

Is it paid in red corpuscles? So, what does it mean?

Jesus said that unless we eat His flesh and drink His blood we don’t have any part with Him—what is He talking about?

Who receives the “blood” in this metaphor of Jesus’ in John 6? We do, does that give an indication of who gets the ransom price of blood?

What does a ransom do? It is the price necessary to set one free from captivity.

What holds human beings in captivity? Lies about God that we believe and our own carnal natures.

What is the price to set us free? The truth about God to destroy lies and win us to trust and a new perfect, sinless human nature. Jesus provides both of these to us as a free gift and His blood is a symbolic representation of this.

Thus, the ransom price was paid to us to provide us what was actually needed in reality to fix the sin-damage in us.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “In the outpouring...” What does this mean?

What is Jesus working to save us from? Sin, where does sin occur or exist? Does it occur or exist in God or God’s law? Or does it occur and exist in our hearts and minds?

And what is sin? It is deviation from God’s law or design for life. So if Jesus wants to save us from sin, which is deviation from God’s law or design, which is occurring in us, where must He work?

And thus, the Holy Spirit is described as working or dwelling where? And taking what to whom?



The second paragraph states, “The outpouring of the holy Spirit meant that Jesus had appeared before the Father and that God had accepted His sacrifice on behalf of humanity.”

How do you hear this?

Do you hear it as, the Father required a legal payment and the payment of Jesus was sufficient for the Father now to be willing and legally able to dispense the Holy Spirit? That description is Baal worship. It is paganism gussied up in Christian language. It is a god who requires some payment be made in order to dispense blessings—paganism.

Or do you hear it as, God was satisfied that Christ had achieved what was necessary to heal and restore humanity to His perfect design and thus the Holy Spirit could be dispatched to take the remedy Christ had procured and apply it in all who respond in trust to the truth Jesus revealed?

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions

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The Book of Revelation Lesson 5 1Q 2019

The Seven Seals

by Tim Jennings

SUNDAY

We will be referring to Revelation from *The Remedy New Testament Paraphrase* today and I wanted to read the preface to Revelation from *The Remedy*:

In the book of Revelation, I did a little more than paraphrase. I also added some decoding of the symbolism, some of which will be without controversy, such as "Jesus, the Lamb" rather than just "the Lamb," but other places might challenge various traditional views. The reason I decided to do this is not that I want to suggest I have been gifted with some special insight beyond any believer's prayerful study guided by the Holy Spirit, but to stimulate the reader to think. Throughout the rest of this paraphrase, I have used new words to get at the real meaning and move past cliché, such as "Remedy" for "gospel." In Revelation, I want the reader to move past the symbolism to consider a cosmic reality beyond the symbol—a reality in which God is love all the time, and Satan is a real being of complete selfishness, seeking to contaminate our minds with his lies about God. I have no doubt that as the future unfolds, events will require modification and reinterpretation of some of the conclusions I have suggested in this book. The point is not that we need to know with total certainty every detail of every symbol, but to know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. You will therefore notice that all of the suggested interpretations always reveal God's character of love—working against Satan for the good of his creation. I hope you will enjoy reading Revelation, and that it will stimulate you with a new appreciation and love for our amazing God.

Some rules of interpretation used in the book of Revelation:

- If one part of a passage is symbolic or metaphor, then the rest is symbolic or metaphor unless clear reasons to be literal are expressed in the text.
- The Bible will be used to interpret itself (i.e. symbol interpretations will use Bible definitions before other definitions).
- The general theme is that of the conflict between Christ and Satan.
- God's character of love never changes, therefore interpretations will never result in God being represented in a character other than love.
- God's law of love never changes, therefore interpretations will always be in harmony with God's law of love.

Read first paragraph, "The events of the seven seals must..." Before we read the seven seals, what is our understanding about the meaning of the information contained in the seven seals?

What is recorded there?



The lesson takes the approach that it can be only one thing, the same information which is covered by the seven churches.

But, Bible prophecy often has more than one application. The lesson acknowledged this with the seven churches—that it had historic application, prophetic application and universal application.

Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 24 mixed events about the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world.

So, could the prophecy of the seven seals have more than one meaning?

In last Tuesday's lesson there was a quote from EGW describing what is contained in the book with seven seals:

“the history of God's providences, the prophetic history of nations and the church. Herein was contained the divine utterances, His authority, His commandments, His laws, the whole symbolic counsel of the Eternal, and the history of all ruling powers in the nations. In symbolic language was contained in that roll the influence of every nation, tongue, and people from the beginning of earth's history to its close.” {9MR 7.2}

What do you hear described?

If we value this description then what is contained in the book with seven seals?

Does it sound like it is only God's dealing with human history during the last 2000 years? We would limit our understanding if we take it to mean it covers the same time period of the seven churches.

But the quote suggests something much broader and more encompassing than just the last 2000 years:

- The history of God's providences—which means what?
 - the foreseeing and caring for His creation
 - did that creation include only earth?
- The prophetic history of nations and the church
- His divine utterances and God's law
- The whole symbolic counsel of the Eternal
- The history of all ruling powers in the nations
- From the beginning of earth's history to its close

So, does this sound like just the history of the last 2000 years?

So, what else might be contained within? Could it be a broader revelation of the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan?



Read Revelation 6:1,2:

I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, “Come!”² I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest. (NIV84)

What is the meaning of this? Is it literal or symbolic?

One interpretation is in the second paragraph, “Although symbolic...”

And the lesson goes on to say, “The scene of the first seal describes the spread of the gospel, which started powerfully at Pentecost.”

I can see where they get this, what would be reasons why this might be a less than adequate interpretation?

- Where does this put the starting point of the first seal? 2000 years ago.
 - Would that starting point cut off much of history?
- Would this book with seven seals contain God’s actions with all powers, nations, the whole symbolic counsel of the Eternal if it only covers the last 2000 years?
- Would the book, if it started 2000 years ago, give us the knowledge of how sin began, what the actual problem is, who the enemy is?

So, another interpretation is that the first seal does not represent Christ but represents a being who impersonates Christ.

Does Scripture teach of another being who attempted to take Christ’s place?

- Did that being start his rebellion by open revolt, or by claiming to be concerned for the welfare of others?
- Did that being start out sharing a name of Christ, and appeared similar in many respects as Christ?
 - Lucifer—means light bearer, Jesus is the light bearer
 - Lucifer was a covering cherub, Jesus appeared in form of a covering cherub
- Does Bible represent Jesus and Satan with the same symbolism in other places?
 - Serpent the devil; the brass serpent to heal the people
 - Roaring lion seeking to devour; Lion tribe of Judah
- So, could the symbolism of a rider on a white horse rather than refer to Christ, refer to Lucifer, the light bearer, and the origins of his rebellion?



Here is Revelation 6:1,2 from *The Remedy*:

Excitedly, I watched as Jesus the Lamb opened the first section of God's book of foreknowledge and began to reveal the warfare between God and Satan. I heard one of the living creatures say in a powerful voice that rumbled like thunder, "Come and see!"² So I looked, and I saw that the war began with a rider on a white horse, holding a bow and wearing a crown—symbolizing Lucifer beginning his war in heaven under the guise of righteousness, yet intent on inciting rebellion and war, and achieving conquest.

MONDAY

Read Revelation 6:3,4:

When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!"⁴ Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword. (NIV84)

What does this mean?

Read second paragraph, "The second seal describes..." What are the problems with their interpretation?

- When was peace taken from the earth?
- Was there peace on earth prior to Christ's advent?
- Was there peace on earth during Christ's 33 years?
- Has there been peace on earth since Christ's resurrection?
- When was there peace on earth? In Eden—and when was peace taken from the earth?
- How was peace taken from the earth?

Somehow this rider has power to take peace and cause people to slay each other—would that be the power of death?

Consider this quote:

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil... (Heb 2:14 NIV84)

What is the power of death? Life eternal is that we know God (Jn 17:3) so eternal death is not knowing God, so Satan's power is the lies he tells about God that we believe.

Was there a time when human beings knew and trusted God and lived in a face to face relationship with God?



What changed that state of being? Believing Satan's lies:

- Lies believed break the circle of love and trust
- Broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness
- Fear and selfishness result in acts of sin
- Acts of sin damage mind, character, body—a terminal condition

EGW wrote:

Eve believed the words of Satan, and the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors, {RH, January 5, 1886 par. 8}

And what happened after they believed Satan's lies? Cain kills Abel—and by Genesis six humanity was violent and violent constantly.

So, what might be another interpretation that is broader, more encompassing, actually applies to the time when peace was taken from the earth and violence and slaying quickly began to happen between humans?

Revelation 6:3,4 from *The Remedy*:

When Jesus the Lamb opened the second section of God's book of foreknowledge, I heard another living creature say, "Come and see!"⁴ Then I saw a rider on a fiery red horse, holding a large sword symbolic of Satan's lies about God severing the bonds of love and trust and inciting fear and selfishness, and resulting in people killing each other.

Read Revelation 6:5,6:

When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶ Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!" (NIV84)

What does this mean?

Read last paragraph, "The scene of the third seal..." This version interprets the Greek as "scales" but another equally valid interpretation of that same Greek word is "yoke."

If we interpret using the word yoke instead of scales does that help our understanding at all?

"I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a yoke in his hand."



The rider was holding a yoke, what does a yoke do? It binds two beings together.

If we agree with the GC view of the first two seals as is translated in *The Remedy* does that lead us to any insights in regard to any type of a yoke this rider put upon humanity?

Would it be a yoke of fear and selfishness as a result of believing lies about God and perhaps the subsequent yoke of false religions (paganism) that require the worshipper to do something to pay a legal payment to the offended deity in order to get a blessing?

What would the meaning of the wheat, barley and oil and wine be?

Wheat and barley can be made into bread, which is symbolic of the Word of God.

What is symbolically represented by the high cost of wheat and barley and the famine conditions?

That the truth about God, as represented in His Word, would be scarce and because it would be scarce a famine of truth would occur in which people would be starving for the truth about God.

What would the oil and wine represent? The oil represents Holy Spirit and the wine represents Remedy, the perfect life of Jesus, which Satan cannot damage.

So, from *The Remedy*:

When Jesus the Lamb opened the third section of God's book of foreknowledge, I heard a third living creature say, "Come and see!" I looked and saw a black horse, symbolic of humanity necrotic with lies about God. Its rider was holding a yoke in his hand, symbolic of the spiritual enslavement that occurs when the mind is bound by lies about God.⁶ Then I heard a voice coming from the four living creatures, saying, "A handful of wheat or three handfuls of barley will cost an entire day's pay, but the oil and wine won't be destroyed"—which means that the lies about God will be so pervasive that a famine of spiritual truth will occur, and humanity will be near spiritual starvation; but the oil of truth and the wine of God's Remedy will not be destroyed.

TUESDAY

Read Revelation 6:7,8:

When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!"⁸ I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth. (NIV84)



What does it mean?

What is this rider going to bring? Death and what is the basis of death? Lies about God, so this rider is going to bring more lies about God.

What is Hades? It is the grave, the place where there is no life, so it can represent the actual grave and it can also represent the place devoid of God's life-giving presence, principles, laws, truths, love etc.

So, the lies told will lead to systems devoid of God's love and truth and result in death and millions of people ¼ of the world's population will embrace this system of thinking.

What does it mean it has power to kill by sword, famine and plague? Is this literal or symbolic?

What kind of war is going on between Christ and Satan, is it a physical war or a spiritual war, a war of ideas, who and what do we love, are loyal to, trust, and believe?

In a spiritual war, what is a sword? God's sword is the sword of truth, so what would Satan's sword be? The sword of lies. So, one interpretation is that this power has the ability to destroy with lies about God.

What about famine, what would this represent? The ability to starve people from knowing the truth—so by restricting access to the Word of God.

And what about pestilence? What is pestilence? A disease that spreads rapidly and brings destruction—and what could this symbolically represent? Sinfulness of the soul which is selfishness with its fear-based survival drive.

What do beasts represent? Both human nations, which rule on what methods? Coercion, and beasts represent pagan deities—Marduk—Bull, Dagon—Fish Heket—Frog. So it is represents by systems of pagan imperialism and coercion.

So, from *The Remedy*:

When Jesus the Lamb opened the fourth section of God's book of foreknowledge, I heard the fourth living creature say, "Come and see!"⁸ Then I saw a pale horse, and its rider was named Death—symbolic of a church fighting against the truth and promoting a false remedy—and the grave was filling up behind him. It had power over one-fourth of the world's population and could destroy by warring against the truth with lies about God; by restricting access to the written word of God and thereby inciting spiritual famine; by indulging selfishness—the pestilence of the soul; and by introducing wild, beastly, pagan traditions.

And has there been any historic events or organizations that have done this?

WEDNESDAY

Read Revelation 6:9-11:

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰ They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” ¹¹ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed. (NIV84)

What does this mean?

Is it literal or symbolic? What is symbolized by the altar? The sanctuary, which is a metaphor of God’s plan to heal restore. The altar is a metaphor of hearts and minds that have the Holy Spirit burning within and which praise God, as incense is burned upon it.

What about the souls, what is represented by this?

Read, first paragraph in Wednesday’s lesson, “The word ‘soul’ in the Bible...” They are not wrong in that soul *can* mean what they say. But the lesson has chosen one possible Biblical meaning for the word soul and in fact they have chosen the wrong meaning. The Bible has another meaning for the soul that does not mean the entire being:

- May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1Thes 5:23 NIV84)
 - Does this sound like soul refers to the entire human being or only a part?
- Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. (Mt 10:28 NIV84)
 - Does Jesus make a distinction between the body and soul here? So does soul mean the entire person in this context?

Would you conclude from these two passages that the soul represents the whole person or only one part of the whole person?

The Greek word for soul is psuche from which we get psyche, as in psychiatry and psychology and means our unique identity, individuality, personhood.

If we use a computer metaphor a computer has three parts:

- Hardware (body)
- Software (soul/psyche)
- Energy (spirit/pneuma/breath of life)



So, then, if we realize that soul represents the identity, individuality, the software of the person and not the entire living being, what might this mean for this text?

When we die where do the dead go?

- the body returns to dust (see Gen 3:19, Ps 44:25, Ecc 3:20);
- the spirit—life energy—returns to God who gave the breath of life (see Ecc 12:7);
- the soul, software, individuality, are safely stored with Christ in heaven on the Lamb's book of life, the heavenly servers

Thus, Paul writes in 1Thes:

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who **fall asleep**, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that **God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him**. The Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and **the dead in Christ will rise first**. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. (1Thes 4:13-18 NIV84, emphasis supplied)

So, we have the recorded individualities of the righteous calling out from under the altar—what does this mean?

And what happens to them? They are purified and given the character of Christ, which is a cleansing, i.e. the cleansing of the sanctuary. This would be describing events after the great apostacy in which the church caused a famine of truth by hiding the Bible from people, perpetuated lies about God, and promoted selfishness—a time when the cleansing of the sanctuary would be happening. When did this begin?

So, from *The Remedy*:

When Jesus the Lamb opened the fifth section of God's book of foreknowledge, I saw an altar, and beneath it I saw the individual identities of those who were killed because they embraced the truth about God's character of love and faithfully revealed his methods, rejecting the lies about God.¹⁰ Their lives called out, "Almighty Lord who always does what is right, how long until your diagnosis of the inhabitants of earth is made known and you set right the wrong done to us?"¹¹ Then they were each given white clothes to symbolize that they were healed to be like Jesus in character. They were told to be patient a little longer, until the rest of their co-workers and friends completed their witness and were martyred for the truth.



THURSDAY

Read Revelation 6:12-14:

I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red,¹³ and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind.¹⁴ The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. (NIV84)

What is the meaning?

Is this literal or symbolic?

The SDA church has taken this literally—to a point, which is strange since all along the rest of the seals are all symbolic and then suddenly these signs become literal?

The historic Adventist view is that this is fulfilled by:

- Lisbon earthquake of 1755
- The Dark Day of May 19, 1780
- The meteor shower over the Atlantic Nov 13, 1833

What is the problem with this interpretation?

First, I am not being dogmatic and saying this absolutely cannot be correct, only questioning it and suggesting an alternate understanding that seems to make more sense.

The problems with this historic interpretation:

- It suddenly shifts from symbolic to literal without any real reason to do so; is there anything in the text that says the seals now contain literal elements?
- If we take the earthquake Sun, Moon, stars literally and apply it to the events above, what about the mountains and islands being moved from their location—how can we ignore those aspects?
- It places the events of the sixth seal before 1844, yet the events which began in 1844 are described in the fifth seal.
- It makes the signs of this event far removed from the generation living at the time of the second advent such that it has no actual impact on the people living in our day

So, what might a symbolic, rather than literal, interpretation be?

Where is the war between Christ and Satan fought? What are the weapons?

So, could this be symbolic of the warfare moving into its final phase before Christ returns?



And throughout human history and Bible history, what has the Sun, Moon and stars always symbolized? The Creator—God. So, could the blackening of the sun, a blood moon and the falling stars symbolize the loss of the belief in God from humanity?

From *The Remedy*:

I watched as Jesus the Lamb opened the sixth section of God's book of foreknowledge. There was a great shaking of ideas in the minds of people on earth: their unshakable confidence in religion was broken, as evolutionary theory—like a black cloth obscuring the sun—covered over their minds. The moon bled dry for believers,¹³ and the stars fell from their high places of esteem, shaken by the mighty wind of changing ideas.¹⁴ The mystery of the cosmos was rolled back like a scroll as science and astronomy advanced; every high place of worship was removed from its place of esteem, and every island of belief was thrown aside.

Read Revelation 6:15-17:

Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains.¹⁶ They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"¹⁷ For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?" (NIV84)

What does this mean? How much is literal and how much is symbolic?

What type of war is being fought? What are the weapons? Where is the battlefield?

What is the Biblical definition of wrath? (See Romans 1:18-28)

Why do these people who have rejected God call for the mountains to fall on them and hide them from God?

Why did Judas hang himself?

What does this tell us about sin?

What does sin do to the sinner?

Here is a quote from EGW:

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of



character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, **cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.** {1SM 235.2}

What is being described? What law is in operation? Is there wrath being described?

From *The Remedy*:

But the leaders on earth—presidents, kings, princes, generals, rich and poor—hid from the truth in the caves of their own lies and amongst the rocks of the mountain of false ideas.¹⁶They begged for their ideas to be true: they cried out, "Hide us from the truth! Hide us from him who sits on the throne of truth, and protect us from what happens when Jesus the Lamb lets us go."¹⁷For the day when he lets us go has come, and who can stand on their own?"

So, after reading Revelation 6, what picture of God do you have? Do you have a picture of an angry deity, who uses power to coerce and punish, or a loving being who has been working to overcome an infection of thought that breaks love and trust and heal His children?

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions

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The Book of Revelation Lesson 6 1Q 2019

The Sealed People of God

SABBATH

As we discuss Revelation let's keep in mind its purpose, which is to encourage believers in their relationship with Christ, to provide hope, to inspire to better living, to motivate us to study and dig into God's Word to comprehend its mysteries that God would have us know.

Why? Because strength comes by exercise and we grow neurobiologically, characterologically, in wisdom as we study for ourselves. Revelation is written as it is to inspire us to study and grow.

But, what Revelation is not—it is not a test of fellowship, a requirement for salvation, or a crystal ball we can use to map out an exact future.

In other words, a person doesn't have to believe a certain interpretation of Revelation in order to be saved.

What is required for salvation is to be restored to godliness in heart/character, what some call being reborn, via the work of the Holy Spirit bringing the character of Christ into your heart and mind.

Therefore, it is okay to have different views of various elements of Revelation as long as the following remain true:

- God is always portrayed as love
- God's laws are design laws
- Trust and faith in God are increased
- Fear and distrust in God are decreased
- You are growing to be more like Christ in character and method
- You become engaged as a worker to share the truth about God

With this in mind let's turn to our lesson:

The lesson takes the position that the seven seals begin in AD 34, at Pentecost, and is a history of the Christian dispensation, covering the same ground as the message to the seven churches.

However, I am not satisfied with this explanation because it leaves out more than half of human history and begins way downstream of the opening of the GC. If one values EGW it also is inconsistent with her statements that the book sealed with seven seals contains:

- The history of God's providences—which means God's creation and care
- The prophetic history of nations and the church
- His divine utterances and God's law
- The whole symbolic counsel of the Eternal



- The history of all ruling powers in the nations
- The beginning of earth's history to its close

So, I prefer the explanation that the seals represent God's foreknowledge from the opening of the GC in heaven to its conclusion as follows, seal:

1. Satan's rebellion in heaven

- a. White horse, pretends to be pure
- b. Bow—which shoots arrows and in Ephesians 6 we are told: “In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.” V. 16
- c. crown—he claims equality to Christ and later to be the ruler of earth
- d. Wants to conquer—which means dominate, compel
- e. Some are concerned this is the same rider as in Revelation 19, starting in verse 11.

Let's examine the difference:

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he **judges and makes war**.¹² His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are **many crowns**. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself.¹³ He is dressed in **a robe dipped in blood**, and his name is the Word of God.¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.¹⁵ Out of his **mouth comes a sharp sword** with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

f. What is the difference in these two riders?

- i. Weapon is bow versus sword—the sword is the sword of truth
- ii. many crowns instead of one crown
- iii. robe dipped in blood
- iv. makes war does not seek conquest—and the war is the war of truth and love over lies and selfishness, not to conquer but to free those who have been conquered
- v. From *The Remedy*:

I looked and saw the heavens open, and before me was a white horse whose rider is called Faithful and True—which symbolizes that Christ makes war using the weapons of truth and righteousness, and diagnoses all things perfectly.¹² His eyes are like blazing fire, symbolic of the penetrating power of truth and love that burns within his heart and with which he sees all things. On his head are many crowns, symbolizing his rightful rule over all domains, spheres, orders, and territories. Upon him is a name that only he knows, for it represents the fullness of



his infinite true self.¹³ His clothes are dipped in blood, symbolic of self-sacrificing death by which he procured the Remedy. His name is the Word of God, for he is God's very thoughts made audible and visible.¹⁴ The host of heaven followed him, also riding on white horses and dressed in pure linen—spotless white and clean—symbolic of the methods of truth, love and freedom with which they wage war.¹⁵ He struck down the nations with a sharp sword that came out of his mouth, which symbolized the spoken words of truth that destroy everything built on the lies about God. "He will rule them with an unbreakable shepherd's rod." He crushes out all lies and selfishness in the winepress of the unrestrained burning rivers of truth and love flowing from God Almighty.¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh, this name is written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

2. The fall of mankind in Eden
 - a. This rider takes peace from the earth, when did peace get taken from the earth 100 years after Christ's death, or in Eden?
3. The history of humanity in the OT up until Christ
 - a. This was a period of spiritual starvation in which truth about God was difficult to find, but the Holy Spirit and the life of Christ could not be destroyed
4. Christianity through the Middle and Dark Ages
 - a. The power of the church to distort the truth about God by distorted teachings about God, restricting access to the Word of God and introducing pagan god concepts.
5. 1844 the opening of the Investigative Judgment
 - a. individualities were being cleansed from sin, given white robes
6. The shaking and end-time rejection of God and rise of atheism and evolutionism
7. The final events culminating in the second coming of Christ

Read second paragraph, "Chapter 7 is an interlude..." What is meant by the sixth seal brings us to the second coming of Christ? Does it mean that the sixth seal ends with the second coming of Christ, or that the events that follow under the seventh seal will culminate in the second coming of Christ?

In other words, are there more events to follow the sixth seal before the second coming of Christ or when the sixth seal is over Jesus comes?

I believe, that there are significant events that occur after what is described in the sixth seal and are described in Chapter 7 and under the seventh seal culminating in the second coming of Christ.

In fact, I believe Chapter 7 gives insight into what has contributed to the delay in the second coming.

SUNDAY

Read Revelation 7:1-3:



After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.” (NIV84)

Is this literal or symbolic or combo of both?

What does it mean?

Read first paragraph, “In the Old Testament...” The first sentence says that winds are metaphors for God’s executes judgments upon the wicked. The second sentence, a quote from EGW, says, “As the angels of God cease to hold in check the **fierce winds of human passions**, all the elements of strife will be let loose.”

Questions:

- Is EGW’s description of the angels letting loose the winds consistent with what Revelation 7 describes the angels are doing?
- So, is the means of harming the angels use by expending power to inflict harm, or by the cessation of their power and letting loose what they have held in check?
- Then is the lesson suggesting God’s execution of judgment upon the wicked is passive, God judges that there is nothing more He can do for the wicked so He sets them free to their own choice?
- Was this passive aspect of God’s executive judgment clear to your understanding from the way the lesson wrote it?

What are the four winds?

Here is one historic view, what do you think?

We feel depressed, greatly depressed, as we see the world and its wickedness. The professed Christian world is enveloped in the darkness that covers the earth. We sigh and cry for the abominations that are done in the land. Why is it that all this wickedness does not break forth in decided violence against righteousness and truth? It is because the **four angels are holding the four winds, that they shall not blow upon the earth. But human passions are reaching a high pass**, and the Spirit of the Lord is being withdrawn from the earth. Were it not that God has commanded **angelic agencies to control the satanic agencies that are seeking to break loose and to destroy**, there would be no hope. But the **winds are to be held** until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. . . . {HP 96.3}

And what causes them to blow? God acting or God withdrawing His restraining influence?



EGW gives further confirmation that this is her view of it:

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

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

"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of." Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

What would cause the Spirit of God to withdraw?

Where is the dwelling place for God's Spirit on earth? Our hearts and minds, we are the Spirit Temple, so what happens when billions of people harden their heart to God?

Is the withdrawal of the Spirit some arbitrary act on God's part, some cosmic clock has reached a point and God says, "Okay, time's up, time to withdraw?" No! It is a result of our rejection!

What is the seal of God?

- When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13)
- What does the Holy Spirit do that "seals" us?
- Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth and love – and
- Jesus said that the Spirit would take what is Christ's and make it known to us

The Holy Spirit settles our minds, hearts and characters into the truth and love of God such that we cannot be moved. Through the Spirit, we become partakers of the divine nature and like Christ in character: sealed to God.

Read second paragraph: "In ancient times..." Sealing is being settled into the truth intellectually and spiritually so we cannot be moved. What does this mean?

1. Intellectually—comprehending reality so that we will not be moved from it:

- We understand the truth of God's character and methods of love
- We understand God's law is design law and how it functions
- We understand that pain, suffering and death come from sin not from God



- We understand love only works in an atmosphere of freedom and thus reject theologies that have God in role of cosmic executioner

2. Spiritually—we have incorporated what we understand into our characters, what we love, what we practice, who we are in heart, and would rather die than turn away from truth and love. Thus, the saved are described in Revelation as “these are they who do not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.” Rev 12:11

A person can understand cognitively that smoking is unhealthy and causes cancer, yet have no desire to quit and continue to smoke. This would be an example of someone who is not settled spiritually, they are settled intellectually on the dangers of smoking, but their life has not been changed to live in harmony with that truth.

An alcoholic may be convinced that they have to quit because of liver failure and multiple DUI's, and so they don't drink, but they long to, they dream about it, they wish they could figure a way to drink without experiencing the harm. They are settled intellectually about the truth and even behaviorally change because of fear of the consequences, but they are not spiritually settled, their heart is still tied to the alcohol. In AA these are called dry drunks.

What about the idea of keeping the Commandments, how do they fit in to the sealing?

Can someone keep the commandments and not be settled into the truth spiritually?

Can someone be like the dry drunk, afraid of the consequences of sinning so they obey the rules, but in their heart they want to do their own thing? These individuals would not be sealed.

What is the mark of the beast? Settling into mind and heart the methods of the beast, coercion—a willingness to punish others who disobey the rules you think should be followed. The beastly methods of human governments.

Read third paragraph, “The faithfulness of God’s sealed...” What is the key to correctly understanding this idea?

What Law Lens? If one tries to understand the idea of the Commandments with the human imposed law lens they will ultimately promote the beast’s view of God. We can only correctly promote God’s end-time message by rejecting imposed law and returning to design law.

Imposed law views the Sabbath as a test of obedience and makes it specifically about the day of the week one attends church and avoids work. This leads to a rules-oriented behavioral approach to salvation and misrepresents God, and people become very Pharisaical.

The design law view realizes that the Sabbath is a sign, a mark and a tool/gift to aide human beings in holiness. It is an evidence of God’s methods of truth, presented in love, while leaving people free. It



was designed and created as a day of rest—a day in which God rested from using power; a day for God's created beings to think and examine evidence. Thus, the Sabbath is a sign of God the Creator whose laws are design laws. It helps us avoid falling into the beastly system of human governments that run on imposed rules.

But if we present the Sabbath as an imposed rule and God is monitoring it to see who breaks it and will punish those who break it then we take this amazing gift to aide is in our holiness and we twist it to make God appear beastly and this in turn corrupts our character to be like the beast and we could end up killing the Lord of the Sabbath, just like the Sabbath keepers 2000 years ago.

For more details explanation of the Sabbath versus Sunday see my blog at:

<http://comeandreason.com/index.php/en/blogs-main/587-sabbath-imposed-rule-or-design-for-life>

MONDAY

Read Revelation 7:4-8:

Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.

From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed,
from the tribe of Reuben 12,000,
from the tribe of Gad 12,000,
from the tribe of Asher 12,000,
from the tribe of Naphtali 12,000,
from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000,
from the tribe of Simeon 12,000,
from the tribe of Levi 12,000,
from the tribe of Issachar 12,000,
from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000,
from the tribe of Joseph 12,000, (NIV84)

Is this symbolic or literal?

Who is symbolically represented by this group?

Read first paragraph, "The announcement of the number..." Why 12,000 from 12 different tribes?

What does this symbolically represent? The ceremonial system of ancient Israel was a grand theatrical enactment of the plan of salvation. The 12 tribes encamped around the sanctuary, symbolically represented the people groups from all four corners of the earth. The Levites, which represent the priest or the saved of God, camped between the other tribes and the sanctuary, symbolically demonstrating that the saved are God's agents, representatives, evangelists, missionaries, to the world



to share the truth about God with the people of the world to bring them back into unity at-one-ment with Him.

So, the tribes represent people from all over the world.

There are two possibilities regarding the 144,000—that they represent the saved from all over the world—the great multitude, or they represent a different group of saved, a subset of saved, both are possibilities.

One piece of identifying information that adds insight as to who the 144,000 are is in verse three.

In verse 3 who is being sealed? The *servants* of God and in Bible symbolism, who are God's servants? I am giving you only a small sample of the OT references for this, but notice how widely this is stated throughout the OT:

- until the Lord removed them from his presence, as he had warned through all **his servants the prophets**. (2Kings 17:23 NIV84)
- The Lord said through **his servants the prophets**: (2Kings 21:10 NIV84)
- But now, O our God, what can we say after this? For we have disregarded the commands you gave through **your servants the prophets**... (Ezra 9:10,11 NIV84)
- From the time your forefathers left Egypt until now, day after day, again and again I sent you **my servants the prophets**. (Jeremiah 7:25 NIV84)
- This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Are you not the one I spoke of in former days by **my servants the prophets** of Israel? (Ezekiel 38:17)
- We have not listened to **your servants the prophets**, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. (Daniel 9:6 NIV84)
- Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to **his servants the prophets**. (Amos 3:7 NIV84)
- But did not my words and my decrees, which I commanded **my servants the prophets**, overtake your forefathers? (Zechariah 1:6 NIV84)

So, in the Bible the “servants of God” is a symbolic reference to God's prophets?

And what are God's prophets—primarily people who predict the future, or people sent by God to the people of their time with a message for them at that time? So we could call them God's spokespersons.

Thus, Revelation 7 could describe a group of people from all over the world who become God's spokespersons to give an end-time message, and from their witness a great multitude responds and is saved.

But another view is that the 144,000 and the Great Multitude are the same and a piece of evidence that supports this view is:



I saw that the four angels **would hold the four winds until Jesus' work was done in the sanctuary**, and then will come the seven last plagues. {EW 36.2}

So, some take the position that the sealing of the 144,000 includes all the great multitude because the sealing is complete when Jesus leaves the sanctuary.

However, EGW says in other places:

The time of trouble is before us. **The angels are, as it were, just loosening the four winds, but they cannot loose them yet.** The church is too far behind her privileges. The people of God are too indolent. Many are unfaithful; many are unclean and polluted. We are not prepared for the crisis. The question is, How long will God wait for our tardy movements? {15MR 86.2}

So, another view is that the angels are loosening their hold, allowing increase in human passion and troubles to overtake the world, but have not fully let loose, because too many aren't ready. So, during the loosening phase the 144,000 spokespersons are sealed and their witness brings in the great multitude and when there are no others capable of being saved, then they completely let loose.

Both interpretations are possible and both have supporting evidence, I don't think we need to argue about it, and ultimately it doesn't really make a difference as long as we know the truth about God and are among the sealed.

But I prefer the view that God sends a message to the angels at the four corners of the earth instructing them to hold back the winds of strife until God's spokespersons are sealed in their forehead.

Then, after they are sealed the winds loosen and that awakens the rest of the sleeping world to inquire what is happening, and from the witness of the 144,000 the great multitude is saved and sealed and then the winds are fully loosed

So, perhaps the loosening of the winds isn't a distinct point but a gradual process until finally completely loosed.

TUESDAY

Read Revelation 7:9,10:

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice:

“Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” (NIV84)



Combination of literal and symbolic? Literal great multitude, from literally all people groups on earth, but the Lamb is symbolic of Christ, white robes symbolic of healed character, palm branches symbolic of their triumph over sin.

Read first paragraph, “John sees...” Regardless of whether we view the two groups as different groups, or the same group, what is God waiting for in order to let loose the four winds and bring about the events that lead to the second coming of Christ?

The sealing of the 144,000—and what is obstructing that from occurring? The imperial law lie that teaches that salvation is a legal process and that God is the source of inflicted punishment for sin from whom we need protection.

Read last paragraph, “Nearest the throne...” The bottom green section states, “Yes, we are covered by the robe of Christ’s righteousness, a gift of faith.”

What does it mean to be covered by the robe of Christ’s righteousness?

Do you find any significance in the fact the lesson authors state it this way, but in the sentence right before EGW says “The palm branch in their hands is a symbol of their triumph, the white robe an emblem of the spotless righteousness of Christ which now is theirs.”

Does the phrase, “covered by the robe of Christ’s righteousness,” immediately sound the same as possessing the righteousness of Christ, having a character that has been purified to be righteous like Christ?

What is an emblem? A symbolic representation of something else. So, EGW says the white robes are a symbolic representation of a reality—and that reality is the saved HAVE/POSSESS the righteousness of Christ, are not unrighteous and covered by the righteousness of Christ.

Why do you think the lesson authors, given the quote, didn’t say, “Yes, we are transformed and healed to be righteous like Christ, a gift of faith?”

Could it be, operating on imposed law, they fail to see the healing reality that God provides in Christ, and instead misrepresent the plan of salvation as a legal covering over unrighteousness by a legal declaration?

When EGW uses the language of covered by the robe of righteousness in other places, how does she explain what it means in reality?

When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. **This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and



deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

WEDNESDAY

Read Revelation 14:1-5:

Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless. (NIV84)

The lesson asks, "What are the chief characteristics of the 144,000?"

- They didn't defile themselves with women, they kept themselves pure
- They follow Jesus wherever He goes
- No lie was found in their mouth
- They are blameless

What does this mean? How do you understand it?

Is it literal? Are we speaking of only men who take vows of celibacy? Or is it symbolic?

What do women represent in Bible symbolism? Systems of religion—the pure woman represents God's church; the harlot represents false religions. So, what would it mean to not defile themselves with women?

Does this mean they always had every detail and every fact of Scripture correctly understood, or that they never embraced and valued the principles that are contrary to God's character?

What about following Jesus? Would it mean they are lovers of the truth and are willing to have their ideas changed and improved as the truth is revealed to them? Whereas, those that won't follow Jesus refuse advancing truth to hold to tradition and historic views?

So, in the metaphor of the sanctuary when Jesus moved from the Holy Place to the Most Holy Place, what is the truth that was to be understood and embraced by those who follow Him?



I submit, the essential truth, is that God is Creator, and His laws are design laws, which are signified by the Sabbath, the day of rest which stands for our Creator God. We are to follow Him in worshipping “Him who made the heavens, earth, sea and fountains of water,” which means rejecting the lie of Roman Imperial law as God’s law.

Thus, all those who are still teaching in the SDA church that God’s law functions like human law are not following Jesus where He leads. They are like the Jews 2000 years ago who would not accept the truth of Jesus as Messiah. And what happened, all the symbolic rituals, given to teach them truth became a source of darkness. And what happens in the SDA church when people promote the Sabbath, or Sanctuary, or any other doctrine through the imposed law lens? It becomes a source of darkness because it promotes God’s character as coercive and compelling rather than love!

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “The final...” No lie was found in their mouth—what does this mean? Would it mean:

- Every word uttered in their life was 100% factually correct?
- They never told someone they liked their hair dew when they really didn’t, or said to a friend or family member they enjoyed a meal when they didn’t?
- They never said “No, mommy I didn’t take the candy” with chocolate on their lips?
- They never said anything about God that wasn’t true in their entire life?
- OR, they never said anything about God that wasn’t true **once they were sealed** of God and called by Him to be one of His end-time spokespersons? In other words, **in their end-time witness about God they told the truth about God!**

Read second paragraph, “Without fault...” What does it mean they are blameless?

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.
(Ephesians 1:4 NIV84)

If a child is born of two HIV parents with HIV infection, is the child to blame? Is the child blameless?

But as the child grows to age of accountability and a remedy is offered to cure the HIV infection and the child refuses it and remains infected will the child remain blameless?

So, what does it mean to be blameless? Would it mean to be healed, cured, recreated, renewed to be like Jesus in character? These are the ones who have accepted the Remedy provided by Jesus and cooperated with His healing plan and thus have been reborn, recreated within and are no longer diagnosed as terminal, but are found blameless through the healing work of Christ.



But, those who refuse are to blame, not for having the sin condition, but for refusing the remedy that would cure them. This is taught in the parable of the wedding in which the man who didn't have the free garment provided was cast out.

Read Revelation 7 from *The Remedy*:

After the events of the first six seals, I saw four angels standing at key positions around the earth, holding back the four winds of strife to prevent them from blowing on the land, or sea, or any tree.² Then I saw another one of God's messengers coming from the east, with the truth about God's character of love and the Remedy of the living God, to seal the characters of God's children. He called in a loud voice to the four angels who had the power to harm the land and sea by releasing the winds:³ "Hold! And do not harm the land or sea until we seal the minds of God's helpers and spokespersons, settling them into the truth about God's character and methods of love, so that nothing can shake them from it."⁴ Then I heard the symbolic representation of those who were sealed—144,000 from all peoples of the earth, symbolized by the tribes of Israel:

⁵From Judah 12,000 from Reuben 12,000 from Gad 12,000 ⁶from Asher 12,000 from Naphtali 12,000 from Manasseh 12,000 ⁷from Simeon 12,000 from Levi 12,000 from Issachar 12,000 ⁸from Zebulun 12,000 from Joseph 12,000 from Benjamin 12,000.

⁹After the spokespersons for God were sealed, the four winds were loosed, and I saw before me a great multitude won to God from the witness of God's spokespersons: They were more than anyone could count—from every nation, tribe, people, and language—standing before the throne and in front of Jesus the Lamb. Their characters had been purified to be like Jesus'—symbolized by the wearing of white clothing—and they were holding palm branches in their hands, indicating their praise and acknowledgment of Jesus as King.¹⁰ They cried out in a loud voice: "Healing and restoration come from our God who sits on the throne and from Jesus the Lamb!"

¹¹And all the angels who were standing around the throne, and the elders, and the four living beings—they all fell down in love and awe and worshiped God,¹² singing, "Absolutely right! God is worthy of all praise, and glory, and honor, and thanks, and wisdom, and power, and strength—forever and ever without end! So let it always be!"

¹³Then one of the elders looked at me and asked, "These people in white clothes—who are they and how did they get here?"

¹⁴I answered, "Sir, surely you know." And he did know: he said, "These are they who—after the four winds are loosed—hear the testimony of God's spokespersons and during the great tribulation respond to the truth, accept the Remedy, and have their minds and hearts renewed to be like Jesus'—symbolized by their clothes being washed in the blood of the Lamb."¹⁵ Therefore they are united to the throne of God, and—as living stones in his temple—reveal his character continually; and he who sits on the throne will cover them with his constant love and



care.¹⁶They will never again hunger for truth or thirst for love. No sun or scorching heat will ever harm them—symbolizing that they will never again be burned by trial or tribulation.¹⁷For Jesus the Lamb, who stands at the command center of the universe, will be their protector; he will provide them with springs of living water. And God will comfort them and wipe away all their tears."

FRIDAY

The lesson points out in question 2, that the 144,000 sing a song no one else can sing, because it is a song of their experience. Question: Would that mean they would have to remember their experience in order to sing the song?

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Thank you to all of our supporters!!! We appreciate your prayers and financial support.

To let you know what is IN THE WORKS in addition to our weekly class:

- Audio Version of the Remedy is in production, we are about half way through and hope to have it available in a few months.
- The Power of Love Come and Reason Training and Equipping Course—is in production and more announcements will be forthcoming on time, place, and schedule
- A new sharing pamphlet to be out in March
- A weekly 15 minute radio show/podcast most likely start in April
- Exploring how to expand the Dr. Tim Jennings Television program

February 2-3, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking Christ's Church of Oronogo, MO.

February 22-March 9, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be in Australia speaking in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Adelaide, Avondale, Sydney, Livingston, Perth, and Melbourne.

April 3-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Sophia Bulgaria.



2019 Q1 “The Book of Revelation” Lesson 7 The Seven Trumpets

by Lori Atkins

What are your thoughts about our study in this quarterly so far? Just wondering if anyone else has had their minds completely blown over the past couple of weeks?! I have been reading and studying extensively preparing to teach this week just like normal...but then, after our lesson two weeks ago on the seven seals, I was motivated to dig an study even more – because some of those new, paradigm-shattering concepts of what time periods in earth’s history are covered by each seal...and who the rider is in each seal...are so revolutionary and so contradict everything I have ever heard, everything I have ever been taught – I mean, I was born and raised on the concept of a good revelation seminar...and now what I am discovering has me thinking that there are a bunch of powerpoint slides out there that may need to be changed.

Again, in my research, every document I read, every presentation I listened to, every video I watched – prominent Adventist teachers, seminary professors, theologians, evangelists – all of them... 100%... agree with our quarterly’s view that the seven seals prophecy covers the span of time from Christ’s ascension to the second coming. But because I believe what we are learning and studying is so groundbreakingly different, even though I know Dr. Jennings reviewed the seals briefly last week, I’m going to do it again today because I think it is that vital and important.

Remember we talked about Bible prophecy often having more than one application – the lesson even acknowledged this by stating that the seven churches had historic, prophetic, and universal applications. This realization opens us up to the question, “Could the prophecy of the seven seals have more than one meaning?”

And we read this quote from EGW describing what is contained in the book of the seven seals:

“the history of God’s providences, the prophetic history of nations and the church. Herein was contained the divine utterances, His authority, His commandments, His laws, the whole symbolic counsel of the Eternal, and the history of all ruling powers in the nations. In symbolic language was contained in that roll the influence of every nation, tongue, and people from the beginning of earth’s history to its close.” {9MR 7.2}

There seems to be so much more being described there than the last 2000 years of human history – something much broader and more encompassing – and believe there is compelling evidence to



support the explanation that the seven seals represent God's foreknowledge from the opening of the GC in heaven through to its conclusion...and here's quick recap of each one.

1st Seal – represents Satan's rebellion in heaven with these key elements:

- White horse, presents himself and pretends to be pure
- Holds a bow that shoots arrows
- Wears a crown – claims equality with Christ and later ruler of the Earth.
- Wants to conquer – dominate and compel

2nd Seal – The fall of mankind in Eden

- This rider takes peace from the earth! When did peace get taken from the Earth? After Pentecost or in Eden? I think this is one of the most compelling evidences against the limited historical scope of the seals.

3rd Seal – The history of humanity in the Old Testament up until Christ

- This was a period of spiritual starvation in which truth about God was difficult to find, but the Holy Spirit and the life of Christ could not be destroyed.

4th Seal – Christianity through the Middle and Dark Ages

- The power of the church to distort the truth about God by distorted teachings about God, restricting access to the Word of God, and introducing pagan god concepts.

5th Seal – 1844 and the opening of the Investigative Judgment

- individualities were being cleansed from sin and given white robes

6th Seal – The shaking and end-time rejection of God and rise of atheism and evolutionism

7th Seal – The final events culminating in the second coming of Christ

And is this important? Why? Remember we also learned last week that it is okay to have different views of various elements of Revelation as long as the following remain true:

- God is always portrayed as love
- God's laws are design laws
- Trust and faith in God are increased
- Fear and distrust in God are decreased
- You are growing to be more like Christ in character and method
- You become engaged as a worker to share the truth about God.



What happens if we see Christ as the rider with a bow who seeks to conquer?
Does it make a difference who/when we see peace being taken from the earth?
Does it make a difference if we Christ or Satan holding a yoke and binding us to something?
Does it make a difference if we see Christ or Satan bringing death and Hades?

I believe in this book specifically designed to be a revelation of God's love and truth, it is every bit as important to reveal the lies and the deceptions and the deceivers...in fact, I do not believe you can't do one without the other. It's so important that we see how Satan's deceitful, destructive actions throughout (not just human) history...have been countered repeatedly and consistently with God's loving intervention, intercession, and healing truth.

SATURDAY

Some early insight (spoiler alert) into the authors' attitudes and viewpoints regarding what the seven trumpets represent...as well as their picture of God and how He and His law operate. So there is some correlation between the vision of the seven trumpets and the scene of the fifth seal – we just discussed this fifth seal where we saw

“... under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed. (Rev 6:9-11, NIV)

Again, what does this mean...is this language literal or symbolic? Of course, it is symbolic with the sanctuary a metaphor for God's plan to heal and restore...the altar represents hearts and minds that have the Holy Spirit burning within...and the incense signifies their praises and prayers ascending.

So, not surprisingly, the quarterly seems to focus in on these souls under the altar, crying to God for “justice and vindication”...in fact, the lesson states,

“The voice from heaven urged them to wait, because the day was coming when God would judge those who harmed them...and points to Revelation 6:15-17 as a picture of Jesus returning to this earth and bringing judgment upon those who did evil to His faithful followers.”



What does this mean? How do you hear it? How has it typically been taught?

Saturday's last paragraph says,

"The vision of the seven trumpets shows that, throughout history, God has already intervened on behalf of His oppressed people and has judged those who harmed them."

Has God intervened throughout history? On whose behalf – only His oppressed people?

"The purpose of the seven trumpets is to assure God's people that heaven is not indifferent to their suffering."

Is this the real purpose for the revelation of the seven trumpets? Let's examine these trumpets a little more closely and see if we agree on whether that is their purpose...or whether there are other possible reasons why they might be included in John's revelation.

SUNDAY

The Prayers of the Saints

We first see this reference to the seven trumpets in Revelation chapter 8, after the 6th seal has been opened, and during an interlude before the 7th seal is opened.

Do you remember what time in earth's history this represents, based on our past 2 weeks of study and brief review?

The events of the 6th seal included a great earthquake, the sun turning black, the moon turning blood red, and the stars falling. Then the sky rolled back, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Our alternate understanding is that this language references the war between God and Satan, where it's being fought, and the weapons being used. This language is symbolic of the warfare moving into its final phase – where an escalating spread of the true gospel is met with escalating darkness and evil, and it takes place between the shaking and end-time rejection of God (evidenced by the rise of atheism and evolutionism)...and the final end-time events culminating in the second coming of Christ.

So it is at this point we see the story in Rev 8:3-4 that correlates closely with the description of the daily services in the temple in Jerusalem, where at the evening sacrifice the lamb was placed on the altar of burnt offering, and the blood was poured out at the base of the altar...then an appointed priest took the golden censer inside the temple and offered incense on the golden altar in the Holy Place.



When the priest came out, he threw the censer down on the pavement, producing a loud noise...at that point, seven priests blew their trumpets, marking the end of the temple services for that day.

Please read Revelation 8: 3 through 6. You can hear the strong parallels between this scene in John's vision and the daily temple service, right?

The quarterly concludes again, "The seven trumpets are God's judgments on rebellious humanity in response to the prayers of His oppressed people."

Agree or disagree?

Same Rev 8 passage from the Remedy:

"But a different angel, holding a golden censer and standing in front of the golden altar, was burning a large amount of incense mixed with the prayers of the saints. This symbolized the character of Christ, burning within the hearts of God's representatives on earth as they prayed for the revelation of God's character of love and the redemption of humankind. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth. This symbolized the Holy Spirit empowering God's spokespersons to reveal the truth with stunning clarity. There was an incredible shaking of the minds of the people, accompanied by flashes of brilliance that battled rumblings of confusion and the thundering of opposition. Then the seven angels holding the seven trumpets prepared to sound them, which represents seven warning messages of truth trumpeting the approaching end and exposing Satan's counterfeits to God's Remedy."

And don't forget...this is also right around the time when the Holy Spirit is being withdrawn from the earth (why?), and the 4 angels who had been holding *back* the winds of strife...were waiting for what? Remember the 144,000 and the "sealed of God"? What did these folks represent? And what was their purpose...why is there an interlude – why did the angels continue to hold and why did these seven trumpets not sound until they were sealed? How many groups will there be at the end of time?

I believe everyone alive then will be brought to the ultimate decision point – fear or love, selfishness or giving, do I love myself so much that I will do whatever is necessary – including kill you – that I might live...or do I love you so much that I will do whatever is necessary – including die – that you might live? This IS the war, the battle that is being fought in these texts.

So how will every single living being on earth be brought to this decision point? I believe it is these warning messages and events...the disasters and catastrophes that happen as the four winds are



loosed...that get people's attention – where even the most agnostic and atheistic folks are asking what's happening – and the sealed of God have a healing answer and can rightly represent God, and while there are still hearts open to hear...while the Holy Spirit's presence is still here on this earth, many choose love and are saved.

But we will also see when we look at the later trumpets, that eventually, just as the saved are so settled into the truth that they cannot be moved...so the lost are so settled into the lies that they will not be moved, no matter how dire and urgent the warnings become.

Are “warning messages of truth trumpeting the approaching end” the same as “God's judgments on rebellious humanity”...do you hear those the same?

The last paragraph in Sunday's lesson does say that the throwing down of the censer “also may be a warning that Christ's intercession will not last forever.”

What does that mean? Why won't it?

MONDAY

The Meaning of the Trumpets

While most of the New Testament references to trumpets are right here in Rev 8 and 9, the Greek words for trumpets/trumpeting occur 144 times in the Old Testament, and 105/144 (73%) of those references concern either signaling in warfare, worship, and prayer – or a combination of these. In ancient Israel the trumpets were always to be handled by the priests, even in warfare...providing a spiritual parallel signaling trumpets represented a prayer to God for intervention in battle.

Likewise, in the temple and on feast days, the blowing of trumpets invited God's spiritual intervention in the lives of his people. Essentially, trumpets in the Bible represent covenant-based prayer, calling on God to remember His people. The quarterly says,

“The seven trumpets are a response to the prayers of the suffering saints of God. It assures them that God has noticed their suffering, and, even though He may seem silent in their experience, He is already acting in history against those who have persecuted them.”

I watched a presentation on The Fifth and Sixth Trumpets by Dr. Jon Pauline and Dr. Graham Bradford. Again, these are leading theologians...religion professors...and they had this to say:



“To those who are abused and oppressed, the trumpet message is this: God hears your prayers – it may not seem like He’s acting now, but He is acting even when you cannot see it. He is making note of what you have suffered and the day is coming when He will address that and bring justice. Just as the trumpets offer comfort to those who pray...those who have been abused, they also should be a warning to those who oppress, to those who do the abusing – because the day is coming, may not be right away, but in time, in history, God does act. Those who act abusively, oppressively toward others, the Day of Judgment does come. So, if we are acting in ways that are harmful to other people, and no consequences seem to come to us, that’s just the way it is right now. When God has marked those, there is a judgment at the end when God does respond to those prayers of the saints. So the trumpets, in a real sense, are a call to repentance, especially to those who are hardened, to those who feel like, ‘I can get away with anything,’ the trumpets have some powerful things to say to them.”

Can we “act in ways that are harmful to other people and no consequences come to us?” Why?

Do people who abuse an oppress “get away with it” if God does not “mark” those deeds, and then intervene to impose judgment/punishment? Why?

In the middle of Sunday’s lesson, point (b) indicates the timeframe of these seven trumpets begin at Christ’s resurrection and run consecutively throughout history until the Second Coming...which differs somewhat from Dr. Jennings’ view in the Remedy paraphrase, where the trumpets are viewed as seven last warning messages to the people of earth at the end of time in order to prepare the world for the coming of Christ and expose Satan’s fraud. The particular timeframe and who is impacted in each trumpet event are open to various interpretations, so I think it’s okay to examine possible explanations by considering the merits and then asking – why is this important, what does it tell us about God, what does it say about God’s character and methods – those are the really important considerations, not locking in on an absolute meaning for each trumpet as these are presumably future events.

Let’s quickly review the contents of the seven trumpets, and we are going to contrast the traditional NIV with the Remedy...we have done this in the last couple of weeks with the seven churches and the seven seals, and I thought it was really powerful to see side by side how tweaking or shifting a word or a meaning even slightly completely changes the perspective and the paradigm and how I understand and receive that message.

We are starting in Rev 8:7-9:



Trumpet 1

NIV: “The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.”

The quarterly suggests that the use of Old Testament judgment-y language of hail, fire, and blood represents God’s judgment on the Jerusalem that had rejected Christ.

Now from the Remedy:

“The first angel sounded his trumpet, and a hailstorm of fiery truth revealing the Remedy achieved by Christ's shed blood was poured upon the earth. One-third of the earth was consumed in fiery turmoil, and the hearts of one-third of earth's leaders and people burned within them as the truth shone forth.”

Does a hailstorm of fiery truth and the Remedy achieved by Christ’s shed blood, and believers’ hearts burning as they shine forth truth change your picture of God when reading this passage?

Trumpet 2

NIV: “The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.”

The lesson suggests proposes that this second trumpet recalls God’s general judgments on all who oppose him, in particular the fall of ancient Babylon...so this trumpet is associated with the fall of the Roman Empire (comparing Peter’s apparent designation of Rome as “Babylon”).

Now from the Remedy:

“The second angel sounded his trumpet, and a huge mountain of truth revealing God's kingdom, ablaze with love, was made known to the sea of earth's inhabitants. One-third of the people accepted the Remedy and partook of the life of Christ, symbolized by the blood—they died to self and gave up their selfish trade.”



Trumpet 3

NIV: “The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water — the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.”

The lesson suggests that the biblical imagery and symbolism suggest a perversion of truth and a rise of apostasy; therefore, they associate this trumpet with the condition of the church in the Middle Ages.

Remedy: “The third angel sounded his trumpet to make it known that an angel, like a brilliant star blazing through the sky, had fallen from heaven, and one-third of the people had their minds filled with his lies about God. This attack was called Bitterness, and many people died from drinking in his bitter lies.”

Trumpet 4

NIV: “The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.”

The quarterly suggests that the sources of light being darkened represents the symbols of truth being partially eclipsed and parallels the deepening of apostasy in the church.

Remedy: “The fourth angel sounded his trumpet with the warning that one-third of people would believe the lie of evolution and no longer recognize the light from the sun, moon and stars as evidence of God's creatorship. The minds of one-third of the people would be darkened and their hearts hardened by this lie, both night and day, as they no longer searched for God.”

Trumpet 5

NIV: “The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. And out of the smoke locusts came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They were not allowed to kill them but only to torture them for five months, and the



agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes. During those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.”

The lesson suggests that the transition from partial darkness to total darkness represents the triumph of religious apostasy and secularism in the modern age. With God and truth totally eclipsed, sinful humankind is left to the demonic torment of destructive desires.

Remedy: “The fifth angel trumpeted his warning, and I saw a fallen angel symbolized by a star falling from the sky to the earth. The fallen angel had the key to accessing the abyss, symbolizing spiritualism and mysticism being the key to accessing the pit of demonic influences. He opened the abyss, and smoke rose from it like that from a huge furnace, symbolizing the immense rise in popularity and acceptance of spiritualism and mysticism. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke, symbolizing the minds of people having become dark and no longer looking to God for enlightenment. Out of the smoke came locusts that had the power of scorpions. As locusts consume the fruit of the land, so too the sting of sin consumes the fruit of the Spirit. The locusts were unable to harm the people whose minds were so settled into the truth about God that they could not be moved—symbolized by the healthy grass, plants, and trees—but could harm those whose minds were not sealed into the truth about God. They were not able to inflict direct physical harm, but caused tortured thinking and mental anguish for five months. And the agony suffered was from the sting of living outside God's design for life—the scorpion-sting of sin. Dying to self and being renewed in righteousness is preferable to living in the anguish of sin, therefore many will seek to die to self and be renewed, but they will not find it, because they seek their own mystical method of renewal.”

Trumpet 6

NIV: “The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the four horns of the golden altar that is before God. It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of the mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand. I heard their number. The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads



with which they inflict injury. The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk. Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.”

Why not? The quarterly suggests the events of this trumpet again echo biblical accounts of ancient Babylon, so the sixth trumpet describes an opposition to God similar to that of end-time Babylon.

Remedy: “The sixth angel trumpeted his warning, and I heard a voice—coming from the horns of the golden altar before God—which is Christ speaking while he works to cleanse the minds of his people. The voice said to the sixth angel, who held the warning trumpet, “It is time to release the four angels bound to the great river Euphrates, who have stood as a barrier protecting the people.” Then the four angels who had been waiting for that hour, day, month and year were released, and they let go of what they held back; and one-third of people on earth died. The number of the enemy forces was more than two times ten thousand times ten thousand—the number was beyond counting, symbolizing the number composed of peoples from the entire world. The horses and riders were a conglomerate of diverse forces uniting together to oppose God. They were assembled in three main divisions: Those who believed the lies about God and promoted them through churches had breastplates of fiery red; those who practiced mysticism and spiritualism had breastplates of metallic blue; and those who merely pursued political power and coerced with the power of the state had breastplates of sulfur yellow. They were all bent on destroying truth, love and freedom, as symbolized by their horses with heads like the heads of lions. They destroyed with fiery lies, smoky mysticism, and coercive pressure. One-third of humanity had their characters destroyed by the combined effect of the fiery lies, smoky mysticism, and coercive pressure. The power of these enemy forces came from the lies and falsehoods they promoted—symbolized by the smoke coming from their mouths, and by their tails being like heads of snakes, which were able to inflict injury. The rest of humanity whose consciences were not completely seared by these assaults still refused to turn away from their own self-promotion; they continued to trust demons, and the idols of their own hearts’ desire, that are not even alive. They did not turn away from destroying others, or from mystical and magical practices, or from sexual immorality or theft.”

Trumpet 7

Rev 11:15-19 NIV: “The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever.’ And the twenty-four elders, who were seated



on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: ‘We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. The nations were angry, and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your people who revere your name, both great and small— and for destroying those who destroy the earth.’ Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a severe hailstorm.”

Remedy: “The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and loud voices proclaimed in heaven: ‘The kingdom of selfishness, based on earth, has been eradicated, and the earth has become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ; and he will reign forever and ever.’ And the twenty-four elders who were seated on thrones before God humbled themselves in awe and admiration, and said, ‘We are thankful to you, Lord God Almighty—who lives today and who has always existed—because you have unveiled your great power and begun to reign in truth and love. The nations of the selfish world lived in anger, and you have let them reap what they have chosen. The time has come for accurately diagnosing those who sleep in the grave, for rewarding your spokespersons—the prophets, and your saints, and all those who revere your character of love, both small and great, and for the destruction of those who destroy the earth.’ Then God’s Healing Plan—represented by the Sanctuary—was disclosed, and at its heart was Jesus the Lamb, who unites the universe into one, represented by the Ark. And there came flashes of insight, rumblings of understanding, peals of thunderous adoration, a foundational collapse of earth-based thinking, and a great hailstorm of truth.”

WEDNESDAY

Eating the Scroll

Eating in the Bible is used to describe the acceptance of a message from God in order to proclaim it to the people. When received, the message is good news; but when it is proclaimed, it sometimes results in bitterness as it is resisted and rejected by many.

Has anyone here experienced this?

John’s commission to “prophesy again” to the world points to Sabbath-keeping Adventists, raised up to proclaim the message of the Second Coming in connection with the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation...is this what John’s commission points to?

What were we raised up to proclaim?



Bottom box: “Keeping in mind how central blood was to the Day of Atonement ritual, how can we always keep before us the reality that the judgment is good news? Why is this truth so important?”

THURSDAY

The Two Witnesses

The idea of two witnesses comes from the Jewish legal system which requires at least two witnesses to establish something as true.



The Book of Revelation Lesson 8 1Q 2019

Satan, a Defeated Enemy

SABBATH

Remember:

- Revelation is highly symbolic—every person is to be fully persuaded in their own mind.
- We don't have to interpret every detail of the symbols correctly to be saved
- Salvation is found in Jesus, trusting Him, opening the heart and being reborn by the indwelling Spirit—saved people can disagree on technical points of interpretation—it's okay
- No interpretation should be accepted that represents God in a character different that Jesus revealed, or which has God violating His design laws of love and liberty

Read Memory Text Rev 12:11:

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

What does it mean?

- Is the blood of the Lamb literal or metaphorical? Is it red corpuscles?
- Does the blood stand for life or death or both?
 - The blood is symbolic of the perfect righteous character—life of Christ that was developed as the Remedy for our sinfulness. This perfect sinless life was developed by Jesus, as a human, and the complete victory was achieved at the cross when love (the law of life) defeated fear and selfishness “by his death he destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light” 1Tim 1:9,10. The blood can also represent the truth about God as revealed in Jesus's life; the truth which dispels the lies which restores us to trust.
- How is the blood of the Lamb related to overcoming the devil?
 - We partake the flesh and blood (John 6), which is representative of the truth about God which wins us to trust and then receive via a real indwelling connection by the Spirit the life of Jesus—the motives, attitudes, desires, thoughts of Christ so that we love what He loves, we become like Him as we choose to identify with, cherish, value, embrace the life of Jesus.
- What is the word of their testimony?
 - Would they give the same teaching about God that Jesus gave?
 - Would they not only teach the truth about God and His character and methods of love, but also would they live out the principles of God in their lives?
- What is revealed by “they did not love their life so much as to shrink from death?”
 - Would it mean a change of heart from survival drive to love for others?
 - Would this be healing of their characters, restoring them to righteousness?



- Would this be taking away the damage of sin and restoring the perfection of Jesus?
- Would this be setting right that which is wrong? Which is called justification.

Is any of this possible by human willpower and human effort alone?

SUNDAY

Read Revelation 12:1-5:

A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. ² She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. ³ Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. ⁴ His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. ⁵ She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. (NIV84)

What does the woman represent? In this case, the people of God—God’s church of that day.

What is represented by the Sun and Moon?

The Sun represents the love and righteousness of Christ, but the Moon has a couple of possible interpretations. It can be interpreted to mean of the OT which taught about the righteousness of Christ, but it the Moon can also stand for the promises of God. In other words, the woman stands on the promises of God. This comes from:

Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness— and I will not lie to David—that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun; it will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky.” Ps 89:35-37

What does the crown of 12 stars represent? The twelve patriarchs, twelve tribes and alludes to the 12 apostles, all of whom were leaders/founders of God’s church of their time.

What is symbolized by a pregnancy and about to give birth? The incarnation of Christ.

Who is the red dragon? Satan

What is symbolized by the seven heads and ten horns?

The beast in Revelation 13 also has seven heads and ten horns, but the dragon has crowns on the seven heads, whereas the beast has crowns on the ten horns, why the difference? What is symbolized by this difference?

Well, what is symbolized by the heads and horns and the number 7 and 10?

Seven is a spiritual number, a number that relates to worship, to completion. Ten is a temporal number associated with nations and states: the ten toes of the multi-metal idol representing 10 nations. It represents a worldwide or complete number of national or temporal powers. Whereas, seven represents spiritual powers.

We have some indication of this in Revelation 13 where one of the heads have blasphemous names, which means they assume God's role or misrepresent God. One of the heads of the beast that receives a wound and is healed, not one of the horns, and we have multiple identifiers that we will explore in a later lesson, that indicate that head refers to the Roman Catholic Church and its wounding in 1798 when Berthier took the Pope captive at the end of the 1260 years.

So, if one head is specifically identified as the Roman church, what might the other 6 heads represent that are part of the dragon and the beast?

Further in Revelation 17 the seven heads are seven hills, and hills in the Bible were represented as places of worship. Ancient temples and shrines were built on hills and God called his place of worship "my holy hill" or Mt Zion. (Dan 9:16, Ps 2:6, 15:1, 24:3, Joel 2:1,

Could it be the other major false religious systems of the world that dominate and are part of the beastly system of deception?

- Paganism/Heathenism
- Atheism
- Eastern mysticism
- Judaism (after the rejection of Christ)
- Islam (which traces its origin back to Ishmael and his twelve sons and Muhammad was the last prophet or formally organized it)
- Roman Catholicism
- False Protestantism

If this is true, why does the dragon have crowns on the heads but the beast has crowns on its horns?

What is Satan's primary goal for rulership? Is it not to be worshipped as a god? But the beast system never claimed its rulers were gods to be worshipped; they claimed to be agents of their god and their power came not through seeking to get people to believe they were god, but through the power of coercion, the power of arms, the power of the state, by enforcing their false beliefs and practices.

So, the crowns represent ruling authority or power—Satan claims to rule as a god, who has the right to be worshipped, thus the crowns on the heads of the dragon beast. Whereas the beast of Revelation 13 claims to be the enforcer of its false god and thus the crowns on the horns.



If this is right, why did EGW in the last paragraph, say, “Thus the dragon, primarily, represents Satan, it is, in a secondary sense, a symbol of pagan Rome.”

Because pagan Rome devolved into false god worship as a source of its power where the Caesars eventually claimed to be living gods and their power was derived from their god-status. So, in a lesser degree the dragon beast. with crowns on the heads, represents pagan Rome.

MONDAY

Read Revelation 12:7-9:

And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸ But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. ⁹ The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. (NIV84)

What kind of war was this? The Greek word for war is *polemo*, from which we get polemic, a war of words or ideas. Satan is the father of lies—he wars by infecting the minds of intelligent beings with falsehood in order to change loyalty, pervert hearts, damage minds, and corrupt characters. The war between good and evil has never a war over who is powerful.

And when was he cast to the earth?

Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; Eze 28:17 NIV84

When was Satan hurled out of heaven? There are two views on this:

- At the opening of the war in heaven
- At the cross

The Ezekiel text above, supports Satan was cast out of heaven and to the earth when he corrupted himself at the beginning of the GC in heaven—before mankind existed!

My view is that there are actually two castings out or down, one at the opening of the Great Controversy and the second at the cross. And both had a specific purpose in God’s plan to win the war of ideas and secure the universe in perfection.

The casting out at the opening of the Great Controversy in heaven.

What condition was the earth in at that time?

Consider this quote from EGW, does it fit the timeline we get from Scripture:



Angels on probation had been deceived by Satan, and had been led on by him in the great rebellion in heaven against Christ. They failed to endure the test brought to bear upon them, and they fell. **Adam was then created in the image of God** and placed upon probation. {Con 18.2}

If this is correct, then the timeline may go like this. Satan began his war of words undermining the character of God in heaven *before* the creation of earth. One of his allegations was that he was equal to Jesus and it wasn't fair that Jesus could go into councils with the Father that Lucifer wasn't invited into.

Why was Lucifer not invited into the councils that Jesus was included in?

- God lives in unapproachable light 1Tim 6:16, unapproachable by whom? By any finite being—God is infinite and finite beings cannot process infinity it would destroy us. This is why Lucifer was not allowed in.
- But why did Lucifer think he should be?
- If an infinite God, who is love, wants the closest intimacy and fellowship possible with His creatures and His creatures cannot enter into infinity, what must happen? A member of the Godhead leaves infinity and enters linear existence in the form of a physical created being—that member what Jesus. Jesus presented Himself in the form of an angel in order to bring the intelligent beings into the closest connection with God possible.

So, Satan alleges equality with Christ and that God is unfair and arbitrary in setting rules that prohibit Lucifer from going into the councils that Jesus can go into. If you were God in this setting what evidence might you provide?

Might Jesus, the member of the Godhead, whom Satan alleges equality with, begin to demonstrate He is not a created being but the Creator? But before Jesus does this, might God permit Lucifer the opportunity to demonstrate his claimed supremacy and equality to Jesus?

So, Lucifer is cast out to this earth and it is a formless void full of darkness—and Satan can do nothing.

Then Jesus comes and in seven days makes a world teeming with life, all operating upon the law of love a microcosm of the universe, with Adam and Eve, two new beings made in God's image with procreative powers governing the planet. All designed to give evidence that God is love, that Jesus is God and that God rules on other-centeredness.

Read first paragraph, "Satan was cast out of..." So, Satan is cast to the earth at the beginning of the rebellion in heaven and he is unable to create, but has a front row seat as Jesus creates. But after the creation of humanity, and Adam's fall, is Satan restricted to the earth, or is he able to travel to heaven?



The first chapter of Job demonstrates he is still traveling to heaven and tempting the angels there with his lies.

What about today—is Satan still traveling to heaven and tempting angels? Why or why not?

What happened that changed his ability to do this?

Jesus said, “Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all **men (not in the Greek, supplied by translators)** to myself.” John 12:31,32

- Who is the prince of this world? Satan
- From where is he being driven out? –from the hearts and affections of all who embrace the truth Jesus reveals
- Who is drawn to Jesus when He is lifted up? Please note, the word “men” is supplied, it should read will “draw all to myself.” Who would that include?
- Col 1:20, “to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”

So, Satan was cast out of heaven at the beginning of the GC in order to demonstrate his claims, which he failed to do, and in order for Christ to demonstrate He is Creator. But Satan, was cast out of the affections of all intelligent beings outside planet earth at the cross.

Read second paragraph, “By His death...” So, is Satan restricted to earth by God using a force shield to keep him here, or is he restricted by the fact there are no intelligent beings anywhere else in the universe who will listen to his lies? In other words, all the other intelligent beings have been settled into the truth and won’t give Satan a moment of their time.

Is this restriction an arbitrary restriction, or a design law restriction?

And what was it that helped the angels in heaven come to this conclusion and close Satan out of their hearts? Was it not the truth that Jesus revealed and Satan being exposed?

Do human beings need to see this same truth?

But, do human beings need something more from Jesus than the angels needed?

What more do we need?

We need the truth to dispel lies and restore trust that the angels needed but we also need a new sinless nature or character operating in perfect harmony with God’s design law of love.

Can any human, other than Jesus, provide such a perfect character? No, but Jesus provides both to sinful humans. He provides the truth that exposes Satan as a liar and confirms God as completely true



and trustworthy, while simultaneously destroying, in the humanity He assumed, the infection of fear and selfishness, and by the exercise of His human abilities, He developed a perfect, sinless, human character that He offers to us as a free gift.

Heb 5:8,9, “Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹ and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him ¹⁰ and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.” (NIV84)

Wasn't He always perfect? He was always sinless. Bible perfection is about mature character and character cannot be created, it must be developed by the freewill choices of the intelligent being. Jesus, as a human, did this.

So EGW writes it this way:

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, **lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character**, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus **the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."** Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Notice what justifying is—it is building up in the believer a righteous character from the achievements of Christ. It is setting us right in heart and mind to love like Jesus loves.

What about the idea in the paragraph “Before the whole universe, the rule over earth was transferred from Satan to Jesus, and He was proclaimed the legitimate ruler over earth.”

Does this mean:

- That Satan was the legitimate ruler until the cross and at the cross Christ became the legitimate ruler OR
- That Jesus was always the legitimate ruler—even before the cross, but after the cross the intelligent beings *recognized* that truth and in their minds the rulership was transferred to Jesus from Satan?

EGW says:

When Satan declared to Christ, The kingdom and glory of the world are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it, he stated what was true only in part, and he declared it to serve his own purpose of deception. Satan's dominion was that wrested from Adam, but **Adam was the vicegerent of the Creator**. His was not an independent rule. The earth is God's, and He



has committed all things to His Son. **Adam was to reign subject to Christ. When Adam betrayed his sovereignty into Satan's hands, Christ still remained the rightful King.** Thus the Lord had said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." Daniel 4:17. Satan can exercise his usurped authority only as God permits. {DA 129.4}

TUESDAY

Read Revelation 12:13,14:

When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴ The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach.

What does this mean?

- Who is the dragon—Satan, as he was hurled to the earth
- Who is the woman that gave birth to a male child? The people of God
- What do wings represent? Speed ability to fly away, to flee
- What does the desert represent? places without water—which would be places without people. Rev 17:15 "Then the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages. (NIV 84)
- So, if waters represent populated places, desert—a place without water—would represent unpopulated places
- What is the time, times, and half a time represent?

Read the third paragraph, "The period of Satan's..." A time would be a year, times would be two years, and half a time would be half a year. In Jewish timekeeping a year had 360 days, so $360 \times 3.5 = 1260$ days which is the same as what was described in verse six.

But, how do we get from 1260 days to 1260 years? Because this is Bible prophecy, not literal events. And in Bible prophecy, just as:

- the dragon is symbolic of Satan
- the woman is symbolic of God's people
- the male child is symbolic of Jesus
- the water is symbolic of seas of people
- the desert is symbolic of places with few people
- the wings are symbolic of speed to flee
- the days are symbolic of years
 - see Numbers 14:34 Israel spend 1 year in wilderness for every day the spies spent in Canaan;



- Ezekiel 4:5,6, the number of days Ezekiel was instructed to lie on his side, would be the number of years of punishment on Israel and Judah;
- Daniel 9:24-27 the 70 weeks map out perfectly to 490 years until Messiah

Why, after the victory of Christ at the cross, has the completion of God's plan to save humanity and rid the universe of sin taken so long?

Because, God's laws are design laws, truth, love, liberty, and God is Sovereign and runs His universe on these principles. And while Christ revealed the truth and procured the Remedy during His 33 years on earth, Satan counterattacked with other lies about the cross to misinterpret the cross and infect the minds of people with such gross distortions about God that the healing truth has been blunted in its ability to spread throughout the world. Paul describes it this way:

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. ³ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. (2Thes 2:1-4 NIV84)

What is described here? That Satan would counterattack the work of Christ and so misrepresent what Jesus achieved that the lies would become predominant and Satan would be established in the temple of God as the one people value and worship. How? By replacing design law with imposed law and thus teaching God is like Satan in character, a being who must use his power to torture and kill rule-breakers unless some legal payment buys him off.

This is the woman riding on the beast which intoxicates the entire world with her wine—the wine of these false ideas.

Minds are darkened by this false theology and the healing plan of God is obstructed. That is why God prophesied through Daniel that it would be 2300 years before the sanctuary would be cleansed, before enough truth was recovered to free the minds of people from these lies about God. And why has it taken so long? Because the lies initially obscure truth and it takes time for the corruption, abuse, darkness to be seen. In time, thinking people see the failings of the imperial law lie as coercive pressure, inquisitions, executions, dominations do not work to transform people to be like Jesus. Godly people eventually rebel against the lie and the truth slowly makes its way through the fabric of humanity—and we are in the midst of this reformation.

We are still fighting this war, fighting against these lies, but we have divine weapons to demolish the strongholds of Satan—truth love and freedom.



WEDNESDAY

Read Revelation 12:17:

Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus. (NIV84)

What does this mean?

- Who is the dragon? Satan
- Who is the woman? God’s people—those loyal to Him
- What kind of war? physical or primarily spiritual, attacking their minds with lies about God?

Who are the “rest of her offspring” sometimes called the remnant?

They are identified with two identifiers—what are they?

Obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Let’s examine these two identifiers.

What does it mean to obey God’s commandments?

It is really very simple—they live in harmony with God’s design laws for life—they no longer live based on fear and selfishness, but on trust and love in harmony with God’s design for life.

The only ones who can do this are those who have had their hearts changed, such that they do not love their own lives so much as to shrink from death. Rev 12:11

Consider this for a moment, applying this principle. What would it mean to love one’s own life that we do shrink from death?

Consider the following scenarios and tell me how the righteous respond:

- Brought before counsel and told that when the music plays they must bow to the golden idol or be thrown in the fiery furnace?
 - How to the righteous respond?
 - The righteous don’t bow—they are not so afraid to die that they compromise their characters.
- How about they are told that if they work on a certain day of the week they will be imprisoned—say Friday or Sunday?
 - How do the righteous respond do they work or not work?



- They don't work on that day—there is no violation of God's command to rest on a day the state says to rest on. We do this now if the state shuts down businesses for certain holidays etc.
- What if they are told they must attend worship services on Sabbath and shut down their business or be imprisoned?
 - How do the righteous respond?
- How about the state passes a law that all citizens must be baptized into Jesus Christ?
 - How do the righteous respond?

Is it a violation of God's law for the state to create holidays and shut down businesses?

What is a violation of God's law? Coercive enforcement on matters of conscience.

God's law is design law, truth, presented in love, leaving others free—any religious laws that are matters of conscience that are enforced upon people are violations of God's law—regardless of whether the law agrees with Scripture or not.

The lesson says the main issue at the end of time is worship—what does this mean—does it mean the forms and ceremonies of worship, or the God we are worshipping?

What about the testimony of Jesus identifier?

Read the last paragraph, “Also, the end-time...” what do you think of this interpretation?

The SDA church takes the position that Ellen G. White (EGW) had the Biblical gift of prophecy. Let's assume for a moment that EGW did have the Bible gift of prophecy; that would then mean her writings are the writings of a dead prophet. What is the Bible? The writings of dead prophets.

So, does this indicator mean that the end-time remnant will be identified by possessing the writings of dead prophets?

Or, does it mean something more than this? Do God's end-time remnant have to have something more than the writings of dead prophets?

Did you notice that the NIV says “hold to the testimony of Jesus” rather than “have the testimony of Jesus.”

What is the testimony of Jesus, Revelation 19:10:

- For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” NIV 84
- For the truth that Jesus revealed is what inspires the prophets. GNB
- Worship God, because the message about Jesus is the spirit that gives all prophecy. NCV



So, one view is that the remnant are those who obey all 10 commandments, including the Sabbath commandment, and have had a historical person, who is now deceased, that possessed the gift of prophecy.

Another view, is that the remnant are those who live in harmony with God's design law in their lives, have the law written in their heart and mind and give the same testimony about God that Jesus and all the prophets gave because that truth about God is what the Spirit always brings.

THUS—this group become the spokespersons for God described in Revelation 7, represented by the 144,000 sealed and called the servants of God, which are his prophets or spokes persons. So, I propose that the remnant are the group of people at the end of time who have been renewed in heart to live in harmony with God's design law (keep the commandments) and give the truth about God that Jesus gave, thus have the gift of prophecy manifested in their lives as they are giving the Spirit inspired truth about God for the people in their day!

Could there be people who obey the Sabbath commandment and who are members of a church that has had a deceased prophet, yet those people do not love others, have not been reborn, are not like Jesus in character?

Would such individuals be part of the remnant? So, does the remnant describe an institution or does it describe people who have been restored to Godlikeness—having the law written on their hearts and minds (Heb 8:10) and give the testimony about God that Jesus did?

Now, have I just attacked any institution? No, I have merely focused the reality of God's plan of salvation to where it has always been—healing the hearts and minds of people to be like Jesus.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "Revelation 12:17..." What kind of war does Satan wage?

What are Satan's weapons?

How has Satan infected Christianity with his lies?

What is the root lie to all lies in Christianity? That God's law functions like human law and therefore requires the infliction of punishment by God.

What is Satan's end-time strategy?

Would it be to get people to become more fearful, and in fear they seek to take more control to enforce order, stop rebellion, put an end to evil—because they are frightened?

Can fear be vanquished by force, might, coercion, punishment of wickedness?

Can fear be vanquished by teaching God is coming back to punish the nations?

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.”—Martin Luther King Jr., Strength to Love (1963)

Can love be restored by teaching God’s law require God punish law breakers?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

FEB 23, 2019 We will not meet in the Courthouse—location for that day yet to be determined. We will announce on website and email to our email list, when we find a location.

Thank you to all of our supporters!!! We appreciate your prayers and financial support.

To let you know what is IN THE WORKS in addition to our weekly class:

- Audio Version of the Remedy is in production, we are about half way through and hope to have it by the first of April.
- The Power of Love Come and Reason Training and Equipping Course—is in production and more announcements will be forthcoming on time, place, and schedule
- A new sharing pamphlet to be out in March
- A weekly 15 minute radio show/podcast will start in April
- Exploring how to expand the Dr. Tim Jennings Television program

February 22-March 9, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be in Australia speaking in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Adelaide, Avondale, Sydney, Livingston, Perth, and Melbourne.

April 3-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Sophia Bulgaria.

May 10,11, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Barrie SDA Church, 140 Mapleton Ave
Barrie, ON L4N 9N7 Canada

June 8, 2019: Dr. Jennings will present The Aging Brain Seminar at Mid Columbia Medical Center, in The Dalles, OR.

July 10, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the 3rd Global Health Conference, sponsored by the General Conference of SDA and held at Loma Linda University.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.



FEB 23, 2019 We will meet at Bake Crafters. See website for map.

The Book of Revelation Lesson 8 1Q 2019

Satan and His Allies

by Tim Jennings

I received this email this week from an online listener:

I will be the first to admit that the Remedy message is liberating albeit I still struggle with some concepts, but by God's grace the pieces will start to fit one day.

May I share the following,

I was once told that a father who confesses his sins to Jesus in family prayer is considered a noble act...

I did this saying Jesus please forgive my sins, thinking it was a learning that my children would get that Jesus wipes the record away. But no change took place.

But after hearing the Remedy message, I prayed that I knew my sin was harming my character and family, please forgive me and teach me to overcome my impatience and replace it with your patience. Whilst praying, I felt sooo humiliated admitting my sin to my family, humbling myself before my God and family, recognizing I needed change in my character. Yet after this prayer there has been transformation in my life and immediate impact on the family. Change takes place when it is applied correctly.

God bless the ministry of the Come and Reason team

SABBATH

Remember:

- Revelation is highly symbolic—every person is to be fully persuaded in their own mind.
- We don't have to interpret every detail of the symbols correctly to be saved
- Salvation is found in Jesus, trusting Him, opening the heart and being reborn by the indwelling Spirit—saved people can disagree on technical points of interpretation—it's okay
- No interpretation should be accepted that represents God in a character different that Jesus revealed, or which has God violating His design laws of love and liberty

Read Memory Text: "Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and he went to wage war with the remnant of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Who are the remnant?

These are the end-time people of God who:

- Live in harmony with God's design laws AND
- Who give the same testimony about God that Jesus gave—in other words, who have the same testimony that the Spirit inspired the prophets to give about God.

Who are Satan's allies?

Any and all who accept and spread Satan's lies, use Satan's methods, and develop Satan's character.

What are Satan's lies, methods and character? (the following is not a complete list)

Lies of Satan:

- God's law is imperial/impose and God therefore must use His power to inflict punishment for sin—i.e. sin must be punished, which leads to all the penal/legal lies about God, all the payment myths, and pagan distortions.
- You will not surely die—i.e. we are immortal so we can never die no matter what we do—which leads to...
- Eternal burning hell in which the unrepentant are tortured by God for all eternity or recycling through endless lives (reincarnation)
- There is no God, which leads to either godless evolution, or an amorphous force of energy that we can tap into and we become our own god.

Satan's Methods:

- Lies (in all their various forms)
- Flattery
- Bribery (remember offering Jesus all the nations of the world)
- Threat, coercion, force, intimidation—playing on fear
- Lawlessness—i.e. promoting violations of design law (unhealthy practices physically, relationally, psychologically, spiritually) and often under the guise of religious fervor

Satan's Character:

- Selfish, cruel, without mercy, without compassion, hateful, vengeful

So, who are Satan's allies? Those who promote Satan's lies, practice Satan's methods and develop Satan's character.

SUNDAY

Read Revelation 13::1-8:



And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. ² The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. ³ One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. ⁴ Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?”

⁵ The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. ⁶ He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. ⁷ He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. ⁸ All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. NIV84

Let's decode what the symbols represent in this passage?

- Beasts—nations
- sea—populated places
- horns—political powers—power of the state
- heads—religious powers
- crowns—the source of authority
- blasphemy—misrepresents God
- name—character
- leopard, bear, lion—Greece, Persia, Babylon
- dragon—Satan
- dragon's power—lies that lead to death (Heb 2:14)
- throne and authority—foundation of one's government i.e. the law upon which it runs (God's throne in Ezekiel 1 and 10 rests upon a rotating wheel inside a rotating wheel, symbolic of the law of love, the principle of giving ie. design law. Satan's throne and authority rests on the principles or methods of imperial law with coercive force. This beastly power will practice the methods of coercion and promote God's law as imposed law—thus blaspheming God).
- Wounding and healing—a blow to the organization threatening to destroy it but with subsequent reemergence of its power
- Following the beast—accepting and promoting the methods of the beast, which are teaching God's law is imperial and enforcing issues of conscious by coercive pressure
- Worship—esteeming, valuing, looking up to, adoring, a frame of orientation that gives life direction and meaning
- War—what kind of war? 2Cor 10:3-5
- 42 months—time frame



- book of life—data storage system where individualities the saved are stored

What then is the message in these verses?

An organization will arise that combines various nation states and religious systems to misrepresent God as an imperial dictator. The power used will not be the power of truth, love and freedom (design law principles), but will be the power of lies, selfishness and coercion (rules—imperial law methods—which is the foundation and basis Satan’s power and kingdom). The entire world will come to accept Satan’s view of God and teach that God is a rule-maker and the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death for those who sin (drinking the wine of this harlot and beast)—thus giving honor to Satan—because they become like the god they worship and Satan’s image is reproduced in those who worship the system of the beast. All will become like Satan in character except those who have rejected Satan’s lies about God and worshipped Jesus the Creator and had God’s design law of love produced within them and thus their individualities/names are stored/written in the Lamb’s book of life.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Revelation 13:5 specifies...” What do you think of this time period?

There is a compelling case to be made for the historic view articulated here and I think it is reasonable. However, there are elements of the prophecy that are not addressed in the historic view and this leaves open the possibility that this prophecy is a dual prophecy with two applications—one historic and one yet future.

What is not addressed in the historic view is:

- If the Catholic church is one of seven heads and that head was wounded who are the other six heads and ten horns?
- The entire world wondered after the beast, yet the papacy impacted only Europe during this time frame
- If the entire beast represents the papacy why was the wound to only one head—why not say and the beast was wounded but the wound was healed?

So, in addition to the literal application of papal abuse from 538-1798 this, it is *possible* this prophecy could also have a literal application for a 3.5 year period of tribulation referencing the battle of Armageddon in which the world unites against God’s end-time saints. I am not saying it does have this application, but it *could* have this application and we won’t know until the future events unfold.

Read second paragraph, “The sea beast’s activities...” What does it mean to blaspheme God’s name? To misrepresent God’s character—and how has this been done within Christianity?

By replacing design law with imposed law, i.e. teaching the idea that God’s law functions like human law, a system of rules requiring judicial oversight and enforcement. This results in presenting God



with Satan's character and the entire world reacts to this view by either embracing it, teaching it, being deformed in character by it, or by rejecting God and teaching godless theories of existence.

What is the evidence or mark that the imperial view of God's law has indeed been accepted within Christianity? The change of the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday—remember this is only the evidence or mark, it is not the actual problem.

If someone have a fever or rash from a disease like scarlet fever, the rash and fever are the signs and marks—the rash and fever are NOT the infection, not the disease. Likewise, Sunday sacredness is not the infection or disease but the sign or mark of the disease—which is what? The lie that God's law is imperial, like human law and thus is subject to change, which leads to worshipping a god who is like Satan in character.

What church counsel ever voted to change the law of respiration so their members are not required to breathe on bad smog days? Why don't church counsels vote to do this? So, what does it mean if church a counsel does vote to change God's law—that they no longer recognize God's law as design protocols, but instead view it as imperial rules.

This is what happened historically and how the day of worship came to be changed from the Bible Sabbath to Sunday.

There is nothing evil in going to church on Sunday any more than there is evil in going to prayer meeting on Wednesdays. The evil is in accepting lies about who God is—thus believing God's law functions like human law and this means we see God in a distorted light and fail to genuinely know Him and His methods. Instead, in the name of God we end up promoting the methods of the beast.

Many SDAs, while promoting the seventh-day Sabbath, promote the false view of God by teaching that God is the source of inflicted pain and suffering for sin and must have His wrath propitiated by the blood of a human sacrifice—namely His Son. Thus, while they have the right day of worship they still have the wrong law—the law that is the basis of Satan's system of government.

How does the beast blaspheme the tabernacle of God?

Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, **so that he sets himself up in God's temple**, proclaiming himself to be God. 2Thes 2:3,4 NIV84

When in human history is the period described in this text? After the ascension of Christ.

- Who is the man of lawlessness?
- What does lawlessness mean? One who rejects the law, denies the law, steps outside the law—what law?
- God's law, which is what?



- Design law—so the man of lawlessness represents the powers that deny God's design law and promote a system outside of it. This would be Satan the dragon and his beastly powers, those religious systems that teach God's law functions like human law.

What temple? The Spirit temple—and this power sets itself up in our hearts and minds when we accept the lie about God's law and then worship a God who is the source of inflicted pain and suffering. Thus, the beast blasphemes God's tabernacle by defiling it with Satan's character traits which automatically arise when we worship the false god-construct.

What is the meaning of blaspheming what is going on in heaven?

The lesson suggests it is by replacing Christ as our heavenly mediator with a system of human priests who claim to be the mediator between God and man. Is this the only way in which the heavenly work of Christ is blasphemed?

There is only one truth—but there are many lies that misrepresent the truth. One lie is the idea of humans replacing Christ as our Priest in heaven.

But another way Christ's work in heaven is corrupted or blasphemed is to keep Jesus as our High Priest in heaven, but to teach a lie about what He is doing in heaven. To replace design law and Christ's true work of writing His law in our hearts and minds (Heb 8:10), with the lie that Christ is doing a legal/judicial work in books in heaven all based on accepting the human law lie.

In other words, both the Catholic system and Protestant system teach the legal lie that salvation is a legal process based on rules like humans use. Thus, the heavenly work of Christ is blasphemed.

A few years ago, I received an email with a link to a Christian talk show on which a Catholic priest and a Protestant theologian discussed the Eucharist and transubstantiation. They went back and forth over several points, then the Protestant honed in on the allegation that transubstantiation sacrifices Christ again and again whereas the Bible teaches Jesus died once for all.

To this the Catholic priest responded:

There are two elements to any sacrifice: the immolation and the offering. The immolation is a bloody death. The lamb is slain. What is precious about that is the life in the blood of the lamb that is precious and pays back God. That's how the Old Testament rituals used to work. The immolation happened once but the offering is something Christ does for all eternity. He is right now in the presence of the Father, in the holy of holies, in the eternal presence, offering himself to the Father for the forgiveness of our sins. . . . Christ isn't killed again and again and again, he is offered [in the Eucharist] in the same eternal presence as Christ offers himself.



The priest said it was by this *offering* of his sacrifice over and over again that the sins were paid for. So each time we sin, we must take mass in order to have the sacrifice of Christ pay the Father for that sin.

How do you think the Protestant theologian responded?

He argued that Christ is in heaven not offering his sacrifice to the Father over and over, oh no! He emphatically stated that Jesus is in heaven offering his *merits* to the Father over and over again to remind the Father that he has already paid for our sins.¹

In the Protestant view, all human sins were placed on Christ at the cross and paid for there. When we pray for forgiveness, Jesus goes to the Father and reminds him of what Jesus has already done in paying for the sins and makes the *legal application* of his “merits” as the payment he offers to the Father into our individual accounts.

And how has the false legal idea infected the SDA view? It is taught that Jesus is in heaven opening legal record books and examining them and erasing from the historic record the recorded bad deeds of those who have been legally pardoned.

So many problems with this view:

- based on idea that God’s law functions like human law
- makes the focus on deeds and behaviors rather than character
- makes the punishment for sin coming out from God rather than from sin itself
- makes the problem God’s inflicted punishment rather than sin and thus we need to be protected from God which is what the priest and minister were both promoting. But the Bible teaches that:
 - The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 1Cor 15:56 NIV84
 - What does this mean?
 - Where does the power come from to kill someone who ties a plastic bag over their head or jumps into the ocean with weights on their legs?
 - Where does the power come from to kill someone who jumps off the Empire State Building?
 - Where does the power come from to kill someone who shoots up with heroin?
 - The power comes from the laws upon which life is built, law of respiration, gravity, physics, laws of health. Violating the design laws is where the power of sin to kill comes from.
 - Thus the problem is sin itself and God is the solution. But the legal lie makes God the problem as the inflictor of punishments for sin
- keeps us afraid of not being loved if our sins were ever known so creates a lie that Jesus is erasing history so no one will know our sins in heaven
 - Why will sin never arise again?
 - Why will we love God so much?



- Where does sin occur, in record books or in hearts and minds? Then from where does sin need to be erased?

Christ is not in heaven doing a legal accounting in a judicial system and erasing facts of history. What Christ is actually doing is so much more profound—Christ is healing His people.

On March 16, when I am back from Australia, we will release a pamphlet with a new paradigm which presents this unique SDA doctrine through the design law lens.

TUESDAY

Read Revelation 13:11: “Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon.” NIV84

What do the symbols mean?

- Then—after the previous beast’s time or perhaps after it’s wound so after 1798
- another beast—a nation that is not the same nation as the first beast
- earth—unpopulated places
- lamblike horns—horns represent power, lamblike represents Jesus, Jesus’s power is truth, love and freedom—so this power would arise on the principles of liberty or freedom around 1798 in a part of the world that was previous uncivilized and undeveloped—any nations come to mind?
- dragon—Satan

What does it mean that this nation will eventually speak like a dragon? Despite its foundation on the principles of liberty—it will eventually practice the methods of coercive force and take away liberty.

Do we see any evidences of this happening?

WEDNESDAY

Read last two paragraphs, “When the early church...” What principles are being described?

What methods employed?

What underlying law system are being practiced?

What is most important, to identify the points of doctrines that people will eventually unite around, or to recognize regardless of the points of doctrines they unite around that these methods are not the methods of God?

- **We cannot win God’s cause by using Satan’s methods**



But, if we were to identify points of doctrines that Christians might unite around today, in order to seek to influence their legislators to pass laws that would enforce their beliefs on others, what points of doctrines in today's society, at least in America, might they be?

Do you think SDA Christians will unite with other Protestants to pass Sunday legislation? I don't think so, but are there other issues that all Christians might unite around in order to, as EGW says: "influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions... and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result." {GC 445.1}?

- Sanctity of male/female marriage to pass marriage laws?
- Sanctity of life to pass laws to make abortion illegal?

Let me be clear—I am not speaking of the righteousness or sinfulness of homosexual marriage or abortion. I am speaking of whether either of these two issues might be used to unite various Christian groups (including SDA Christians) to impose laws to force people who are not converted in their heart to comply with those laws?

Would this be an image to the beast?

The last paragraph, quoting the GC 445, states:

The "image to the beast" represents that form of apostate Protestantism which will be developed when the Protestant churches shall seek the aid of the civil power for the enforcement of their dogmas.

Would uniting around the sanctity of marriage and/or the sanctity of life and passing laws to enforce such beliefs on others meet this description?

Does that mean we should support values that we do not agree with? No—what does it mean?

That we oppose values that we do not agree with by using the methods of God—we present truth, in love, and leave others free.

We educate about design law, the impact decisions and choices have upon character, how every violation of God's design reacts upon the person to damage that person and that only in harmony with God's principles of truth, love and liberty can the character be healed.

We also focus on character development and don't presume to judge another person's situation or circumstances when it comes to matters of conscience.

God promises that we can experience a new heart, right spirit, mature character here and now. We are not promised new biology until the second coming when this mortal and corruptible puts on the immortal/incorruptible. So, biological divergence from biological perfection is not sin, but is the result



of sin in the world and does impact how one lives today. Being born blind is not sinful, but blindness exists in the world because of sin and impacts how that person lives their life.

But despite the biological corruption with which we all struggle, character can be changed from selfish to love for others, from deceitful to honest, from cruel to kind, from brutal to merciful, from divisive to a peacemaker.

It is the transformation of character to be like Christ which is the greatest evidence of the working of God's Spirit. **And transformation of character cannot be accomplished by passing legislation—that is the devil's trick.** Get good people to think they are doing good by passing laws for good goals, but ultimately using Satan's methods to coerce people which will only cause more division and damage more character.

THURSDAY

What is the Mark of the Beast?

The lesson says, "The mark of the beast involves the substitution of a human commandment for God's commandment."

Is it really the substitution of human rule or the substitution of human law i.e. substituting imperialism for God's design law, of which changing the 10 Commandments are merely an evidence or sign or mark?

What does it mean to be marked in the forehead and hand?

Forehead is where God's saints are sealed—it is the place of the mind, of worship, of choice, of belief. Thus, the saints are sealed in their characters, minds, hearts to be like God—because they have accepted the truth from the Spirit of truth and are like God in heart.

The lost fall into two camps—those who truly believe the lies and value the methods of coercion and they are marked in their foreheads, and those who don't believe the lies, but still have hearts of selfishness so they choose to practice the methods of the beast to promote and protect themselves, thus they are marked in their hands.

Consider these quotes regarding the mark of the beast:

Why are men not interested to know what constitutes the mark of the beast? Exodus 31:12-17. The Sabbath question will be the issue in the great conflict in which all the world will act a part. [How does the entire world act a part? Will Muslims give up Friday and start worshipping on Sunday? What about agnostics and atheists? Or, is it these two days (Sabbath and Sunday) stand as signs of something more, and everyone will choose one or the other of two methods, of which these days stand as symbols?] Revelation 13:4-17. {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 3}



"Christ died to save sinners, not in their sins, but from their sins. [Imposed law constructs all teach that we are saved in our sins, from the legal penalty, but not saved from our sins, that we continue live sinfully until Christ returns. The truth is that God actually transforms us here and now and we stop living for self, and instead live to love God and others!] The warning given in Revelation shows us the terrible consequence of transgression. By lips that will not lie, God's law is declared to be holy, just, and good. **Our duty to obey this law is to be the burden of the last message of mercy to the world.**¹ **God's law is not a new thing. It is not holiness created, but holiness made known. It is a code of principles expressing mercy, goodness, and love. It presents to fallen humanity the character of God, and states plainly the whole duty of man.** {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 4}

"'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' This command contains the principles of the first four precepts. And 'thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' Upon these two great principles, the Word of God declares, hang all the law and the prophets. {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 5}

"These **principles** are made known by the third angel's message, which declares that **the Creator has always required and always will require obedience to his royal law.** [Why does the Creator require obedience? Why does the Creator require we breathe? Because that is how life is built to operate. Remember the law is not holiness created but holiness made known. The commandments did not impose a law, but made the law known] But this law has been disregarded and transgressed, and is now being ignored by the churches. **Human enactments are placed where God's law should be.** [What kind of law is replacing God's law? Enactments, this is by teaching in the churches that God's law functions like human law. One evidence of this is the belief that God's law can be changed like human law, of which the day of worship change is a sign] Sunday, a child of the Papacy, has taken the place of God's holy Sabbath. As Nebuchadnezzar made a golden image, and set it up to be worshiped by all, so Sunday is placed before the people to be regarded as sacred. This day bears not a vestige of sanctity, yet it is held up to be honored by all. {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 6}

The time has come for the true light to shine amid moral darkness. The third angel's message has been sent forth to the world, **warning men against receiving the mark of the beast or of his image in their foreheads or in their hands. To receive this mark means to come to the same decision as the beast has done, and to advocate the same ideas, in direct opposition to the word of God.** {RH, July 13, 1897 par. 5}

¹ It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth... The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. {COL 415}

What does it mean to come to the same decision as the beast and to advocate the same principle as the beast? To teach God's law is imperial and that coercive enforcement is godly.

FRIDAY

Read first second paragraph, "No one..." What is described—a method, protocol, practice, which is imperialism with coercion that is what is beastly.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Thank you to all of our supporters!!! We appreciate your prayers and financial support.

February 22-March 9, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be in Australia speaking in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Adelaide, Avondale, Sydney, Livingston, Perth, and Melbourne.

April 3-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Sophia Bulgaria.

May 10,11, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Barrie SDA Church, 140 Mapleton Ave
Barrie, ON L4N 9N7 Canada

June 8, 2019: Dr. Jennings will present The Aging Brain Seminar at Mid Columbia Medical Center, in The Dalles, OR.

July 10, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the 3rd Global Health Conference, sponsored by the General Conference of SDA and held at Loma Linda University.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

¹"Debate about the Mass and Transubstantiation," Amazing Discoveries, October 24, 2012, <http://amazingdiscoveries.org/12.10.24-debate-about-the-mass-and-transubstantiation> (transcribed by T. Jennings).



2019 Q1 The Book of Revelation - Lesson 10

God's Everlasting Gospel

By Linda Ojala

SABBATH

Memory Text – “Here is the patience of the saints: here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12

- **Revelation Disclaimer:** Understanding Revelation is not a requirement for Salvation.
- **People are saved through a loving relationship of trust/faith in Jesus Christ and an understanding obedience to God's laws that he used to build this universe to operate.** Matthew 19:16-26 Story of the Rich young man. Matthew 22:34-40 All the Law and prophets hand on these two commandments – Love God supremely and your neighbor as yourself

So, why study it?

“Gospel” means “Good News” and there is plenty of it in Revelation

- Proverbs 24:3-6, “By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures. A wise man has great power and a man of knowledge increases strength; for waging war you need guidance, and for victory many advisers.”
- So let's look at the good news, guidance and victory contained in Revelation!.

Revelation, even without the prophecies, shows the great controversy and plan of salvation. My summary of each page:

- This calls for taking it to heart.
- He loves us and has freed us from our sins.
- Repent, go back to your first love, do what you did at first and overcome.
- Do God's will to the end. Remember what you received and heard, obey it and repent, be earnest.
- Worthy is the Lamb! He purchased men for God.
- God will lead to springs of living water – we will never thirst again.
- Repent of the work of your hands and acts.
- It is time for God to judge.
- Overcome by the blood of the Lamb and your testimony.
- Obey God's commands, hold to the testimony of Jesus.
- This calls for faithfulness, patient endurance and wisdom.



- Stay awake and keep your clothes on – He comes like a thief.
- Come out of Babylon so you don't sin or receive her plagues.
- God's judgments are just and true – He gives us the righteous acts we do.
- The dead are judged by what they have done.
- God will live with us, wipe every tear from our eyes, and make everything new.
- Worship God - "I am coming soon" to give to everyone according to what he has done.

SUNDAY

Read Revelation 14 from the NIV – the Six Angel's messages – three to men, three to heavenly beings

Layers of the three angels' messages:

Personal:

1. Give glory to God by worshiping the creator of everything good in this world, including humans
2. IF you do, confusion falls away from your life.
3. IF you don't, the consequence of following the beast and receiving his mark will be torment with no rest.
4. IF you do, you are rewarded by being totally healed/saved and taken out of this world.
5. IF you do not, your will not be healed, so that the fire of truth will be too much for you.
6. And the full weight of truth on the unhealed life will destroy you.

Church:

1. Worship the creator God – examine the evidence and use good judgment about Him.
2. Babylon is not the world, it's the church! - Identify confused and erroneous teachings and rid them from the church of believers.
3. What happens to a church group that does not purge erroneous teachings about God? It is marked with error and condemns the group to lack of healing and restless torment.
4. IF the church does, the reward is being healed and promoting salvation.
5. IF the church does not, the fire of truth will reveal the error.
6. And the church members will clearly see that their leaders have taken them to a point of restless torment without true healing.

World outside of the church:

1. Discover and worship only the true creator of this world.
2. Identify error and replace error with truth.
3. If you don't, error isn't harmless; it will destroy you.
4. There is escape from the craziness of error and salvation from it through the truth about yourself and God that Jesus reveals.
5. Your true life, your decisions and results of them will be revealed, without any ability to hide or manipulate them.



6. The weight of that truth will put an end to your life.

MONDAY and TUESDAY

The First Angel's Message

“Then I saw another angel flying in midair and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth – to every nation, tribe, language, and people. He said in a loud voice, 'Fear God and give him glory because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.'” Revelation 14:6,7

What is the good news here?

- This is for all eternity, not just temporary
- No one on earth is excluded
- God has given us the ability to use good judgment to identify the truth about God
- What gives glory to God is following the truth about this awesome God to the point where you understand, love and worship Him without fear (Luke 1:74 – John the Baptist's father, Zechariah's prophecy that part of the mission of Christ is to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.”)
- The same judgment we make about God and others, will God make about us as being healed or not healed. Unselfishly loving, or judgmental and misjudging of others and God? He makes an accurate diagnosis. Matthew 7:1,2 Matthew 25: 31-46 Isaiah 11:1-4
- The sign or banner of this creator God is the brilliant choice of a period of time (the 7th day Sabbath), rather than an icon or item (like a wedding ring). He created this 7th day as the last day of creation, where He “rests His case”. A day for us to consider how He uses his mighty power, and who we are in relationship with Him. A day to keep ourselves holy through staying connected to and healed by Him. Gen.2:1-3 Exodus 8-11

E.G. White, Desire of Ages, pg 308

“Till heaven and earth pass,' said Jesus. 'one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pas from the law, till all be fulfilled.' The sun shining in the heavens, the solid earth upon which you dwell, are God's witnesses that His law is changeless and eternal. Though they may pass away, the divine precepts shall endure. 'It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.' Luke 16:17. The system of types that pointed to Jesus as the lamb of God was to be abolished at His death; the but precepts of the Decalogue are as immutable as the throne of God. Since 'the law of the Lord is perfect,' every variation from it must be evil. Those who disobey the commandments of God, and teach others to do so, are condemned by Christ. The Saviour's life of obedience maintained the claims of the law: it proved that the law could be kept in humanity, and showed the excellence of character that obedience would develop. All who obey as He did are likewise declaring that the law is 'holy, and just, and good.' Romans 7:12. On the other hand, all who break God's commandments are sustaining Satan's claim that the law is unjust, and cannot be obeyed. Thus they second the deceptions of the great



adversary, and cast dishonor upon God. They are the children of the wicked one, who was the first rebel against God's law. To admit them into heaven would again bring in the elements of discord and rebellion, and imperil the well-being of the universe. **No man who willfully disregards one principle of the law shall enter the kingdom of heaven."**

E.G. White, Desire of Ages, pg 309

"The greatest deception of the human mind in Christ's day was that a mere assent to the truth constitutes righteousness. In all human experience a theoretical knowledge of the truth has been proved to be insufficient for the saving of the soul. It does not bring forth the fruits of righteousness. A jealous regard for what is termed theological truth often accompanies a hatred of genuine truth as made manifest in life. The darkest Chapters of history are burdened with the record of crimes committed by bigoted religionists. The Pharisees claimed to be children of Abraham, and boasted of their possession of the oracles of God, yet these advantages did not preserve them from selfishness, malignity, greed for gain, and the basest hypocrisy. They thought themselves the greatest religionists of the world, but their so-called orthodoxy led them to crucify the Lord of glory. The same danger still exists. Many take it for granted that they are Christians, simply because they subscribe to certain theological tenets. But they have not brought the truth into practical life. They have not believed and loved it, therefore they have not received the power and grace that come through sanctification of the truth. **Men may profess faith in the truth; but if it does not make them sincere, kind, patient, forbearing, heavenly-minded, it is a curse to its possessors, and through their influence it is a curse to the world."**

E.G. White, Council to the Churches, pg 261

"Great blessings are enfolded in the observance of the Sabbath, and God desires that the Sabbath day shall be to us a day of joy. There was joy at the institution of the Sabbath. God looked with satisfaction upon the work of His hands. All things that he had made He pronounced 'very good.' Genesis 1:31. Heaven and earth were filled with rejoicing. 'The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.' Job 38:7. Though sin has entered the world to mar His perfect work, God still gives to us the Sabbath as a witness that One omnipotent, infinite in goodness and mercy, created all things. **Our heavenly Father desires through the observance of the Sabbath to preserve among men a knowledge of Himself. He desires that the Sabbath shall direct our minds to Him as the true and living God, and that through knowing Him we may have life and peace.** When The Lord delivered His people Israel from Egypt and committed to them His law, He taught them that **by the observance of the Sabbath they were to be distinguished from idolaters.** It was this that made the distinction between those who acknowledge the sovereignty of God and those who refuse to accept Him as their Creator and King. **'It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever,'** the Lord said. 'Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for **a perpetual covenant.'** Exodus 31:17, 16. As the Sabbath was the sign that distinguished Israel when they came out of Egypt to enter



the earthly Canaan, so it is the sign that now distinguishes God's people as they come out from the world to enter the heavenly rest. **The Sabbath is a sign of the relationship existing between God and His people, a sign that they honor His law. It distinguishes between His loyal subjects and transgressors.**"

WEDNESDAY

The Second Angel's Message

"A second angel followed and said, 'Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.'" Revelation 14: 8

According to the New Oxford American Dictionary, to adulterate means, "to render something poorer in quality by adding another substance, typically an inferior one."

Babylon is the "Church," not the "World"

E.G. White, pg 178, "Concerning Babylon, the symbol of the apostate church, He says to His minister of judgment, 'Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.'"

What is the good news here?

- The errors of Babylon will fall away – only truth will be left!

THURSDAY

The Third Angel's Message

"A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: 'If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name. This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.'" Revelation 14:9-12

How are the wicked tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb?

1 Corinthians 15:20-58 talks about the resurrection of Christ and of the dead, and the resurrection body:



“The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable...Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable...”

Why?

Creatures God made that CAN tolerate the intense heat, sulfur and pressure of underwater volcanoes.

- What happens to people in that environment? They would die.

Animals that create light, both on and above the ground and under the water – phosphorous

Angels of light

“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.” Luke 2:8,9

God is called “...the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.” James 1:17

“At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.” Matthew 22:30

Fire flooding from God's presence. Isaiah 33

We must allow God to change us. We will have different abilities, to play harps, to fly, to see God as He is in his brightness, to see long distances, to live and learn without fatigue.

God is a gentleman – He won't force us to let Him in to make the changes to our spirit, characters, and ultimately our bodies.

- How does God take His world back and live among us, when his presence would consume us?
- People must allow Him to change them.
- The wicked will be resurrected unchanged in spirit and with evidences of decay in their bodies. The Great Controversy, by E.G. White, page 662 says, “The wicked bear the traces of disease and death....As the wicked went into their graves, so they come forth with the same enmity to Christ and the same spirit of rebellion.”

We may not be carbon-based beings, because carbon based beings will be tormented mentally in the presence of the fire of truth, and physically in the fiery sulfur of God's presence (which is brimstone).

[Click to see pictures of burning sulfur](#)



Plague described in Bible:

“This is the plague with which the Lord will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. On that day people will be stricken by the Lord with great panic. They will seize each other by the hand and attach one another.”
Zechariah 14:12,13

What is the good news here?

- God warns us in time to make the changes needed. RE: Eden, the flood, Israelites in the dessert and those before the end of time.
- Wickedness will end!
- “Therefore the Lord, the Lord Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: ‘Ah, **I will vent my wrath on my foes and avenge myself on my enemies. I will turn my hand against you; I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities**’.” Isaiah 1:24, 25
- “Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, ‘**Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.**’” Isaiah 35:3,4 What is the best retribution for a person who has been killed, diseased, deceived, etc? **Healing and restoration – Salvation!**

Read Revelation 14 from the Remedy Bible paraphrase.



2019 Q1 The Book of Revelation - Lesson 11

The Seven Last Plagues

by Dr. Karin Covi

Not being a theologian, by any stretch, instead a seeking believer trying to make sense of Revelation, I owe it to myself and you all, to read widely and to at least TRY to distill the information.

We have the two foremost SDA Revelation scholars represented in the Bible Study Guide and the accompanying Teacher's notes. We can channel Tim in the reading of The Remedy.

For more alternative views: Dave Larson article refers to Adventist theologians with new perspectives <https://conversation.spectrummagazine.org/t/revelation-our-options-for-interpretation/17676>

God of Sense and Traditions of Nonsense, by Sigve Tonstad (last 2 chapters on Revelation) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WaFbegB6zeM>

<https://conversation.spectrummagazine.org/search?q=timeout>

With this in mind, I'd like to introduce the concept of Differential Diagnosis (D/Dx):

In medicine, there may be more than one possible explanation for a given set of symptoms; e. g cough. Cough is a symptom, usually one of several, with which a patient presents. While most likely representing some form of URTI, is it viral or bacterial? Is it pneumonia or just a "cold"? Is there an underlying condition that could predispose the patient to complications? Is it possible that it represents GERD, or even a side effect of other medications?

Nowadays, anyone can google "D/DX of Cough" and come up with percentages of likelihood of any given symptom represents one condition vs another. This is how patients think medicine is practiced: "Dr. Google". (Not back in 1980s, for sure; today's TV docs all walk around with an iPad! - fonts of knowledge of the most obscure diagnoses. Practical? Because only rarely is a single symptom present in isolation, e.g., our patient with a cough: is there accompanying fever and chills? Nausea/vomiting? Post nasal drip? Sputum production? You can see how quickly one would need multiple Google searches, all able to correlate and integrate information from the others to rule in or out particular options for your single diagnosis of the patient's condition.

I don't know what medical education is like today, but in my day we spent years honing our abilities to discern which details of the patients history and physical were pertinent; D/Dx is the task of finding the most persuasive explanation for ALL the findings/symptoms in a given patient.

Wiki Definition "the process of weighing the probability of one disease versus that of others possibly accounting for a patients' illness"



- Why does one's diagnosis matter? BECAUSE IT CHANGES THE TREATMENT! The physician's or provider's DIAGNOSIS -- their JUDGMENT -- matters in how they recommend and implement treatment for the patient towards healing and restoration of health. You can't arrive at the correct treatment until you have the correct diagnosis.

Applying these concepts to spiritual matters:

- How has "God's Judgment" been defined by those adhering to the penal substitution? A legal finding and determination of imposed punishment for breaking of arbitrary rules
- How have we defined "judgment of God"? His DIAGNOSIS of the condition of the heart; His therapeutic intervention to heal and save; His pronouncement of the natural result of the condition of the heart and mind (depending on the context of the use of "judgment")

But God's judgment is not the only judgment discussed in Scripture:

Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD. Isaiah 1:18

May you be proved right in what you say, and you will win your case in court." Romans 3:4 (GNB)

"God, may you be proved right and true in the hearts and minds of your intelligent creatures when you present yourself openly for their judgment." Romans 3:4 Rem

So, what about YOUR judgment of the evidence? We are invited to weigh all the evidence in the case of God's trustworthiness, of his Righteousness. All the various motivations ascribed to God in the stories revealed in the Bible, the ways in which He designed the universe to function, and the degree to which He manifests/abides with His law of Love --> your assessment of Him, your "diagnosis" of His character will define the way you become, for we become like that which we worship and admire. the way you treat others and, ultimately, whether your heart has his Law of Love written upon it, and you love others more than self. Other-centered giving, service, and love results in maturing and perfecting of character, and healing of mind and body.

In D/Dx - not all evidence is equal; not all diagnoses are equal; In the spiritual realm, while each thoughtful person's "diagnosis" of God's character may deserve thoughtful consideration, one must ultimately arrive at a "diagnosis" of God, His character, His methods, His judgments.

Turning to our study of Revelation and the awful, AWE-ful plagues:

Review provisos:

- Revelation is highly symbolic: If one part of a passage is symbolic or metaphor, then the rest is symbolic or metaphor unless clear reasons to be literal are expressed in the text; the Bible will be used to interpret itself (i.e. symbol interpretations will use Bible definitions before other definitions).
- The general theme is that of the conflict between Christ and Satan.



- **No interpretation should be accepted that represents God in a character different that Jesus revealed, or which has God violating His design laws of love and liberty**

This being said, we may still come to different conclusions about what symbols mean; We don't have to interpret every detail of the symbols "correctly" to be saved; Salvation is found in Jesus, trusting Him, opening the heart and being reborn by the indwelling Spirit—Saved people can disagree on technical points of interpretation—it's okay!

Let's listen to each other and possibly learn.... Ultimately, you'll find that I ultimately, ask:

- What does this perspective say about God?
- Is it in keeping with what I KNOW to be true: through Scripture, through Design Law and science, and through life experience; all overlapping/intersecting to reveal harmonized Truth - with a capital T! The Integrative, Evidence-based Approach?

SABBATH

The challenge of Revelation is that it all must be taken in context; this is a book named “reveal”, to “open” our eyes to what's going on, even tho' using strange (to us!) imagery and symbols to depict events.

One can't pick up the study of the plagues, for example, without seeing the setting in the chapter just prior. Or recognizing the familiarity of "7's", or the “thirds”, particularly regarding the trumpets previously. [The intricacies of Revelation allow for people to do dissertations on one symbol!]

Memory Verse: starting with Rev 15:1-4 (Phillips):

1 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, *which are* the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.
2 And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God. 3 And they *sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,
“Great and marvelous are Your works,
O Lord God, the Almighty;
Righteous (setting right) and true (trustworthy) are Your ways,
King of the nations!
4 “Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify (speak well of) Your name?
For You alone are holy (faultless);
For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU,
For Your RIGHTEOUS ACTS (RIGHT-NESS) HAVE BEEN **REVEALED** .”

The **setting** for the upcoming plagues is: the throne room, the heavenly council. Familiar? Same as it was for the seals (Rev 4 and 5) and the trumpets (Rev 8:2-5)



- God is active: HIS angels, HE directs the releasing of the actions of the adversary; even actively “letting go”...

but at the same time:

- God is revealing: the nature of the adversary; allowing him to show himself for what he is.

V. 1: another revelation is about to begin; the “last” plagues, maybe in contrast to the trumpets (“first”?); also, the wrath of God...is finished. We have come to the end of a process. The “wrath of God”:

1. letting go – permission to loose the restraints, and
2. revelation – exposing the adversary for who he is Vv2-4: the sea of glass – at the foot of the throne of the heavenly council (Rev 4:);
 - a. The harps of God – Rev 14:1-2

A victory celebration for and by those who had won the war. Singing (echoes of the seeming chaotic choirs, chants, etc described in the heavenly council after the Lamb stepped up to open the seals). Hymns that speak primarily to the kind of person God is! Your deeds, Your ways, Your name and Your judgments – **have been revealed!**

Song of Moses (Deut 32:4); review Moses’ story: Moses was kept from entering the Promised Land after striking the rock, when God had told him to speak to it (Num 20:7-11); He was God’s representative, and by striking the rock, he misrepresented God’s character and methods. Moses admits to his failure, and in his song, he “gets it right!”

But this song is sung by both Moses and the Lamb! What a Seal of Approval! And sung in concert with Jesus.

Revelation 15:5-8 continues the heavenly context for the giving of the seven last plagues.

v. 8: Read . **8** And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

It is important to notice that no one is in the temple in heaven when these plagues fall. Previously, the throne room in heaven was full of millions upon millions of heavenly beings. Might this “mean” (?)/lead us to believe that the events connected to the seven last plagues will take place after the close of probation.

Would someone like to summarize what we mean by “close of probation”?

Does anyone have any insight to affirm the idea that the close of probation has already happened PRIOR to the 7 last plagues? Why would it even matter?

To one who believes that the catastrophes wrought in the 7 seals/trumpets/plagues are “from the hand of God”, as “punitive judgement” or “covenant curses” on the unbelieving/unrepentant -- these plagues would then be falling on permanently deaf ears. So, to what end? punishment? retribution?? Stick it to ‘em? WHAT DOES THAT SAY ABOUT GOD?!?!

SUNDAY

(last para) The expression “no one was able to enter into the temple” ([Rev. 15:8, NKJV](#)) points to the close of probation ([Rev. 22:11](#)). As Christ’s mediatorial ministry in heaven (**He is certainly in heaven, but his mediatorial ministry is involved in changing His people here...working in their minds to heal and restore.**) comes to an end, the door of opportunity to repent closes forever. Therefore, the last plagues will not bring anyone to repentance, but only disclose the hardness of the hearts of those who chose to side with Babylon, prompting them to hate God even more ([Rev. 16:9, 11](#)).

The temple is a symbol of God’s people. We are all spiritual stones built into one building that is designed to house God. In all the previous times mentioned when God’s glory fills the temple, nobody could enter it. In Exodus 40:34-35, Moses could not enter the tent of meeting. In 1 Kings 8:10-11 and 2 Chronicles 5:13-14, the glory of God filled the temple like a cloud, and the priests could no longer serve. So, in this metaphor, God’s people -- his temple -- is so filled with the character of God Himself that there is no longer any need for the “priest’s” duties to be fulfilled.

Summation thus far:

- God is active: HIS angels, HE directs the releasing of the actions of the adversary; even actively “letting go”...

but at the same time:

- God is revealing: the nature of the adversary; allowing him to show himself for what he is.

MONDAY

(1st para) With the cessation of Christ’s intercession in the heavenly sanctuary, the destiny of each individual is forever determined. **Determined by what? Jesus stops because what He has been working for has been achieved. The glory of the Lord is in His temple. (glory=character, temple=His people) Everyone else has rejected the truth enough that they no longer hear it. The time has come for those who have spurned the gospel to experience God’s wrath in its fullness. True, but written poorly. “The time has come for those who have rejected the truth, the good news about God’s character, to experience what happens when God lets them stay in error. They are so tied the lies that He cannot reach them anymore, so He lets them go.**

Going back to v. 7 imagery:

7 Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God (NASB)

Some might say, “How can this be read as anything OTHER than coming from the hand of God?”



Here I want to point out the picture from The Remedy: aren't you drawn to The Remedy's description of the 7 bowls as "God's heartbreaking disengagement" and "the final 7-step release of God's restraint"

In fact, let me read them by verse, from The Remedy :

15:7 . seven gold bowls filled with the heartbreaking disengagement of God who is the source of all life. The gold bowls are symbolic of God's stepwise release of those who choose to be separate from him.

15:8 . the final seven-step release of God's restraint

16:1 ...the seven bowls God's heartbreaking disengagement upon the earth.

16:2 ... symbolizing God's love granting people their final choice of rejecting him, and allowing them to reap the consequences of their choice by no longer shielding them with his protective hand

16:3,4,8,10 symbolizing the withdrawing of God's protective and life-sustaining presence from the earth

16:12 ...symbolizing the withdrawing of God's forces of righteousness

16:17 ... symbolizing God's restraining and protective presence being completely removed from the earth

SUNDAY

The Meaning of the Seven Last Plagues

(1st para) People have already made their choice either for God or for Babylon. Before Christ comes, however, the destructive winds of Satan's fury that have been restrained ([Rev. 7:1-3](#)) are unleashed, followed by the seven last plagues.

Review imagery of 4 angels releasing winds of strife: Rev 7:1-3.

What are the four angels doing? Holding back the winds of strife, the forces of evil, satanic agencies, thus their power to harm the earth is by letting go their hold – just like God let Satan loose in the book of Job.

EGW supports this view:

The restraining Spirit of God is even now being withdrawn from the world. Hurricanes, storms, tempests, fire and flood, disasters by sea and land, follow each other in quick succession. Science seeks to explain all these. The signs thickening around us, telling of the near approach of the Son of God, are attributed to any other than the true cause. Men cannot discern the sentinel angels restraining the four winds that they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed; but when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there shall be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture.—Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 408.

Four mighty angels are still holding the four winds of the earth. Terrible destruction is forbidden to come in full. The accidents by land and by sea; the loss of life, steadily increasing,



by storm, by tempest, by railroad disaster, by conflagration; the terrible floods, the earthquakes, and the winds will be the stirring up of the nations to one deadly combat, while the angels hold the four winds, forbidding the terrible power of Satan to be exercised in its fury until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. {ML 308.2}

If there are no objections, I'm going to skip Sunday's content, because, it asks us to "compare and contrast" the 7 last plagues with the 10 plagues on Egypt.

1. The analogy is weak, vaguely repetitive and only incomplete alignment between the 7 last plagues and the 10 plagues upon Egypt
2. And, as I understand them, in the plagues of Egypt, GOD was the acting subject, yet the 7 last plagues are NOT God acting, but demonic activity.

Later, I'd like to demonstrate the comparison of the last plagues and the TRUMPETS sequence. (And then ask yourself why the quarterly might not be making this much more OBVIOUS comparison?)

[The plagues of Egypt were intended to reveal the truth about God and to convince the Egyptians (and probably also the Israelites) of the uselessness of worshiping false gods. Each plague pointed out and worked against one of the false gods and its "power." Pharaoh hardened his own heart against this truth, as did many of his people.

God was acting to demonstrate that He is the only true God, that the gods they worshiped were not God. God was responsible for presenting the evidence, but then God left Pharaoh free to decide how they would respond to the evidence. Would they repent and humble themselves before the Lord or would they reject the truth and thereby harden their heart?]

(2st para) The seven last plagues are referred to as the "last" plagues because they come at the very end of earth's history. *Maybe to contrast the "first" plagues, i.e., the trumpets? "Last" in that with them, God's wrath (letting go) is complete. 15:2 Rem: "last" because when these are released, God will have ceased all intercession on earth.* [In contrast, the plagues of the seven trumpets cover the time period that includes the entire Christian age and are restricted in their scope. *Historicist/New Historicist viewpoint.* They are executed while the gospel still is being preached ([Rev. 10:8-11:14](#)) and intercession is taking place ([Rev. 8:2-5](#)). They are mixed with mercy, and their purpose is to bring the enemy of God's people to repentance.]

*** (3rd para) On the other hand, the seven last plagues are poured out just prior to the Second Coming. They are poured out upon those who, like Pharaoh, hardened their hearts against God's redeeming love and would not repent ([Rev. 16:11](#)). Divine wrath is God's righteous judgment on the choices people have made ([Rom. 1:26-28](#)), and at that time the lost are reaping the consequences of their own choices. Translation: Gods righteous judgment is His correct diagnosis of the condition of all, based on the choices they have made. God lets go of those who have rejected Him, leaving them to the consequences of their own choices.*

Do you see how EASY it is to interpret using the penal view?

All the more reason to flood our minds with this picture of God!

MONDAY

The Outpouring of the Last Plagues

I am a member in the library SS class at the big church; I taught the week of the Trumpets, to less than grand fanfare. I dissented with the Quarterly position that the trumpet “plagues” were “divine judgments of retribution, “punitive judgments” and/or “covenant curses”, as described by its authors. Instead, I hold that the plaques were delivered by the adversary; they have his “fingerprints” all over them!

And while the vast majority of Christianity agrees with the SS authors’ conclusions, I’m holding out: based on what I know to be true about God, He just can’t be saying all along, “All I want from you is your love and devotion”. Only to, in the end, say, “... or I’ll have to kill you.”

Particularly Trumpet/Bowl #6: Both revolve around the Euphrates river.

Can you imagine that this correlation is an accident? This is “recapitulation”; Revelation being consistent with itself, within the text itself (see Proviso #1). More easily seen when RE-reading Revelation, as I have strived to do during this quarter and would recommend doing – particularly listening to audio version. Do your own thinking and come to your own conclusions.

Can you imagine why the quarterly authors might not have drawn attention to these comparisons?

Read Rev 16:12-16: 6th bowl

Conclusions of the Bowl plagues:

1. The bowls recapitulate the trumpets – only they are worse
2. The identity of the acting subject that is in the foreground in the trumpet cycle carries over into the bowl cycle.
3. In the sixth trumpet, Satan is not just barely active; he is not just acted upon; he is – instead – acting with all stops pulled!

#	TRUMPETS	BOWLS
1	Hail, fire, and blood fall on the <i>earth</i> .	The bowl is poured on the <i>earth</i> .
2	A blazing mountain falls into the <i>sea</i> . One third of the sea becomes <i>blood</i> . A third of <i>sea creatures</i> die.	The bowl is poured on the <i>seas</i> . The seas become <i>blood</i> . Every living thing in them <i>dies</i> .
3	A blazing star falls on a third of <i>rivers and fountains of water</i> .	The bowl is poured on <i>rivers and fountains of water</i> .
4	A third of <i>sun, moon, and stars</i> are struck, resulting in darkness.	The bowl is poured on the <i>sun</i> , resulting in fierce heat.
5	Shaft of the <i>bottomless pit</i> opened. Sun and air are <i>darkened</i> with smoke. Locusts appear to <i>torture</i> people.	The bowl is poured out on the <i>throne of the beast</i> , plunging it into darkness. People <i>bit</i> their tongues in severe pain.
6	The four angels bound at the <i>great river Euphrates</i> are released. Cavalry numbering two hundred million kills a third of humanity.	The bowl is poured on the <i>great river Euphrates</i> . Kings of the world assemble for battle on the great day of God the Almighty in a place called <i>Armageddon</i> .
7	<i>Loud voices</i> in heaven announce the coming of the kingdom of God and Christ.	The bowl is poured into the <i>air</i> . A <i>loud voice</i> from the throne announces “It is done.”



TUESDAY

Drying Up the Euphrates River

Read Revelation 16:12 along with Revelation 17:1 and 15. What does the symbol of the Euphrates stand for? What is the significance of the drying up of the Euphrates in the context of the seven last plagues?

Compare and contrast the quarterly's interpretation of this event with Tim's understanding of the "drying up of the Euphrates" and the "kings from the east" (Wednesday), as we read in The Remedy. Diametrically opposite.

I'll leave interpretation of particular symbols to others...

(3rd para) The symbolic drying up of the Euphrates in [Revelation 16:12](#) results in the collapse of Babylon in the end time. Because the Euphrates in Revelation represents the world's civil, secular, and political powers giving their support to Babylon, the drying up of the Euphrates symbolizes the withdrawal of their support and their subsequent attack against Babylon, thereby causing its downfall.

As the people of the world witness the upheaval in nature ([Rev. 16:3-9](#)), they turn to Babylon for protection. However, as the fifth plague strikes the seat of Babylon's authority ([Rev. 16:10-11](#)), they see the futility of seeking help there. Feeling deceived, they turn against Babylon, causing her downfall ([Rev. 17:16](#)). Yet, as we have seen, their hearts remain hard against God and His people. As such, they become fertile soil for the final deception by which Satan will draw the world to unite against God's people to wipe them off the face of the earth.

In what ways have you learned how risky it is to place your trust in humans and in human institutions?

Interesting question...for isn't our church a human institution? I agree, that our trust should be in God and not in individual people or in the institutions people create and/or maintain.

Read [Revelation 16:13-14](#). What is the role of the three unclean spirits in the preparation for the battle of Armageddon? How are they a satanic counterfeit of the three angels' messages in [Revelation 14](#) ? ([See 1 Tim. 4:1](#))

WEDNESDAY

(Wed 3rd para) Through the final events leading up to the close of probation, every human being will be led to choose on which of the two sides he or she will stand in the battle of Armageddon. As a prelude to this spiritual warfare, John sees three demonic spirits resembling frogs. Satan's last attempt to deceive involves demonic, lying spirits.

The dragon (paganism and spiritualism), the sea beast (Roman Catholicism) , and the false prophet (apostate Protestantism) unite under Satan's command ([Rev. 13:11-12](#)). Satan enables



the lamblike beast to perform miraculous signs ([Rev. 13:13-17](#)) that includes spiritualistic manifestations. These signs are part of Satan's end-time deceptive strategy to persuade the world to follow him rather than the true God.

Blinded by their hatred of God and His truth, the leaders of the world readily believe Satan's lies, which are cloaked in a pleasing religious guise ([2 Thess. 2:9-12](#)). Ultimately, they will unite in the final battle leading to the end of this world.

THURSDAY

Gathering for the Battle of Armageddon

(3rd para) The "mountain of Megiddo" is an apparent allusion to Mount Carmel that towers above the valley in which the ancient city of Megiddo was located. Mount Carmel was the site of one of the greatest clashes in Israel's history, between God's true prophet (Elijah) and the false prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18). This showdown answered the question, "Who is the true God?" The fire that came from heaven demonstrated that the Lord was the only true God and the only one to be worshiped. While the spiritual issue of the battle of Armageddon - Will we obey God or man? - is decided *before* the plagues fall, those who side with the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet ([Rev. 16:13](#)), will then be totally controlled by the devil (as Judas was, leading up to Christ's crucifixion [[Luke 22:3](#)]).

Having chosen the losing side, they will be among those who cry for the mountains to hide them ([Rev. 6:16](#); *read also 2 Thess. 1:7-8*). Before the plagues fall, however, [Revelation 13:13-14](#) portrays the earth beast bringing fire down from heaven to deceive the world into thinking that Satan's counterfeit, which will include false revivals led by another spirit, is the work of God.

(5th para) Armageddon is not a military battle among nations to be fought somewhere in the Middle East, but a global spiritual contest in which Christ decisively confronts the forces of darkness ([2 Cor. 10:4](#)). The outcome will be like that at Carmel but on a worldwide scale - with God's triumph over the forces of darkness.

Armageddon will not be some kind of military battle either in the Middle East or anywhere else on the earth. It will be **a spiritual battle over who is telling the truth and whom we can trust**. The weapon will be truth vs. falsehood, love vs. selfishness.



2019 Q1 The Book of Revelation - Lesson 12

Judgment on Babylon

By Linda Ojala

SABBATH

Read Revelation 17, 18

Memory Text - "And I heard another voice from heaven saying, 'Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.'" Rev. 18:4,5

Two weeks ago, I gave the view that the multiple Christian beliefs stem from a vital truth/s being found, out of all the error in the previous beliefs, and the joy of this discovery, followed by the creation of a new denomination, as being like hot lava. This enthusiasm cools down over time, as lava does, and the believers stay right where they are, holding tight to this/these new belief/s.

Another new truth is found, and the same thing happens. Then another and another and another.

We have to ask ourselves, "Could this be true of our church as well? Could we be so content with the truth we have, that we are not open to any other truth God may reveal, and so become like cold lava...hardened and unyielding?"

I recommend reading Councils to Writers and Editors, by E.G. White, Pages 34-41 for her position on new light that should be coming even until the end of time. A few examples of what you will find there:

"A spirit of pharisaism has been coming in upon the people who claim to believe the truth for these last days. They are self-satisfied. They have said, 'We have the truth. There is no more light for the people of God.' **But we are not safe when we take a position that we will not accept anything else than that upon which we have settled as truth.** We should take the Bible, and investigate it closely for ourselves. We should dig in the mine of God's word for truth. 'Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.' Some have asked me if I thought there was any more light for the people of God. Our minds have become so narrow that we do not seem to understand that the Lord has a mighty work to do for us. Increasing light is to shine upon us; for 'the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.'" Page 34

"New light will ever be revealed on the word of God to him who is in living connection with the Sun of Righteousness. Let no one come to the conclusion that there is no more truth to be revealed. The diligent, prayerful seeker for truth will find precious rays of light yet to



shine forth from the work of God. **Many gems are yet scattered that are to be gathered together to become the property of the remnant people of God.”** Page 35

“There is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation.” Page 35

Great Controversy, by E.G. White, page 651 says

“...through the eternal ages new truth will continually unfold to the wondering and delighted mind.”

So, what is Babylon?

According to abarim-publications.com, Babel means a “confused” mix of voices and other sounds, from Babhel (Hebrew) “Gate of the deity” or “Gate of God.” When a tower was being made to reach up to God and prevent death from another flood.

- Then, it came to mean “confusion” when the multiple languages were created and distributed by God.
- How is something adulterated – it is made impure by mixing something else in.

The Great Controversy, by E.G. White, pg. 382, 383,

“Says the Apostle James: “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”.....“It was by departure from the Lord, and alliance with the heathen, that the Jewish church became a harlot; and Rome, corrupting herself in like manner by seeking the support of worldly powers, receives a like condemnation. Babylon is said to be 'the mother of harlots.' By her daughters must be symbolized churches that cling to her doctrines and traditions, and follow her example of sacrificing the truth and the approval of God, in order to form an unlawful alliance with the world. The message of Revelation 14, announcing the *fall* of Babylon must apply to religious bodies that were once pure and have become corrupt. Since this message follows the warning of the judgment, it must be given in the last days.....in the eighteenth chapter of the Revelation the people of God are called upon to come out of Babylon. According to this scripture, many of God's people must still be in Babylon.”

Speaking about the people of Israel in slavery in Egypt prior to their exodus, Patriarchs and Prophets, by E.G. White, pg 260, says, **“Many were content to remain in bondage rather than leave Egypt.”** We understand this as, 'Better the evil you know, than the evil you don't'. The plagues encouraged them to look to God and want to follow Him out into the great unknown.



In Sabbath's lesson, first paragraph,

“The sixth plague causes the symbolic drying up of the Euphrates, as the disillusioned people of the world withdraw their popular support from end-time Babylon.”

In Sabbath's lesson, second paragraph,

“At the outset of the final battle, a great earthquake occurs as part of the seventh plague. **The earthquake shatters the unity of Babylon and splits it into three parts** (Rev. 16:18,19). End-time Babylon is portrayed as a city, signifying the short-term union of the political and religious powers of the world in opposition to God's people. **This unity is shattered, causing the breakup of end-time Babylon.**”

The shake up of what appears to be solid ground.

SUNDAY

The Harlot Babylon

Sunday's lesson, first paragraph says,

“A woman in the Bible is a symbol for God's people (church). In Revelation, **God's true church is portrayed as a pure woman** (Rev. 12:1, 22:17). **A harlot thus represents a false apostate church.** In Revelation 17:5, this harlot is identified as **Babylon the Great**. Just as ancient Babylon depended on the Euphrates River for its existence, so will end-time Babylon rely on the support of the masses to enforce her plans.”

- **Revelation 14:8**, “**Babylon the Great**, which **made all nations drink** of the maddening wine of her adulteries.”
- **Revelation 17:2**, “**Great prostitute**, who sits on many waters. With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries.”
- **Revelation 18:2,3**, “Fallen, Fallen is **Babylon the Great!** She has become **a home for demons** and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. **The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries.**”

What two groups of people are specified as being involved in an illicit relationship with, and being seduced by, end-time Babylon?

1. **Kings of the earth**, the governing political powers – A union of church and state.



2. **The inhabitants of the earth**, the governed masses, who are intoxicated by Babylon's false teaching and practices, deceived into thinking that she can protect them. When people are drunk, they do not think clearly and are controlled easily.

The point: The masses of the people get it wrong. What should this tell us about the dangers of following popular sentiment?

MONDAY

The Harlot Riding on the Scarlet Beast

Monday's lesson, first paragraph,

“While the harlot represents a religious entity, the beast symbolized a political power....The picture of religion riding the secular and political power....shows...that these two entities will join together at the end time. The concept of riding a beast denotes dominance....**this end-time religious system will dominate the secular and political powers.**”

Second paragraph, “The harlot is pictured as extravagantly arrayed in purple and scarlet and adorned with ornaments of gold, precious stones, and pearls; such adornments of gold, precious stones, and pearls; such adornment was a practice of harlots in antiquity to enhance their power of seduction (Jer. 4:30).”

Symbolic of her vanity and self-promotion.

- “As the **color of blood, scarlet corresponds to the oppressive character** of this religious system.”
- “The **harlot's dress counterfeits the attire of the high priest** in the old Testament, attire that included the colors purple, scarlet, and gold.(Exod. 28:5,6)”
- “The **blasphemous inscription** on the harlot's forehead also replaces the priestly inscription, 'Holiness to the Lord' on the miter of the high priest (Exod. 28:36-38)” “**Mysterious Babylon the Great**” – the confusing system of religious tradition, fable and falsehood that obscures the truth about God. “**The Mother of Prostitutes**” - the many diverse religious sects who sell their virtue for earthly advantage and seduce others into their bed of lies about God.” “**The Abomination of the Earth**”
- “The cup in her hand reminds us of the vessels of the sanctuary from which Belshazzar, king of Babylon, and his guests drank wine (Dan. 5:2-4). **The cup on the harlot's hand uses the appearance of truth to conceal the wine – the falsehoods of Satan's end-time religious system – in order to seduce the world away from God.**” Intoxicating brew of lies, distortions, and false presentation about God.
- The harlot Babylon is further described as **drunk with the blood of the saints and the martyrs** of Jesus who died as a result of their witness to Christ. This blood-guiltiness links



end-time Babylon to medieval apostate Christianity, which was led by the papacy and responsible for the deaths of millions of Christians who remained faithful to the gospel.”

In the green section:

“The description of the **harlot Babylon** reflects the image of Jezebel in the church of Thyatira (Rev. 2:20-23). How do the parallels between these two women elucidate the character of end-time Babylon? **Dictatorial, Destructive, Deceptive, and Demonic.**”

TUESDAY

The Identification of the Scarlet Beast

Tuesday's lesson, first paragraph,

“Though living in an age of ecumenism, Protestants would do well to remember the terrible persecution of the past, because, according to prophecy, something similar, but only worse, will happen again.”

“The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction.” Revelation 17:8

- “How does Revelation 13:3 clarify the three phases of the existence and activities of the beast?” “One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast.”
- Revelation 13:8, **“All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast – all whose names have not been written in the book of life,** belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.”

Second paragraph,

“The scarlet beast is identified as the one that was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. This tripartite phrase is, first of all, a counterfeit of the divine name, Yahweh, “who is and who was and who is to come.” (Rev. 1:4, Rev. 4:8)

It also further points to the **three phases of existence through which the beast has passed:**

1. The beast **“once was”** - It existed in the past. It's prior activities lasted for the prophetic period of 42 months, also known as 1,260 days/years (see Rev. 13:5 and Lesson 9, Sunday).
2. **“Now is not.”** With its deadly wound (see Rev. 13:3), the beast went into its “nonexistence phase, at least as a persecutor, in 1798. It vanished for some time from the world scene; yet it survived.



3. Finally, with the healing of the deadly wound, the beast will regain its power **“Will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction”** and exert it in full satanic rage. Once again there will be a short-lived union of religion and politics as it existed during the Middle Ages, and persecution again will take place.

“Let opposition arise, let bigotry and intolerance again bear sway, let persecution be kindled, and the halfhearted and hypocritical will waver and yield the faith; but the true Christian will stand firm as a rock, his faith stronger, his hope brighter, than in the days of prosperity.” Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, P. 602

WEDNESDAY

The Seven Heads of the Beast

Wednesday's lesson, first paragraph,

“The angel explains that **the seven heads are seven mountains**. Some translators think that these mountains allude to the **seven hills upon which the city of Rome is situated**, and for this reason, they translate the Greek word *oroi* (“mountains”) as “hills.”

“There are **seven kings, too, who are symbolized by the seven mountains**. Also, these mountains are **successive, not simultaneous**.”

Second paragraph,

“These mountains do not symbolize individual kings, because Revelation does not deal with individual persons, but with systems.”

- In the Bible, **mountains often symbolize world powers or empires** (Jer. 51:25; Ezek. 35:2,3)
- In biblical prophecy, **“Kings” represent kingdoms** (Dan. 2:37-39, Dan. 7:17)
- Thus, the **seven mountains symbolize seven great successive empires that dominated the world** throughout history, through which Satan opposed God and harmed God's people.
- **From John's time perspective**, five of these empires have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come.
- While no single view has been agreed upon by all Adventist interpreters, **many hold that the five that have fallen are the great kingdoms that in Old Testament times dominated and (on occasion) harmed God's people: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Media-Persia, and Greece.**
- The **“one is” kingdom was the Roman Empire of John's time.**
- These kingdoms **sound like the image Nebuchadnezzar saw in a dream** predicting the current and subsequent kingdoms (Dan. 2,3)
- The seventh kingdom that “Has not yet come” is the sea beast of Revelation 13 – **the Papacy, which dominated and harmed God's people**. History has powerfully attested to the truth of this prophecy, written many centuries before the events unfolded.



- John is further told that **the scarlet beast is an eighth world power, although it is one of the seven heads (world powers). Because these heads are sequential in time, the eighth must be the seventh head that received the deadly wound....**Today, we live at the time of the healing of the deadly wound. This eighth world power will appear on the scene right before the end and will go to perdition.

Another point of view is that the seven heads represent seven false theories, or theological systems, that fill the minds of human beings, and are represented as seven mountains, or high places of worship, on which the woman sits.

They are also represented as seven false kings who try to usurp the place of Jesus, the true King.

THURSDAY

The Judgment of Babylon

Thursday's lesson, first paragraph,

“Different interpretations have been offered regarding the identities of the ten kings....we can derive from the text is that they are a short-lived political confederacy appearing right before the end and supporting the harlot.

- Their number signifies that **the world powers will render total, unwavering allegiance** to the beast.
- ****Could it be the ten toes of the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw?**

Second paragraph, Revelation 17:3,4 reiterates the battle of Armageddon – introduced in Rev. 16:12-16.

“...the battle of Armageddon is not a military battle in the Middle East but the final conflict of the Second Coming in which Satan and his confederacy fight against Christ and His angelic host.

Third paragraph,

“Filled with hatred, the ten horns, which are the successor powers to the divided nations of Europe, suddenly turn against the harlot Babylon (the end-time manifestation of the papacy), making her desolate and naked; they symbolically will eat her flesh and burn her with fire....Burning by fire was the punishment for a priest's daughter who was involved in sexual immorality (Lev 21:9). **The deceived political powers have become disillusioned because of the inability of Babylon to protect them from the plagues. They feel deceived and, in hostility, attack her. This end-time apostate religious system, together with all those who choose to identify themselves with it, experiences the fullness of divine judgment.”**



***Could what is being described be experiencing the release of God's protections? They think it is God's divine judgment, but in fact, God is letting them go, giving them up to their own choices.

“They [the ten horns] will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings – and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.” Revelation 17:14,

Spend so much time learning about God and communing with Him through prayer and His work, that we know, love and trust Him. So that we “know His voice” and follow His directions.

“Pay her double from her own cup. Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself.” Revelation 18:6,7

NOTE: What a surprising thing to say!

**Who would think that self-centeredness was the core issue that is the problem with Babylon!

**What does this say about the “Prosperity Gospel” so popular now?

“It will be just like this [Referencing Noah/The flood and Lot/destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah] on the day the Son of Man is revealed.” Luke 17:20-37

By their own choices their fate was “Sealed.”

**Judgment vs punishment – same event, different point of view?

“When your judgments come upon the earth, the people of the world learn righteousness. Though grace is shown to the wicked, they do not learn righteousness; even in a land of uprightness they go on doing evil and regard not the majesty of the Lord.” Isaiah 26:9-11

“...They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify Him.....Men gnawed their tongues in agony and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.” Revelation 16:9-11

Doesn't this remind you of Pharaoh with the plagues of Egypt in Exodus 7-12?

The Great Controversy, by E.G. White, pg. 639, 640

“That holy law, God's Righteousness, that amid thunder and flames was proclaimed from Sinai as the guide of life, is now revealed to men as the rule of judgment. ...God's ten words, brief, comprehensive, and authoritative, are presented to the view of all the inhabitants of the earth...The Lord have them His law; they might have compared their



characters with it and learned their defects while there was yet opportunity for repentance and reform; but in order to secure the favor of the world, they set aside its precepts and taught others to transgress. They have endeavored to compel God's people to profane His Sabbath. Now they are condemned by that law which they have despised. With awful distinctness they see that they are without excuse. The chose whom they would serve and worship.....The enemies of God's law, from the ministers down to the least among, them, have a new conception of truth and duty. Too late they see that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God."

Whose "sign" do we believe in and support? Whose "wedding ring" do we wear? Whose "flag" do we fight under? THIS is our God!!

The Great Controversy, by E.G. White, pg. 638,

"Through a rift in the clouds there beams a star whose brilliancy is increased fourfold in contrast with the darkness. It speaks hope and joy to the faithful, but severity and wrath to the transgressors of God's law."

NOTE: The same events are seen differently by the two groups.

FRIDAY

Further Thought

Friday's lesson, Discussion Questions:

***How should we treat others that hold different beliefs than we do?

Evangelism, by E. G. White, pg. 575 says,

"This message must be given, but while it must be given, we should be careful not to thrust and crowd and condemn those who have no the light that we have....Those who have had great privileges and opportunities, and who have failed to improve their physical, mental, and moral powers....are in greater danger and in greater condemnation before God than those who are in error upon doctrinal points yet who seek to live to do good to others."

When Elijah thought he was the only Godly man left, God assured him he had 7,000 who have not bowed to Bael. 1 Kings 19:14-18, Romans 11:2-5

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judges, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye.' when all the time there is a



plank in your own eye? **You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.” Matthew 7:1-5**

How easy is it for us to think the error is all “Out there”?

Remember the story of David, Bathsheba, and the prophet Nathan in 2 Samuel 11 and 12. “You are the man!” By condemning the man who took his neighbor's pet lamb, David condemned himself

“In one day” and “in one hour” - Notice the speed of Babylon's downfall which is emphasized in Revelation 18:8, 10, 17, 19. In prophetic time (a day = a year), “one hour” in prophetic time would translate to around two weeks.

Testimonies for the Church, by E. G. White, Volume 6, pg 408, says,

“The restraining Spirit of God is even now being withdrawn from the world. Hurricanes, storms, tempests, fire and flood, disasters by sea and land, follow each other in quick succession. Science seeks to explain all these. The signs thickening around us, telling of the near approach of the Son of God, are attributed to any other than the true cause. Men cannot discern the sentinel angels restraining the four winds that they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed; but **when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there shall be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture.”**

Testimonies for the Church, by E. G. White, Volume 69 pg 11, says,

“The days in which we live are solemn and important. The Spirit of God is gradually but surely being withdrawn from the earth. Plagues and judgments are already falling upon the despisers of the grace of God. The calamities by land and sea, the unsettled state of society, the alarms of war, are portentous. They forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude. The agencies of evil are combining their forces, and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones.”

Christ's Object Lessons, by E.G. White, pg 415, 416 says,

“The last message of mercy to be given to the world is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them.”

“Therefore the Lord, the Lord Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: ‘Ah, I will vent my wrath on my foes and avenge myself on my enemies. I will turn my hand against you; I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities’.” Isaiah 1:24, 25



“Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, **‘Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.’**” Isaiah 35:3,4

****What is the best retribution for a person who has been killed, diseased, deceived, etc? Healing and restoration – Salvation!**

******Read Revelation 17 and 18 in the Remedy Bible**

“When I think of the wisdom and scope of God's plan, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth, I pray that from His glorious, unlimited resources He will give you mighty inner strength through His Holy Spirit. And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in Him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love really is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it. Then you will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Now glory be to God! **By His mighty power at work within us, He is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask of hope.**” Ephesians 3:14-20

“Lord, you establish peace for us; **all that we have accomplished you have done for us.**” Isaiah 26:12



The Book of Revelation Lesson 13 1Q 2019

I Make All Things New

by Tim Jennings

NEXT WEEK CLASS WILL START AT 10 A.M. AND STOP AT 11 A.M. FOLLOWED BY Q&A TO DISCUSS THE NEW PAMPHLET

Australia Report:

First HUGE Thanks to Simon Harrison and his fiancé Maani who have been so helpful in not only organizing this entire event, but also in heading up C&R Ministries in Australia.

Also, if you have appreciated *The Remedy New Testament* all the editing has been done by Mirra Huber, who lives in Tasmania Australia. Well it was such a privilege to get to meet Mirra and her sister at our last stop in Melbourne. What a blessing Mirra has been to us!

There are so many more people we want to thank, but are fearful of forgetting someone—truly too many to remember everyone but we have so many friends down under who love this message—thank you all!

We were reminded that we are in a war between Christ and Satan and the devil does not want this message going forward, but God overruled every time.

When we left our plane was delayed in ATL 45 minutes and then after we took off in the first few minutes of flight our plane was hit by lightning, which was quite frightening, but no harm and we kept going. Then when we got to LAX we were held on the tarmac for 45 minutes so when we finally got off we had to run through the airport and barely made our connection to Brisbane, but we made it—but our luggage didn't. We arrived in Brisbane Friday morning, spoke Friday evening and Sabbath and then left Brisbane Sunday morning. Our luggage finally caught up with us an hour before we left on Sunday morning. While there I got food poisoning or a GI bug and was nauseated and sick on my stomach for 7 days—so to all our Australian friends, if I seemed less social, please forgive me. But, every time I got up to speak the nausea went away and I was energized and had a clear mind.

- We arrived Friday February 22 and spoke in Brisbane (Gold Coast SDA Church)
- We spoke at (Springwood Church) in Brisbane and 8 Miles Plains
- Toowoomba Parkhouse Café
- Cairns SDA church
- Adelaide at the Morphet Vale SDA church
- Cooranbong and Avondale High School and retirement village
- Sydney Adventist Hospital
- Perth—Livingston SDA church



- Perth—Christian Counselor's Association of Australia
- Melbourne at Nunawading SDA church

Talks presented included:

- *Recovering from Sexual Abuse*
- *The Mind God's Design and What Went Wrong*
- *The God-Shaped Brain*
- *The Seven Levels of Moral Development*
- *The Science of Belief*
- *Neurobiology of Depression and Drug Free treatments*
- *Addictions and the Adolescent Brain*
- *Healthy Love versus Love Addiction*
- *The Developing Brain*
- *The Aging Brain*
- *Domestic Violence in the Christian home*
- *Plus teaching two SS lessons and multiple open Q&A times*
- ***total 31 presentations in 15 days***

We were so positively received and this message is changing lives all over the world.

We had people come up to us at every venue and tell us they watch this class every week and it has changed their lives. Many said to tell each of you hello and how they appreciate you and your questions and all our substitute teachers when I am gone. Truly there were far too many stories for me to remember them all but here is a sampling:

- A young man in late 20's came up to me and told how he had been an atheist but came across our material online and it has completely changed his life and he now believes in God and has given his life to Christ.
- A lovely gentleman and his wife drove over five hours to come to our event and he told me they are Christians but not SDAs and came across our material online and have read all my books and it has transformed their lives.
- A woman in her 70's came up to me and told me she has been a lifelong Adventist, a pastor's wife but had been so discouraged with Adventism that she was about to leave the church when she came across our material. And with tears in her eyes and as smile on her face, she grabbed my hands and squeezed them telling me how much God has used this ministry to reach her—that she has such a love relationship with God now.
- One lady came up to me and said that she was in the SDA church her entire life but so many things didn't make sense and she was really struggling. She came across our materials and started reading and listening, but was afraid because it seemed to contradict so many things she had been taught in the church. She said that she had been praying that God would show her the



truth, but as she was studying our material it was contradicting so much of the traditional stuff that was getting stressed and afraid and unsure and was just calling out to God to know what to do. Then one evening as she was struggling with this question, she heard God speak to her and say, “You wanted to know the truth—this is the truth.” She said, since then she has embraced this message and has had such peace and the doubts have resolved.

- After my talk on *The Science of Belief* in which I describe quantum mechanics and string theory, how all reality is connected through these invisible strings, a woman and her husband came up and said that she knows what I am teaching is the truth because she didn’t believe in God, and refused to believe in God, was living with a lot of stress and one day God gave her the awareness of how all things in the universe are connected by Him and through Him. She said it was so powerful she knew God was real and gave her heart to Him.
- In Melbourne, a Baptist pastor came to the meetings and stopped to tell us how much he appreciated the message and wanted our materials to share at his church.
- A message came in online: *“Thank you for your ministry and visit to Nunawading Victoria Australia, it is helping my family members who stopped worshipping God many years ago get a new fresh positive perspective of God and His character. May God continue to bless you as you share the ‘Good News’ of a loving Creator Designer God around the world.”*

Our last stop in Melbourne, was such a positive experience. We were in the main church auditorium at the Conference Office Headquarters and there was standing room only, they opened a bonus room and had to bring in extra chairs and still people were standing out in the hall, which was a surprise for the church leadership as it was a holiday weekend and they didn’t expect a large attendance.

I received a couple of emails since getting back:

Dear Tim, We wish to pass on to you and your team our deep appreciation for your fabulous presentation/s at Nunawading SDA Church last Friday night and Sabbath. Chris and I are familiar with your YouTube Sabbath School classes as well as your books and DVD's but it was such a pleasure to hear you once again in person. I had the pleasure of meeting you and to be in the audience at the New Zealand Conference. The content last weekend was so relevant and illuminating and is helping both of us understand more the Father's plan and the unbelievable and extraordinary life and sacrifice of Jesus. I know from many others that I have spoken to since, others we deeply respect for their commitment to God, that they too felt the Holy Spirit moving and feel so encouraged to continue to dig deeper and explore both Scripture and the writings of Ellen White... for us and I'm thinking most of the 400+ people who attended, that having Come and Reason Ministries attend our church was such a blessing. It was so inspirational and we are grateful for your study, your commitment and your willingness to travel to the other side of the world and head to Melbourne after what must be an exhausting tour. Could you also kindly pass on to your wife, your team and all involved our appreciation and grateful thanks.

To our Collegedale Class I received this email and a card:

I am emailing from Melbourne. A big thank you to you all for sharing Dr. Jennings with us here in Australia these past weeks. We were blessed to hear him speak today and last night. We managed to sneak in a very quick hello and thank you to Tim but was mindful of his time. What we really wanted to do was ramble on and on about the difference Come and Reason has made to EVERYTHING since discovering you on YouTube about a year ago. This message is exciting!! Thank you all for what you are doing to get God's true character 'out there'.

Well done also to the ladies teaching in Dr. Jennings absence. We have very much enjoyed listening to them :))

Also, for our Australian friends, we are in the final stages of receiving Not For Profit Status in Australia. Check with Simon at Australia@comeandreason.com for when this is finalized—all paperwork is in, just waiting for the government to grant the status.

SABBATH

What things are made new?

- The earth—all physical things on the earth, mountains, trees, waters, animals—what about people?
- Do we get *new* hearts? When do we get new hearts before or at the second coming?
- So would this mean we are set right, in heart, with God before the second coming? What is another word for setting right? Justified or justification—so do we actually get justified before the second coming or are we just declared to be righteous, set right, justified but really we are not, which is what penal substitution teaches?

Read first paragraph, “The destruction...” It says Babylon induces secular powers to persecute—what does this suggest the problem is and what we need to watch out for?

Does it suggest the problem is a physical conflict, one in which physical force is brought to bear?

But what kind of war does Paul say we are in, (2Cor 10:3-5)? A war for our minds—is Babylon's primary attack one of inducing state powers to inflict coercion, or is the real attack in our minds—getting Christians to believe that government enforcement of law is how God operates so that Christians will support the beastly system?

How could Christians come to support the state in passing laws to coerce the consciences of people? What issues might be involved? Could it be:

- to save the earth—climate reform—not enforcing worship, but rest from work for environmental reasons? Would this really be coercion of conscience if no worship is involved? No, it would be no different than laws that require cars to get inspection for emissions—this is



not a matter of conscience. So, don't confuse Revelation's warnings with laws to take a day off each week to reduce carbon emissions if no issues of worship are involved.

- what about laws regarding marriage? Could these be avenues that Satan could use to get Christians to seek to enforce their beliefs on others by the power of the state? In other words, be tricked into pursuing what they believe is a good goal, but with Satan's methods of coercion?
- What is the difference between carbon emission laws and laws on marriage?
 - Carbon emission laws would be about environmental and economic policy—not about personal matters of conscience—like laws on recycling, clean air, car exhaust emissions, etc.
 - But laws on marriage move past community and environmental issues to personal issues of conscience and belief.

Read second paragraph, “With the destruction of Babylon...”

The lesson references the fifth seal—let's read this seal:

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰ They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” ¹¹ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed. Rev 6:9-11

What do you hear happening? Do you hear anything about the Investigative Judgment or Sanctuary message?

There is an altar, where does that symbol (altar) place the scene? In the sanctuary, so this seal is focusing our attention on the work of Christ in the sanctuary.

What is under the altar? Souls—what does this mean?

Do we understand it through a legal view based on human law and teach that God is functioning like a human law court? Or, do we teach that God is Creator and He is functioning in harmony with His design law in whatever He is doing?

It is taught that Jesus is in the sanctuary opening records, reviewing sins, removing sins from the record of the saved etc. Do we understand such descriptions in legal terms or in design law terms?

Have you considered where the dead go when they die? Do they return to dust? Do they go to God? Do they go to heaven? Or do they do all three?

According to the Bible, human beings are tripartite:



“Now may the God of peace himself make you completely holy and may your spirit and soul and body be kept entirely blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1Thes 5:23 NET, emphasis supplied).

Is it possible that at death, one part of a human returns to dust, one part goes to God, and one part goes to heaven?

Interestingly, computers are also tripartite and serve as a very poignant object lesson. In order to have an operational computer, one needs hardware, software, and an energy source. Having only two of these three, results in a computer that will not operate. All three are required for actual functioning.

In a similar way, to have an operational (or functioning) human being, it requires all three components—body, soul, and spirit:

- The Greek word for body is σῶμα [soma] and is analogous to a computer’s hardware—the physical machine, including our brain.
- The Greek word for soul is ψυχή [psuche], from which we get *psyche*, as in *psychiatry* and *psychology*, and means our unique individuality, personhood, identity. It is analogous to a computer’s software.
- And the Greek word for spirit is πνεῦμα [pneuma], from which we get *pneumonia* or *pneumatic* and means wind, air or breath, as in the breath-of-life. This is our energy source—the life-energy originating from God.

If a computer runs out of power, then into what state does it go? It sleeps. And how does the Bible describe those who die the first death? They sleep, awaiting the resurrection. So, with this in mind, we can now answer what actually happens to the various components of a human being at death.

At the first death,

- the body returns to dust (see Gen 3:19, Ps 44:25, Ecc 3:20);
- the spirit—life energy—returns to God who gave the breath of life (see Ecc 12:7);
- but what about the soul—the psyche, the individuality, the software? Where does that go?

If someone stole your laptop and was threatening to destroy it unless you paid a great price, but you had a perfect copy of the data backed up on a cloud-server, you might say, “I’m not afraid of the one who can destroy my laptop (body) but cannot destroy the software (soul/psyche).” This is what Jesus described in Matthew 10:28 when He spoke about those who might kill us for our faith in Him.

Why is it, that killing of the body cannot destroy the soul? Because the soul is our psyche, our individuality, our unique personhood and is distinct from the body. The question is, Where does the soul go when it is absent from the body?

The apostle Paul said, “Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be **absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.**” (2Cor 5:6-8 KJV, emphasis supplied)



But where would our identities (souls) be stored in heaven? Would it not be in the heavenly records, the Lamb's book of life? EGW says this:

Remember, **your character is being daguerreotyped** [photographed] **by the great Master Artist in the record books of heaven**, as minutely as the face is reproduced upon the polished plate of the artist. What do the books of heaven say in your case? Are you conforming your character to the Pattern, Jesus Christ? Are you washing your robes of character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb? (TSB 62.1, emphasis supplied)

Every passing hour of the present is shaping our future life. These moments spent in carelessness, in self-pleasing, as if of no value, are deciding our everlasting destinies. The words we utter today will go on echoing when time shall be no more. **The deeds done today are transferred to the books of heaven, just as the features are transferred by the artist onto the polished plate.** They will determine our destiny for eternity, for bliss or eternal loss and agonizing remorse. **Character cannot be changed when Christ comes, nor just as a man is about to die. Character building must be done in this life.** (TM 429.3, emphasis supplied)

What is the relationship between deeds and character?

When you hear “deeds” do you think legal, judicial, the bad acts are the problem and require punishment—like in human law. Or, do you think through God's design law and realize that the deeds are evidence of character and further develop and reinforce the type of character one has?

The words are an indication of that which is in the heart. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." [this would be evidence of the character] **But the words are more than an indication of character; they have power to react on the character.** Men are influenced by their own words. Often under a momentary impulse, prompted by Satan, they give utterance to jealousy or evil surmising, expressing that which they do not really believe; **but the expression reacts on the thoughts.** They are deceived by their words, and come to believe that true which was spoken at Satan's instigation. **Having once expressed an opinion or decision, they are often too proud to retract it, and try to prove themselves in the right, until they come to believe that they are.** It is dangerous to utter a word of doubt, dangerous to question and criticize divine light. **The habit of careless and irreverent criticism reacts upon the character,** in fostering irreverence and unbelief. Many a man indulging this habit has gone on unconscious of danger, until he was ready to criticize and reject the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." {DA 323.1}

So, what is recorded in the record books—merely lists of bad deeds that are legal in nature, requiring legal accounting and punishment, or our actual characters, individualities, personhoods?



This is why Paul could write:

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who **fall asleep**, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that **God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him**. The Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and **the dead in Christ will rise first**. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. (1Thes 4:13-18 NIV84, emphasis supplied)

Did you notice that the very same righteous dead who arise out of the ground are also coming down out of heaven with Christ, and that they are described as coming from heaven in a state of sleep? How can this be? Because their souls (psyches/software), which are stored/recorded on the heavenly servers, are coming down with Christ to be downloaded into their new immortal bodies during the resurrection at the Second Coming!

This is why Jesus could say, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.” (Jn 11:25,26 NIV84)

The righteous may *sleep*, but they never *die*. Their individualities are safe with Christ in heaven!¹

Do you see a connection with this and the doctrine of Investigative Judgment and the removing of sins from the Sanctuary in heaven?

When Jesus raises the righteous at the first resurrection, will they arise defective and sinful, or perfect and sinless? Obviously, perfect and sinless, but did all the saved who have died throughout history, die in perfect sinlessness or did they die as sinners who loved Jesus and trusted Him for their salvation, but who still struggled with defects in their lives?

Will they rise with those same defects? Will the thief on the cross, who found salvation in Christ, arise with the heart of a thief longing to steal? Will the great Reformer Martin Luther, who held staunch hatred of the Jews, arise hating the Jews and longing to kill them?

Then, would something need to happen in these saved souls **before** the resurrection so that at the moment of resurrection their previous evil habits, selfish natures, addictive tendencies and other lusts would be gone? Would all such defects, sinfulness, need to be removed?

Could we describe this process as a healing, cleansing, or removing sins? And from where are these “sins” being removed? From the individualities/characters of the sleeping people who have trusted in Jesus. They are receiving from Jesus *His* perfection, so that when they arise, they arise perfected!

¹ This article does not address the fate of the unrepentant *wicked*. Nothing in this article speaks to the mortality or immortality of the soul—that is a different discussion. However, it is the author’s position that the soul is mortal and immortality is a gift from God for the saved (see Rom 6:23).



EGW describes it this way:

We believe without a doubt that Christ is soon coming. This is not a fable to us; it is a reality. **When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time.** (Counsels for the Church 214.4, emphasis supplied)

Do you see how the penal substitution lie cheats people, deceives people, and keeps people trapped in sin? It doesn't teach people that they can be renewed now, but that they can't be renewed now, only declared to be legally righteous, even though they remain unrighteous.

So, our souls, our individualities, or safe and secure in heaven, on the heavenly servers—and what other metaphor does the Bible use for the safekeeping of the individualities of the righteous? The heavenly Sanctuary! (see Eph 2:19-22; 1Pet 2:5; 2Cor 5:1). Using beautiful symbolism Revelation describes this cleansing of the individualities (souls) of the dead:

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the **altar [sanctuary]** the **souls [individualities]** of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you **judge [Investigative Judgment]** the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” **Then** each of them was given a **white robe [cleansing of their characters at that time]**, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed **[cleansing of the living on earth]**. (Rev 6:9-11 NIV84)

So, we could describe this process as *cleansing of the Sanctuary*.

We could say that:

Jesus, our heavenly High Priest, is opening every individual record and examining it closely, and for all those who have trusted Him, He removes the sins from their account;

which means

He examines in detail the stored data (code) that constitutes every person, and for those who trust Him, He removes all damaged code—all elements of selfishness, all tendencies to sin—and writes in His perfection!

The cleansing of the sanctuary is the cleansing of individualities, and EGW connects this cleansing of the temple directly to Malachi 3:1-3, which is critical, because Malachi 3:1-3 is the same event as the one described in Daniel 8:14 that began in 1844.

The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to his temple, foretold by Malachi, are descriptions of the same event; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25. (GC88 426.1, emphasis supplied)



In 1844, Christ began His final work in heaven of cleansing the souls, databases of all who trust Him from the residual elements of sinfulness people had when they died, so when they arise they arise in sinless perfection.

But why wait until 1844 to start this final work? Because Jesus needs to not only perfect the individualities of the dead/asleep who have placed their trust in Him, but He also has to do the same for those who are still alive on earth at the time of His Second Coming.

This means He needs a people who have comprehended the truth sufficiently enough to expunge the lies about God from their minds and experience the transformation of their souls as described above. Because of Satan's counterattack on Christ's work at the Cross, it wasn't until 1844 that people on earth were ready to begin this final preparation.

But why wait until 1844 to start this final cleansing work?

After Christ's victory at the cross, Satan's *man of sin*—the little-horn power, as Paul and Daniel describe him—wages war against God's people by attacking the truth about God. This evil power advances its assault on God's character by changing people's perception of God's law—it replaces the truth of God's design-law with the human imposed-law lie. This little-horn power—man of sin—thereby sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God (see Dan 7:25; 2Cor 10:3-5; 2Thes 2:4), by getting humans to conceive of God as an authoritarian dictator—an imposer of rules who, in order to be just, must use His power to inflict punishment and death on the unrepentant. This little-horn power is winning the war of ideas by filling hearts and minds with imperialism and dictator-views of God until the Ancient of Days comes and gives judgment/discernment to the saints (see Dan 7:22).

God, looking down the corridors of time, tells His friend Daniel that 490 years remain for the Jewish people to be the avenue for the Messiah. In the middle of the last week of their mission, the Messiah will come and end the ceremonial system, and He will provide the remedy for human salvation. But the little-horn power will arise after Christ's victory at the cross, and it will war against the saints until a message goes forth from God, proclaiming to the world: Be in awe of God, for the time has come for people to make a right judgment about God—to worship the Designer, Creator, Him who made the heavens, earth, seas and fountains of waters (see Rev 14:7).

This message is specific in its design to turn the minds of people away from the imperial dictator-god with its false, imposed Roman-law construct, back to our Creator God, whose laws are the design-protocols upon which life is built. Those who accept the truth about God and His design-law understand their need for healing and transformation, and they cooperate with Jesus in His work of cleansing the Sanctuary—their souls—so that they will be prepared to meet Him face to face. Those who reject the truth about God and His design-law, continue to perpetuate the lie of the little horn and teach the Investigative Judgment concept through legal lenses, subvert the church, and obstruct the final healing message.



This perspective is developed in more detail in our pamphlet we are making available today. It is currently on our website in digital form and we have print copies here in class for you to take. I want you to take it, study it this week, and next Sabbath we will start our regular class at 10 a.m. instead of 10:20, and at 11:00 a.m. we will do Q&A over this new pamphlet.

In the pamphlet is the main article, followed by several addendum—please read the addendum also. I will share one section now

The last paragraph states the Babylon is destroyed—how do you destroy a system of belief? By destroying the ideas in the minds of intelligent beings it is based upon—this final destruction of Babylon is not a war of physical power, but of truth destroying all the lies about God and removing all the confusion Babylon has caused.

SUNDAY

The Wedding Supper of the Lamb—what is this referring to?

When does the Wedding *Supper* take place? At the second coming—then when does the wedding take place? Before the second coming, and when did the wedding ceremony occur?

To whom is Christ married?

Read first paragraph, “Two thousand years ago...” What does this mean? Does it mean Christ gets married to inanimate matter?

Or does the New Jerusalem symbolically represent something else?

Similarities between the MHP and the NJ:

Most Holy Place

- Cube
- Covered in Gold-Perfect
- Saved at-one with God
- Where God dwells
- HP cleanses MHP

New Jerusalem

Cube
Paved in Gold
Saved at-one with God
Where God dwells
HP cleanses the hearts of the saved

So, prior to the coming of Christ, He receives His kingdom, which is primarily a concern for objects or people? And when a wedding occurs, what happens between the bride and groom? Does intimacy occur? Does union occur? Do the two become one? In other words, at a wedding at-one-ment happens!!!!



So, could we consider, that the receiving of His kingdom, the wedding for which we are guests, is Christ bringing into perfect at-one-ment all those who have put their trust in Him. In other words, the cleansing of their data-sets, their individualities, their characters as they are united to Christ like a bride to her groom, so that at the resurrection they are perfect?

Consider Revelation 3:12, describing the saved:

I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. Revelation 3:12. {CTr 227.1}

What is being described here? The cleansing of character to restore the saved to God's original design for humanity, receiving the perfection of Christ as their own—being united or at-one with Christ, i.e. being married to Him.

I found this EGW quote in connection with Revelation 3:12 and found it instructive:

Never will the human family—redeemed by the example of the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father—understand and fully comprehend the terrible conflict waged with deceptive, alluring power and concealed, deadly hatred by Satan against our Lord when He lived upon earth. After the battle of the great day of God shall take place, when the power of rebellion is forever broken and Christ's mediatorial work in its magnitude is represented so plainly that all of the redeemed of God's family shall, with clear comprehension, **understand the mission of His Son as the mediatorial remedy to make of the fallen race a repentant, humble, meek, reclaimed order of beings—then there will be seen developed the difference between the person that serveth God and the one that serveth Him not.** {CTr 227.2}

Rebellion will exist in our world until in heaven are spoken the words "It is done." **Rebellion in the church is caused by its members feeling opposed to God and to His terms of salvation.** Human beings want abundant room to express themselves and to attract attention. They do not know or understand that they are working out the plans of Satan. **If they refuse to see and to become enlightened, if they refuse to be instructed, they reject the mediatorial remedy that has been given to save the sinner—not in sin but from sin.** [Come let us reason together... Those who refuse to reason, to examine evidence, to pursue the truth have closed their minds to the truth that Jesus has brought. It is only through the truth we are won to genuine trust in God and then transformed by the Spirit of Truth and Love. Notice the purpose of Christ was not legal, but remedial, healing, to fix the damage sin has done to His creation.] **For the express purpose of saving sinners was the remedial work of Christ planned.** {CTr 227.3}

Here is another EGW quote:

Jesus sent His angels to direct the minds of the disappointed ones to the most holy place, where **He had gone to cleanse the sanctuary** and make a special atonement for Israel. Jesus told the angels that all who found Him would understand the work which He was to perform. I saw that **while Jesus was in the most holy place He would be married to the New Jerusalem**; and after His work should be accomplished in the holiest, He would descend to the earth in kingly power and take to Himself the precious ones who had patiently waited His return. {EW 251.1}

Do you see the reality through the metaphorical language? Jesus is uniting Himself in heart, mind, character with all the saints through history who have trusted in Him, thus cleansing their records (their individualities/data sets) which are stored in heaven. This unity, is oneness in the most intimate way and is described as a marriage.

In COL 311, describing the parable of the wedding feast EGW writes:

When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

Again, do you see the reality through the metaphor of an actual healing of the character, mind, motives to be at-one with Christ.

Those who have died trusting in Him, have their individualities stored in the heavenly records, the Lamb's book of Life, and during the IJ, the Wedding, Jesus unites Himself with them by opening their datasets, their unique stored personhoods and removes all residual defects and writes in His perfection. Thus, they are "washed in the blood" metaphor for the life of Christ, His character restored in them, or covered by the robe of righteousness.

We who are alive on earth receive the same transformation of character through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and our humble and purposeful trust in Him.

The Church will never fulfill its mission to take the final message of mercy to the world until we reject the imperial law lie with its penal substitution theology and return to worship our Creator God whose laws are design laws. If you want to see Jesus come in your lifetime, then I implore you to reject the legal lie and promote the truth about God.



MONDAY

Armageddon Ends

What is the battle of Armageddon?

- Is it a local battle, or worldwide battle? Worldwide
- Is it a battle of physical armies? No
- Is it a battle for hearts and minds? Yes
- What are the weapons employed by both sides?
 - Satan—lies, coercion, bribes, appeal to survival instincts, impersonation of Christ, miracles, imprisonment, physical torture, death penalty
 - God/Jesus/Saints—truth, love, freedom, never coercion, always leaves free, self-sacrifice, not loving own life so much as to shrink from death, trust God with one's life.

The lesson references 2Thes 1 as a description of the end of the wicked, let's read verses 6-10:

God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you ⁷ and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. ⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power ¹⁰ on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you. (NIV84)

How do you understand this? What law lens are you reading it through?

If we believe Satan's lie that God's law functions like human law, requiring the law-giver to inflict punishment, what conclusions do we draw? That Jesus will use His power to inflict pain, suffering and death on the wicked.

If we reject this view, because we reject the lie that God's law functions like human law, and instead believe God is Creator and His laws are the laws upon which all reality operate and life depend, then what conclusions do we draw from the passage?

Do the wicked receive punishment? Yes, but from where? The Bible tells us, Galatians 6:8:

The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction...(NIV84)

So, 2Thes 2:6-8 from *The Remedy*:

God always does what is merciful, loving and right: those who refuse the Remedy and cause harm, he will give up to reap the torment they have chosen—the destruction that comes from



unremedied selfishness—⁷ but he will free us from our afflictions. This will happen when the Lord Jesus appears in the sky in the full brilliance of his unveiled fiery glory, surrounded by his powerful angels.⁸ Truth and love will burn free, and those who have rejected the Remedy procured by Jesus will experience the punishment that unremedied selfishness and sin bring: they will be unfit to tolerate the intensity of absolute truth and pure love of God's presence; the anguish of facing the reality of their true selves and of all they have done will overwhelm them;⁹ they will be punished with eternal separation from the glorious presence of God—separation from their source of life that unremedied sin and selfishness bring—and sink into everlasting non-existence.¹⁰ This will happen on the day Christ returns to be glorified in his people when he restores to his original ideal those who have taken the Remedy. This includes you, because you have believed us and have taken the Remedy.

TUESDAY

The Millennium

When does it begin?

Who is on earth?

Where are the saints?

How is Satan bound?

What do you think the lesson means in the first paragraph where it says, “The chaining of Satan is symbolic, because spiritual beings cannot be physically bound.”

Are they suggesting that Satan is not a physical being that angels don't have physical bodies?

EGW wrote the following in EW 152:

I was shown Satan as he once was, a happy, exalted angel. Then I was shown him as he now is. He still bears a kingly form. His features are still noble, for he is an angel fallen. But the expression of his countenance is full of anxiety, care, unhappiness, malice, hate, mischief, deceit, and every evil. That brow which was once so noble, I particularly noticed. His forehead commenced from his eyes to recede. I saw that he had so long bent himself to evil that every good quality was debased, and every evil trait was developed. His eyes were cunning, sly, and showed great penetration. His frame was large, but the flesh hung loosely about his hands and face. As I beheld him, his chin was resting upon his left hand. He appeared to be in deep thought. A smile was upon his countenance, which made me tremble, it was so full of evil and satanic slyness. This smile is the one he wears just before he makes sure of his victim, and as he fastens the victim in his snare, this smile grows horrible. {EW 152.3}



I have always thought that angels were physical beings, with bodies, just made out of different stuff than our bodies.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson points out that the planet will be purged by fire—this is the fire of combustion which burns up physical matter, the fire in which the elements melt—is this the same fire that consumes sin? No, the fire that consumes sin, is the fire of God’s life-giving glory, the fires of truth and love that consume lies and selfishness. It is only after the wicked are dead that the fires of combustion cleanse the physical matter of the earth.

Read the fourth paragraph, “A life free of suffering...”

Why does God’s presence guarantee a life free of suffering and death? Did God’s presence in heaven guarantee a universe free of suffering and death or did Lucifer rebel in God’s presence?

So, why do they say God’s presence is the guarantee? What is the guarantee that sin will never rise again? The truth—all truth—the truth about God revealed by Jesus, the truth about God’s law—perfect and righteous—the design protocols for life, not imperial rules—the truth about Satan and his lies about God’s law, the knowledge that violations of God’s law only injures and damages the one who violates it. Thus, the universe is safe and secure because all have the knowledge of the truth and have chosen the truth, thus being settled in their hearts and minds on the issue.

Consider this EGW quote:

Through Christ's redeeming work the government of God stands justified. [to whom? what is the redeeming work? Would this mean that we would remember we were redeemed and from what?] The Omnipotent One is made known as the God of love. Satan's charges are refuted, and his character unveiled. [to whom is God made known as the God of love and to whom is Satan's character unveiled? Will we remember?] Rebellion can never again arise. Sin can never again enter the universe. Through eternal ages all are secure from apostasy. By love's self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of earth and heaven are bound to their Creator in bonds of indissoluble union. [why can rebellion never arise again? because we all remember. It is Satan's lie that memory is erased in the hereafter.] {DA 26.2}

FRIDAY

The lesson points out that we are still waiting for the second coming of Christ—why do you think there has been a delay?

Is there anything we can do to hasten the day?



I believe the delay has occurred because the truth about God's design law, the eternal good news about God's character and methods has still not gone to the world. Instead, all Christianity has been infected with the beastly view of God as a dictator who makes up rules and then punishes rule breakers.

The SDA church was called into existence to finish the reformation by rejecting Imperial Rome's view of law and calling people back to worship Him who made the heavens, earth, sea and fountains of waters, i.e. the Creator whose laws are design laws. But the SDA leadership rejected this view in 1888 and embraced the imperial law lie and teaches its pastors and leaders that God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death—the lie Satan told from the beginning. We can only finish the work and hasten the day by rejecting the imperial law lie and returning to the truth about God and His law as design law.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you to all of our supporters!!! We appreciate your prayers and financial support.

To let you know what is IN THE WORKS in addition to our weekly class:

- Audio version of the Remedy is in production, we are about half way through and hope to have it by the first of April.
- The Power of Love Come and Reason Training and Equipping Course—is in production and more announcements will be forthcoming on time, place, and schedule
- A new sharing pamphlet to be out in March
- A weekly 15 minute radio show/podcast will start in April
- Exploring how to expand the Dr. Tim Jennings Television program

Check our website for new chapters of *The Remedy* the Psalms will be going up slowly as they are completed and edited. When an entire book of the Old Testament is complete then it will be added to the app and when you update the app you will get the new book. Thank you for your prayers and support as I work on this project.

April 3-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Sophia Bulgaria.

May 10,11, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Barrie SDA Church, 140 Mapleton Ave
Barrie, ON L4N 9N7 Canada

May 18, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Love and Transformation Summit in Scottsdale, AZ

June 8, 2019: Dr. Jennings will present The Aging Brain Seminar at Mid Columbia Medical Center, in The Dalles, OR.

July 10, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the 3rd Global Health Conference, sponsored by the General Conference of SDA and held at Loma Linda University.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.



Family Seasons Lesson 1 2Q 2019

The Rhythms of Life

by Tim Jennings

Before we get to the lesson I received an email recently:

I was so blessed by a friend that gave me your book, The God Shaped Brain, while I was sitting in church asking God to please help me learn more about Him and help me not to be so confused and scared. That was about 2 years ago. Your books have helped me to love God even more. I'm not confused or scared anymore!!! I have listened to all of your sabbath school classes and feel like I know the wonderful people that attend every week. I know their voices because I jog while I'm listening, and the five miles I jog feels effortless.

January 15th I found out I had cancer in my breast. February 14th I had them removed and implants were put in. God has blessed me so much through this time. I stand in awe of His love. The anesthesiologist, who is a good friend of mine, asked if he could pray with me while I was on the operating table. One of the nurses overheard him and asked if she can join us. Later after the surgery my friend came to visit and told me that he's never felt the Holy Spirit fill the operating room like that before. God's Love is absolutely amazing!

I am at home recovering now, and after my daughter's wedding I plan on taking a trip to come and sit in your class. Thank you for all that you're doing in spreading the true message about God and His law of love. God bless you and your whole Sabbath school class. With a heart full of love,

SABBATH

The lesson points out attention to Ecc 3:1-8, so let's read it from the NIV84:

There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under heaven:
² a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
³ a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
⁴ a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
⁵ a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain,
⁶ a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
⁷ a time to tear and a time to mend,



a time to be silent and a time to speak,
8 a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

Is this true? Is this eternal truth? Or, is this a true description of the ebbs and flows of life in a world of sin? Is this describing the pull and tug of the battle between good and evil? Is it describing the tension between the forces of life and the forces of death, between the law of life and the law of sin and death?

So, these truths are truths for two reasons—which are?

- sin infecting God’s creation and...
- God’s grace not abandoning sinners in sin

Would there be any tension between sinful humans and sinful angels naturally, or is the fact we see tension an evidence of God’s interventions, grace, intercession?

EGW puts it this way, do you agree?

The Lord says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." The enmity does not exist as a natural fact. As soon as Adam sinned, he was in harmony with the first great apostate, and at war with God; and if God had not interfered in man's behalf, Satan and man would have formed a confederacy against heaven, and carried on united opposition against the God of hosts. There is no natural enmity between evil angels and evil men; both are evil through transgression of the law of God, and evil will always league against good. Fallen men and fallen angels enter into a desperate companionship. {ST, July 11, 1895 par. 5}

When you think of God’s intercession, do you think through human law of Jesus interceding with His blood to a punishing Father, or do you think through design law and see the Father, Son and Holy Spirit united to intercede with the forces of evil for the healing of their creation?

SUNDAY

Genesis 1:1 states “In the beginning God created the heavens and earth...” Of what is this the beginning of?

John 1:1 says “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God....” Is this a different beginning?

Which is the first?

To what is Genesis 1:1 referring?

Were humans in existence at the time of Genesis 1:1?



Were angels in existence at the time of Genesis 1:1? (Job 38)

Was sin in existence when humans were created? In other words, did Satan start his rebellion in heaven before or after humans were created?

Here is why I think Satan sinned first—because immediately, in a sinless world after Adam and Eve were created the tree of knowledge of good and evil is there along with Satan who tempts them. There is no history of living many years in perfection and then along comes the tempter.

EGW also holds this view:

Angels on probation had been deceived by Satan, and had been led on by him in the great rebellion in heaven against Christ. They failed to endure the test brought to bear upon them, and they fell. **Adam was then created** in the image of God and placed upon probation. {Con 18.2}

Humanity was the crowning act in God's creation, planned by God to possess and reveal the most abilities or qualities of God Himself—not only individuality, freedom of choice, capacity for reason, creative thought, capacity for art, music, industry, but also dominion to govern and ability to procreate beings in their image.

The earth was to be the pinnacle of all God's creation and this is one reason Satan specifically targeted earth over all other planets or species in God's universe. Realizing that human beings were gifted with the ability to adapt and change, and to procreate beings in their own image, Satan realized if he could infect humanity with the principles of selfishness and sin, then Satan could produce offspring with his attributes and grow an army of his agents to promote his kingdom.

Not only would Adam and Eve be recruited into selfishness, they become the progenitors of an entire planet of beings infected with Satan's principles.

But God was not taken by surprise and foreknew and already had a plan to destroy the infection of selfishness and heal and restore all human beings who would respond to truth and love and trust Him to heal and restore His perfect design into their being.

Read second paragraph, "Ellen G. White wrote..." From the article cited,

Order is Heaven's first law, and the Lord desires His people to give in their homes a representation of the order and harmony which pervade the heavenly courts. Truth never places her delicate feet in the path of uncleanness and impurity. Truth does not make men and women coarse or rough or untidy. It raises all who accept it to a higher level. **Under Christ's influence, a work of constant refinement goes on.** {ST, July 8, 1908 par. 4} [what does this mean? growth, advancement, healing development, which means we always have more to



grow, so we don't get discouraged or feel guilty when we discover areas we can do better or advance in. It is part of living]

We are living in the last days. Soon Christ is coming for His people, to take them to the mansions He is preparing for them. **But nothing that defiles can enter those mansions. Heaven is pure and holy, and those who pass thru the gates of the city of God must be clothed with inward and outward purity.** They must be without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." The charge to us is, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting [holiness] in the fear of God." {ST, July 8, 1908 par. 5}

What kind of law? Is this imperial rules, or design law?

Why can't we live in heaven with impurity? What would we experience in heaven if our hearts, minds, characters were selfish, deceitful, corrupt, vile, vain?

Would the presence of our infinite God, who emanates infinite love and infinite truth be a place of joy and pleasantness for those who are solidified in selfishness and deceit?

Consider this quote:

The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God. Christ declared that He taught nothing except that which He had received from His Father. **The principles of the divine government are in perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, "Love your enemies."** [What kind of law is this? Keep this in mind with the next words] **God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited.** [Through what law lens do you hear justice and judgment, human imperial law or God's design law? What does justice look like through human law? What does justice look like through design law?] He would make them happy if He could do so in **accordance with the laws of His government and the justice of His character.** [What are the laws of His government and justice of His character? Can love be forced? Can love be achieved by threat? Can God program a being, like a computer, to love Him? Can any law, that functions like human law, requiring external punishment for breaking ever bring greater love and trust?] He surrounds them with the tokens of His love, He grants them a knowledge of His law, and follows them with the offers of His mercy; **but they despise His love, make void His law, and reject His mercy.** While constantly receiving His gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that He abhors their sins. [like a doctor abhors bubonic plague and the deforming lesions it produces] The Lord bears long with their perversity; but the decisive hour will come at last, **when their destiny is to be decided.** [By whom will their destiny be decided? If we think through human law what is the answer—by God—He judges; He decides.



But if we think through design law, who decides their destiny? Continue reading and see.] Will He then chain these rebels to His side? Will He force them to do His will? {GC 541.4}

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power **are not prepared to enter the presence of God.** [What does this mean? Why are they not prepared? What law lens—are they not prepared because they haven’t filed the proper legal briefs, or is there something about their actual state of being that unfits them to be in God’s presence? Continue reading.] **Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become fixed in their characters.** [How did these attributes become fixed in their characters? Who fixed them in their characters? Does this have any bearing on a decisive hour coming that decides their destiny?] Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? **Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish.** What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? {GC 542.1}

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,— every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,—**could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God,** of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? **Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no; [Why not? What law lens do you use to answer and understand what is happening? Why can’t they endure the glory of God because He gets upset, angry, wrathful and lashes out against them using divine power to hurt them, or that there is something in them that hates holiness and suffers in the presence of purity...continuing the quote]** years of probation were granted them, **that they might form characters for heaven; but they have never trained the mind to love purity; they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. [What kind of law? Is this just on God’s part, why? Is it an infliction?]** They would long to flee from that holy place. **They would welcome destruction,** that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. **The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. [Who decided the destiny of the wicked? Was this a judicial decision made by God or a result of the choices of the wicked to reject the only healing solution that God freely provided?]** **Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.** {GC 542.2} [Why are they excluded from heaven? Who makes the choice for them not to be there? And God’s role is to what? Grant them THEIR choice and let them go!]
Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God’s **verdict that the wicked are incurable...** {GC 543.1} [What is God’s verdict or judgment? That they are incurable, which means what? And why does God make this judgment? Because it is the reality or truth



of their condition. Does God's judgment make them this way? No—they made themselves this way by rejecting the only cure to their condition.]

Do you see why the imperial law lie with its penal substitution theology has obstructed and prevented the church from taking the truth about God to the world, has kept millions in the bondage of fear and selfishness and undermined our ability to trust God and experience His healing?

So a question that was sent in this week, which I think fits better here than at the end of class today is:

When we consider God's wrath, either letting go, or the unveiled glory consuming sinfulness, or Jesus on the cross experiencing God's wrath, does God's will play a role in deciding when to unveil His wrath and if so, wouldn't it be better for some law to determine this than some other mechanism?

How do we understand God's design law and why God's wrath, His willful choice to "let go" happens? Why did God let go of Jesus at the cross? Was it to punish Jesus? No, it was because God (F, S, HS) chose to save mankind from sin. In order for that to happen, Jesus had to become human, partake of our condition and cure it. In order to cure the condition He had eliminate the infection of fear and selfishness, the survival of the fittest drive by destroying it and restoring God's perfection of love into humanity. Thus, he "destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light" 2Tim 1:10.

So, the only way for Jesus to complete His mission to reveal truth to win to trust and destroy the death causing infection of selfishness and perfect the humanity He assumed, was to be tempted to act in self interest, but to love perfectly instead. Thus His death was the means to end sin; it was not a punishment, and the only way for Christ to develop a perfect humanity, was for the Father—the source of life to let go so He could die and destroy the selfish infection that tempted Him. God's wrath is letting one go to reap what one has chosen, and in this case God let Jesus go to reap what Jesus had chosen, which was to be our Savior and remedy to sin. This was in full harmony with design law, restoring the law of life into humanity—this is why Jesus arose because He restored the law of life into the humanity He assumed.

The wicked in the end are likewise let go by God based on design law as described above, they are fixed in their hatred and rebellion of God and all things holy and lovely and pure and they do not want God to keep them alive—they are incurable—so God set them free to reap what they have chosen.

So, design law is the most reliable, unwavering, unchangeable, consistent, law—any other construct which brings in imperialism and rules introduces confusion and misunderstanding and inconsistency.

MONDAY

The rhythms of life—all life operates in predictable patterns or rhythms. Examples:

- Earth's magnetic fields cycle every day
- Earth's rotation every 24 hours
- Moon's phases and cycles



- Seasons
- Human circadian rhythm—the natural cycle for the human body is every 25 hours, unless influenced by the sun which adapts to every 24 hours. The moon cycles in a 24 hour 50 minute rhythm, which is closer to the body's natural cycle. Which makes one wonder if the original rhythm of our creation was in harmony with the moon and not the sun, because the earth was made with a water layer over the earth and a worldwide temperate climate, with the moon shining as bright as the sun, and the sun 7 times brighter. ("The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the Lord binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he inflicted." Isa 30:26 NIV84) And it was only after the flood that the sun became the primary solar object to which we respond?
- Body temperature is lowest at 4 a.m. and highest at 4 p.m.
- Many more examples all through the natural world

What rhythms were part of God's creation and what are a result of sin and the battle between God's principles and Satan's?

Rhythms created by God:

- Each day, with an evening and morning
- Earth rotating around the sun and moon rotating around the earth

Assumed to be part of God's creation:

- Changes in biorhythms of living organisms throughout each day

Unknown

- Tidal changes—as oceans likely didn't exist as they do now
- menstrual cycles—likely but unknown
- sleep cycles—was sleep necessary before sin—unknown (Genesis tells of God causing an artificial deep sleep to come upon Adam and during this deep sleep Eve was created. Sounds like anesthesia, but it doesn't sound like nightly sleep).

From sin

- Seasons in which things die and decay
- hibernation of animals

TUESDAY

The lesson talks about unexpected changes and quotes a Greek philosopher who said, "there is nothing permanent except change."

What do you think of that quote?



The lesson points us to examples of people who suffered unexpected painful change, Job, Joseph, Abel—pointing out that in this life change happens and sometimes that change is painful and destructive even to those who choose to do good rather than evil.

What is the lesson from these examples?

We live in a world currently infected with sin—a world that is not operating as God intended, but in which two antagonistic principles are at war. This current circumstance is evidence of God's grace refusing to allow sin to win and His interventions to cure the problem and in the end all pain, suffering and defects from God's design will be eliminated.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "The fact is that human..." do you agree?

EGW wrote:

Men and women of mature age are generally as insensible to impressions as is the hardened rock... {RH, March 30, 1897 par. 3}

Why is this so?

- Mindset—people of mature years have formed a mindset in which they are comfortable, in which they seem to have answers for their life's problems and to question their framework would cause a certain discomfort for which they don't want to experience
- Neurobiology—the older we get the more difficult to change and the more effort it takes
- Fear—fear of years of being wrong and the potential guilt one might have if one acknowledges new truth
- Pride—if one has gone on record promoting a certain belief or practice pride can obstruct acknowledging one was wrong

Read the second paragraph, "Indeed, we don't change..." What is wrong with this paragraph? Where is the wife placing the emphasis for change? Where does the wife have authority to make change?

Read third paragraph, "However, God is in the business..." How does God make this change? What method does He use? Can God make change in our hearts, minds, characters without our cooperation? Can we make godly change without God's participation?

- We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God



which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}

- **There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies--** divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding,** but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . .** Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}
- And he who seeks to give light to others will himself be blessed. "There shall be showers of blessing." "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." Proverbs 11:25. **God could have reached His object in saving sinners without our aid; but in order for us to develop a character like Christ's, we must share in His work.** In order to enter into His joy,--the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice,--we must participate in His labors for their redemption. {DA 142.2}

So, while we are alive we are working in cooperation with God to grow in ever increasing godliness.

Are there people who have died trusting in Jesus who still had struggles for which they longed to experience victory, but they had not yet experienced victory in this life? What happens to them? They are saved—when they arise at the resurrection do they arise still struggling with sinful tendencies or are those eliminated before they arise? When and where are they eliminated? That is the doctrine of the IJ, Christ working in each person's individuality to perfect all who trust in Him so when they arise they arise perfected.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The Bible is a book..." Scientific studies compared socially connected people to socially isolated people and found that those with social connections had gene expression differences which reduced inflammation and improved the ability to resist infections.

People who engage in volunteerism live longer, have less disability, depression, dementia and stay out of nursing homes longer than those who don't volunteer.

The science would agree with the Bible that we are designed for relationships.

Yet, even though this is true, our changing social media and world has resulted in ever increasing social isolation, with increased mental breakdown, drug and alcohol use disorders. Why?



My hypothesis is that the digital world has markedly increased the selfish tilt of relationships, where people can be voyeurs, bullies, project avatars or false images all designed to get for self and never really having to be open, honest, patient, compassionate or caring of another.

Read last paragraph, “In many ways...” Can we make up rules on kindness and compassion? Does context ever matter in directing what is the kind and compassionate action to take?

What is required to actually be nice, kind or compassionate toward another?

Before we can actually be nice, kind, or compassionate we must understand reality, understand God’s design law, and have love for people in our hearts. It is a combination of both truth and love that results in genuine kindness and compassion.

Examples:

- Your son has an addiction problem and refuses any treatment, denies he has a problem and is now unable to pay his bills and car is going to get repossessed and he will be evicted from his apartment and doesn’t have any money for food. What is the kind and compassionate action to take?
- You are a pastor and a member of your church comes to you telling you her husband has been physically abusive to her, but he hasn’t been sexually involved with anyone else. The abuse has been going on for many years and he refuses to acknowledge any wrong doing or get help. She wants to divorce, but doesn’t want to disobey God’s Word and wants to do the most loving thing she can for her husband. What do you tell her to do?

Jesus said:

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn “ ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law— man’s enemies will be the members of his own household... MT 10:34-35 (NIV84)

From *The Remedy*

"Don't think that I have come to make peace with a selfish world. I have not come to bring peace with selfishness, but a sword to cut selfishness out of the hearts of people.³⁵ I have come to cut dysfunctional family ties: to free a son from selfish loyalty to his father's ambitions and feuds, to sever a daughter from the control of an oppressive and manipulative mother, to cut through the fear and hostility a daughter-in-law has toward her mother-in-law.³⁶ A person's worst enemies are often members of their own family.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Thank you to all of our supporters!!! We appreciate your prayers and financial support.

To let you know what is IN THE WORKS in addition to our weekly class:

- Audio version of the Remedy is in production, we are about half way through and hope to have it by the first of April.
- The Power of Love Come and Reason Training and Equipping Course—is in production and more announcements will be forthcoming on time, place, and schedule
- A new sharing pamphlet to be out in March
- A weekly 15 minute radio show/podcast will start in April
- Exploring how to expand the Dr. Tim Jennings Television program

April 3-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Sophia Bulgaria.

May 10,11, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Barrie SDA Church, 140 Mapleton Ave Barrie, ON L4N 9N7 Canada

May 18, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be a speaker at the Love and Transformation Institute: The Epidemic Rise of Anxiety, Depression and Suicide at the Phoenix Seminary, in Scottsdale, AZ.

June 8, 2019: Dr. Jennings will present The Aging Brain Seminar at Mid Columbia Medical Center, in The Dalles, OR.

July 10, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the 3rd Global Health Conference, sponsored by the General Conference of SDA and held at Loma Linda University.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.



Family Seasons Lesson 2 2Q 2019

The Choices We Make

By Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

I viewed a few minutes of the Q&A session from last week and was quite disappointed with myself in how I appear to have come across. I allowed the pressure of trying to answer 27 pages of questions in only 60 minutes to increase my sense of urgency and came across too stern; perhaps it would have been better to not be so pressured and to have covered fewer questions. So, if I came across to stern I apologize to you and will try to slow down—but it's hard!

A news article this week on Spectrum Magazine reported:

In business meetings held last week, March 21-24, 2019, delegates of the Czech-Slovak Union voted their affirmation that women pastors should be ordained to pastoral ministry while rejecting the document "Regard for and Practice of General Conference Session and General Conference Executive Committee Actions" that was voted at the GC's Annual Council on October 14, 2018.

In their resolution they state:

The Czech-Slovak Union Conference does not agree with the enforcement of unity by a "higher organizational body"; they believe that unity comes from the action of the Holy Spirit on every individual.

<https://spectrummagazine.org/news/2019/czech-slovak-union-votes-ordain-women-pastoral-ministry-rejects-gc-document>

Do you think people who lived under a dictatorship for decades are perhaps a little more savvy, sensitive, to the movements of imperialism and recognize a little more quickly such tactics are not in keeping with God's design for unity?

In the discussion after this article, some argued that the actions of the Czech union could cause a split and that church members should not rebel against the church leadership of the GC. What I found interesting was in a response to that concern another person cited the following quotation from EGW, which she wrote after the 1888 Minneapolis GC, and then the person made an observation. Here is the EGW quote cited:

"When I purposed to leave Minneapolis, the **angel of the Lord** stood by me and said: [The following is a quote from the angel of the Lord, who is Christ] "Not so; God has a work for you to do in this place. **The people are acting over [re-enacting] the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.** I have placed you in your proper position, **which those who are not in the light will not acknowledge; they will not heed your testimony;** [What was EGW advocating? For the healing view of the gospel promoted by Jones and Waggoner.



Righteousness by faith message—which is actual, real, genuine righteousness within the heart/mind of those who trust in Jesus. The rebuilding and healing of our characters when we trust in Jesus—the fulfillment of the day of at-one-ment metaphor, the cleansing of the bride, the groom receiving His bride bringing her into unity/oneness with Him, the cleansing of the sanctuary. All the same. But church leadership rejected this healing view and chose instead to embrace the false imperial legal view of declared righteousness even though we are not. This, is, according to the angel of the Lord, like Korah saying “we can’t succeed in going into the promised land.” And church leaders, who prefer the imperial law view, have been telling Adventists ever since that we can’t succeed in experiencing Christ’s righteousness, which prepares us to stand in His presence; we can only be declared legally righteous, even though **we are not.**] but I will be with you; My grace and power shall sustain you. **It is not you they are despising, but the messengers and the message I send to My people.** [Friends of Come and Reason around the world, realize that when you are told you are not welcome, you cannot teach your SS class, that you cannot share the wonders of God’s love that has so transformed your life—that it is not you they are rejecting but Christ they are rejecting—just like Korah.] **They have shown contempt for the word of the Lord. Satan has blinded their eyes and perverted their judgment; and unless every soul shall repent of this their sin, this unsanctified independence that is doing insult to the Spirit of God, they will walk in darkness.** I will remove the candlestick out of his place except they repent and be converted, that I should heal them. **They have obscured their spiritual eyesight.** [What does this mean? How? By refusing the truth of God’s design law, by holding to Rome’s imperial law lie, they have blinded themselves to how reality actually works and live in a fantasy of confusion and contradictions mirroring this sinful world with a god who is the source of pain, suffering and death which they call justice.] They would not that God should manifest His Spirit and His power; for they have a spirit of mockery and disgust at My word. Lightness, trifling, jesting and joking are daily practiced. They have not set their hearts to seek Me. They walk in the sparks of their own kindling, and unless they repent, they shall lie down in sorrow. Thus saith the Lord: “Stand at your post of duty; for I am with thee, and will not leave thee nor forsake thee.” These words from God I have not dared to disregard.”—Letter 2a, 1892, pp. 4, 5. (To “Dear Nephew and Niece, Frank (F.E.) and Hattie,” Nov. 5, 1892.) {3MR 191.2}

The person who posted this on Spectrum noted that EGW took the position that church leadership became represented by Korah and to reject those who hold the legal/penal position is not rejecting God, but rejecting the leadership of those who have rebelled against God.

Can you see why they shipped her to Australia?

Can you see why our church is still wandering in the wilderness instead of going home to our heavenly promised land?

An online listener, Jonathan Mahurin, in aftermath of our Q&A last week sent this quote from DA in relationship to God cleansing people from sin:



“I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance,” said John; “but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” Matthew 3:11, R. V., margin. The prophet Isaiah had declared that the Lord would cleanse His people from their iniquities “by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.” The word of the Lord to Israel was, “I will turn My hand upon thee, and surely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy sin.” Isaiah 4:4; 1:25. To sin, wherever found, “our God is a consuming fire.” Hebrews 12:29. **In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. But if men cling to sin, they become identified with it. Then the glory of God, which destroys sin, must destroy them.** Jacob, after his night of wrestling with the Angel, exclaimed, “I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.” Genesis 32:30. Jacob had been guilty of a great sin in his conduct toward Esau; but he had repented. His transgression had been forgiven, **and his sin purged; therefore he could endure the revelation of God's presence.** [from where was his sin purged? What was purged? Fear and selfishness and the lies he had been telling himself that justified his selfish choices] But wherever men came before God while willfully cherishing evil, they were destroyed. At the second advent of Christ the wicked shall be consumed “with the Spirit of His mouth,” and destroyed “with the brightness of His coming.” 2 Thessalonians 2:8. **The light of the glory of God, which imparts life to the righteous, will slay the wicked.** DA 107.4

Sin has two roots, lies and fear-based selfishness, truth burns out lies and love burns out fear and selfishness. Thus, God’s presence of truth and love burns out lies about God and fear and selfishness.

So, how do we get healed? How do we get the lies, fear and selfishness burned out of our hearts, minds, characters, without being destroyed in the process?

Malachi writes, after the previous chapter where he wrote about the cleansing of the sanctuary, in which our hearts and minds are cleansed:

“Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the Lord Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them.” ² **But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.** 4:1,2

What do you understand this to mean?

Christ is the source of truth, spiritual light, at the end of time truth increases in its intensity and those who love truth assimilate it and grow in the truth until they are ready to meet Christ face to face. But those who do not love the truth, deny it and stay in the darkness of false ideas about God, rooted in the false law lens of an imperial dictator and they are not prepared to stand in His presence.

Consider, being in a dark cave for days and then being brought out at 4 a.m. and allowed to sit there while the sun rises, how would that be?



What if you were in that dark cave for days and being brought out at noon on a sunny day, how would that be?

Jesus is rising now, truth is increasing in its intensity for this generation, are we advancing in it, assimilating it, being transformed by it or are we clinging to old ideas, preferring the darkness of the Dark Ages view of God?

Consider these quotes:

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. [What is the cause of darkness in the minds of humans?] That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. **This could not be done by force.** [Why could this not be done by force? What kind of law uses force? What kind of law does Satan allege God uses?] **The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority.** [Is there darkness in the world today because essentially all of Christianity teaches that God's justice requires Him to use force to torture and kill those who don't love Him? But at this time in history the Sun of righteousness is rising with healing—healing for our minds, hearts, characters as we reject the imperial law lie and the penal substitution lie and return to worship our Creator God whose laws are design laws] **Only by love is love awakened.** To know God is to love Him; **His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan.** This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {DA 22.1}

In these final hours of probation for the sons of men, when the fate of every soul is so soon **to be decided forever**, [decided by who?] the Lord of heaven and earth expects His church to arouse to action as never before... The good news of salvation is to go to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. [For what purpose? Would it be for people to make a decision upon? And what decision? Would it be whether to trust God? And would the message be different from the dictator view of a punishing god that Christianity has spread for over a thousand years?] {PK 716.2}

In the visions of the prophets of old the Lord of glory was represented as **bestowing special light upon His church in the days of darkness and unbelief preceding His second coming.** **As the Sun of Righteousness, He was to arise upon His church, "with healing in His wings."** Malachi 4:2. And from every true disciple was to be diffused an influence for life, courage, helpfulness, and true healing. {PK 716.3}

The coming of Christ will take place in the darkest period of this earth's history. The days of Noah and of Lot picture the condition of the world just before the coming of the Son of man. The Scriptures, pointing forward to this time, declare that **Satan will work with all power and**



"with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10. [This is a quotation from 2 Thes 2—which is the same evil power that wars against the saints and sets itself up in God's temple proclaiming itself to be God. How? By replacing God's design law with imperial law. This is the deceivableness of unrighteousness and the message we have for this time sets minds free, the eternal gospel about our Creator God!] His working is plainly revealed by the rapidly increasing darkness, the multitudinous errors, heresies, and delusions of these last days. Not only is Satan leading the world captive, but his deceptions are **leavening the professed churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. The great apostasy will develop into darkness deep as midnight.** To God's people it will be a night of trial, a night of weeping, a night of persecution for the truth's sake. **But out of that night of darkness God's light will shine.** {PK 717.1} [Light about what—about God Himself, His character and methods, which are magnified when we reject the imperial human law construct with its false penal substitutionary theology!]

He causes "the light to shine out of darkness." 2 Corinthians 4:6. When "the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep," "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." Genesis 1:2, 3. So in the night of spiritual darkness, God's word goes forth, "Let there be light." **To His people He says, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."** Isaiah 60:1. {PK 717.2}

"Behold," says the Scripture, "the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee." Verse 2. **Christ, the outshining of the Father's glory, came to the world as its light. He came to represent God to men...** [And what did we learn about God in the life of Jesus? How many imperial rules did Jesus lay down? How many people did Jesus seek to punish, stone, imprison, persecute for breaking God's laws? Do we really learn about God in the life of Jesus, or have we rejected the truth Jesus revealed and replaced it with the Roman lie and teach Jesus came to be punished by His Father?] In the synagogue at Nazareth He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; **He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives,** and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke 4:18, 19. **This was the work He commissioned His disciples to do. "Ye are the light of the world,"** He said. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see **your good works,** and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:14, 16... {PK 718.1} [Do we shed the light about God when we teach the penal legal views of God or are we spreading the darkness?]

Thus in the night of spiritual darkness God's glory is to shine forth through His church in lifting up the bowed down and comforting those that mourn. {PK 718.3}

All around us are heard the wails of a world's sorrow. On every hand are the needy and



distressed. It is ours to aid in relieving and softening life's hardships and misery. **The wants of the soul only the love of Christ can satisfy...** {PK 719.1} [People are living in fear, guilt, shame, fear of rejection, fear of not being good enough, fear of failure and only the truth and love of God can heal and set them free. We must embrace the truth and love of God and let people know this truth and love and hearts will be transformed!]

There are many from whom hope has departed. **Bring back the sunshine to them...** {PK 719.2}

Light is a blessing, a universal blessing, pouring forth its treasures on a world unthankful, unholy, demoralized. **So it is with the light of the Sun of Righteousness. The whole earth, wrapped as it is in the darkness of sin and sorrow and pain, is to be lighted with the knowledge of God's love.** [What is the knowledge the world needs? It is the proper lists of rules, rituals, foods, dress, days of worship or is it the knowledge of God's love?] From no sect, rank, or class of people is the light shining from heaven's throne to be excluded... {PK 719.3}

Christ has made every provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the Light of the world, possessing the glory of Immanuel. It is His purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. He desires that we shall reveal His own joy in our lives. {PK 720.1} [If Christ has made every provision that His church shall be transformed to reveal His character of love—why has this not happened? Has something gotten in the way? What? The imperial law lie, which corrupts every teaching and sews distrust and fear into hearts thereby obstructing the provisions of Christ from actually reaching the heart—because people don't actually trust God!]

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Isaiah 60:1. **Christ is coming with power and great glory. He is coming with His own glory and with the glory of the Father.** And the holy angels will attend Him on His way. **While all the world is plunged in darkness, there will be light in every dwelling of the saints. They will catch the first light of His second appearing.** The unsullied light will shine from His splendor, and Christ the Redeemer will be admired by all who have served Him. **While the wicked flee, Christ's followers will rejoice in His presence.** {PK 720.2} [Do you see the first light of His second coming—the light of the truth of God's character which must dawn upon us, upon our minds and hearts BEFORE we are prepared to see Him? This is the light that precedes His coming—do you see it?!?]

SABBATH

The Choices We Make—do we make the choice to embrace the truth about God as our Creator and His laws as design law, or to reject that view and cling to Satan's view that God runs His universe like sinful humans run our governments, on imperial law requiring judicial oversight and infliction of pain and suffering?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “We all know very well...” How can we know what the right choices are?

Here are some guidelines that improve healthy decision-making:

- Reason and evidence-based decisions over feeling-based decisions
 - Does that mean we ignore our feelings—no we seek to understand in light of evidence why we are having feelings. However, if we are uncomfortable with a decision, it is best to take time and reflect prayerfully before acting if there is not a clear unquestionable right course to take.
- Understanding design law, the protocols upon which life is constructed to operate
- Living in a state of communion with God in which the mind is constantly seeking God’s direction and guidance
- Differentiate between moral decisions and decisions that are not moral in nature
 - moral decisions are decisions that are actually right or wrong, in harmony with God’s design law or not, which if wrong are evil or sinfulness—acts of selfishness, breaking God’s law of love
 - non-moral decisions would be many of the decisions in life such as:
 - which toothpaste to use
 - which umbrella to buy
 - which neighborhood to live in
 - which car to drive
 - decisions that could be either moral or non-moral depending on the motive and reasons, include:
 - which job—if specifically called by God and says no (Jonah)
 - clothing—if promotes ungodly ideas or motives or is bought in order to primarily make self the center of attention
- Realize there is a difference between making mistakes and choosing evil
 - We want to avoid choosing evil—but it is not possible to grow, advance without making mistakes
 - If learning a musical instrument, math, or any subject, will mistakes be made? Are mistakes evil?
 - Is there a difference between making a math error in your check registry and accidentally over-drafting a check and purposely writing fraudulent checks?
 - Many people live in fear of making mistakes, feeling guilty for them as if they chose evil. But life is about choices and learning from choices. We need to give ourselves permission to reason, problem solve, make the best choice we can with the information we have and then evaluate the outcome and update the decision-making process.
- Grow in spiritual maturity (our method of determining what is right and wrong) so moral decision are made at level five and above
 - 1. Reward and Punishment



- 2. Market Place Exchange
- 3. Social Conformity
- 4. Law and Order
- 5. Love for others
- 6. Principle based living
- 7. Understanding friend of God
- Get more information about the decision
- Weigh pros and cons
- Get insight or guidance from people with experience
- Make a choice and reassess—the worst option in MOST but not all decisions is to make no decision, because then one never advances, but is stuck in life

Read second paragraph, “In every important decision we make...” Does our level of moral development impact how we understand God’s law and what it would mean to violate God’s law?

What about those who wanted to stone Jesus for healing on the Sabbath—didn’t they want to stone Him for breaking God’s law? Why did they think this?

Do we have any such problems today?

- Health care professionals who want to run a free clinic for the indigent on Sabbath are told by the businessmen sponsors that the funding will be pulled if they do this on the Sabbath—the health care professionals are operating at least at level five, perhaps at level 7, but the businessmen are at level four and believe it is wrong to break a rule as they understand it.

The last sentence says, “if we in faith and humility surrender our lives to Him, we can move ahead in faith on the choices we make.”

What do you think about this?

- Do you think that those people who burned to death in Waco with the Branch Davidians would have agreed with this? Would they have thought of themselves as having surrendered their lives to Jesus in faith? What about the decisions they made?
- What about those who sincerely unite with the state to pass laws to enforce their religious beliefs on others?
- If we don’t understand how God’s law functions, design law, and instead believe the lie of Satan that God’s law functions like human law, then we could easily move forward in faith to harm others. Consider Saul of Tarsus before Damascus road.

Consider this EGW quote:

Faith in a lie will not have a sanctifying influence upon the life or character. No error is truth, or can be made truth by repetition, or by faith in it. **Sincerity will never save a soul from the consequences of believing an error.** Without sincerity there is no true religion, **but**



sincerity in a false religion will never save a man. [Why not? Isn't about the sincerity of the heart?] I may be perfectly sincere in following a wrong road, but that will not make it the right road, or bring me to the place I wished to reach. **The Lord does not want us to have a blind credulity, and call that the faith that sanctifies. The truth is the principle that sanctifies, and therefore it becomes us to know what is truth.** We must compare spiritual things with spiritual. We must prove all things, but hold fast only that which is good, that which bears the divine credentials, which lays before us the true motives and principles which should prompt us to action.--Letter 12, 1890. {2SM 56.1}

What is the point here?

We all have the freedom to believe as we choose, but not all beliefs are equally healthy—some beliefs are actually harmful—like God as the source of inflicted pain and suffering.

But, there are some beliefs that are inconsequential—i.e. may be wrong but don't really matter in the end, such as:

- Who the king of the north or the king of the south is
- Whether one does communion every weekend or once a quarter, or in church or in a home

The beliefs that matter are those that impact our view of God, His character, methods, principles, the nature of sin, the actual conditions necessary for our salvation, in other words—how reality works.

WEDNESDAY

Choosing a Life Partner

What would you recommend to young people?

Evaluate the trustworthiness of the person:

- Love you more than self
- Are mature (have self-governance)
- Have wisdom (understand God's methods—design law)

Here are 10 other actions you can take to obtain a healthy relationship:

1) First Be Healthy:

Healthy relationships require healthy people! Therefore, the number one action you can take to ensure a healthy marriage is to do all in your power, through God's grace, to be emotionally and spiritually healthy. Being emotionally and spiritually healthy changes the filters that are used when evaluating others. What you find attractive changes as you get healthier and more mature. Becoming healthy not only allows you to interact in healthy ways, but changes who



you find attractive enough to date. In other words, a healthier person generally dates healthier people.

2) Be Honest:

Far too many people are so afraid of hurting someone's feelings that they fail to be honest. If your partner asks whether you like their new hairstyle, don't lie. If you don't like the hairstyle graciously, but honestly, let them know your preferences. If a certain meal is cooked and you don't particularly enjoy it, affirm them for the cooking, but be honest about your taste preferences. Why is this important? Because if you are graciously honest about the things you don't like, when you do tell your partner their hair looks great, or they looking amazing in that suit, or that meal was wonderful they will know you really mean it. But, if you always say you like everything, even when you don't, your affirmations will become meaningless and your partner will lose confidence in your ability to be truthful. It will also send a message that you think so poorly of your partner that you either don't trust them enough to handle the truth, or don't respect them enough to be truthful with them. Learning to be honest may have moments of disappointment, but over the long haul will result in a much healthier marriage with enhanced respect and more meaningful affirmations.

3) Be Yourself:

The only way you will know if the person you are dating genuinely likes you for who you are, and therefore meets that qualification, is to be yourself. Never pretend to be someone or something you're not. Don't try and figure out what the other person wants and act in ways to please them, simply be yourself and evaluate whether the person you are dating likes you, or instead tries to change you. If they try and change you simply say, "Thanks for letting me know you are not qualified to be with me," and move on!

4) Create a List of Non-Negotiable Qualifications for Your Life Partner:

Before dating, first identify the non-negotiable qualifications a person must possess in order to be qualified to be your life partner. These are qualities that if the person doesn't possess, would cause you to be dissatisfied and result in you trying to invest them with those qualities. For instance, if you are a Christian dating a non-Christian would you try to "convert" them? If so, being a Christian is a non-negotiable quality that you require in a life partner in order for you to be satisfied with them. If they don't possess this quality you will begin trying to change your spouse to "fit" your parameters. This generally never works. People are who they are. It is wiser to understand what qualities you demand of a life partner and then, when dating, evaluate whether the person possesses those qualities or not, than to marry someone without those qualities and spend your energy trying to change them to fit your expected mold.

One non-negotiable qualification for everyone is - your life partner must genuinely like you for who you are. If they don't like you for who you are then they are not qualified to be your life partner.



5) Agreement on Children and Child Rearing Principles:

I have had a number of couples come to see me who have experienced stress in their marriage because one spouse wanted children, while the other did not. Generally, if a person feels strongly one way or the other in regard to having children that attitude doesn't change after marriage. If disagreement exists, then one partner will necessarily be dissatisfied. This can lead to a great sense of loss at not having children, or irritation, or loss of love of the spouse. Either way, such a relationship is set up for resentment and conflict. Additionally, children in such homes often suffer in atmospheres where the parents are at odds with each other, and the children may be blamed for the marital discord. Also, unity in parenting practices reduces points of conflict and contributes to greater team work within the marriage.

6) Common Vision and Life Goals:

What is your vision for your life and family? Where do you want to live? Is your goal to become wealthy, raise a family, have pets, live on a farm, enjoy city living, be a missionary, own your own business, or be a church worker? If your life goals conflict with the life goals of your potential partner, then conflict could develop over whose life goals take priority. If both goals cannot be realized, then one partner will have to surrender their dreams/goals, which may generate disappointment, dissatisfaction, or resentment. A shared vision and goal allows spouses to work together as a team through life rather than, what can seem like, opposition to each other.

7) Shared Lifestyle:

Relationships grow as we share life experiences together. If we choose a life partner with whom we share little in common, and thus during the course of the marriage each partner does activities either alone or with someone other than their spouse, the marriage risks fracturing as the two slowly grow apart. Conversely, as life experiences are shared, these shared experiences continue to bond the partners together and grow the relationship into deeper levels of connectedness. Additionally, choose a partner who shares your style in diet, exercise, dress and health habits. If you enjoy a glass of wine with dinner but your potential spouse is a teetotaler, or you don't smoke but your future partner does, or you are vegetarian but your love interest enjoys meat, the future home life is at increased risk for long-term tension and conflict. This can be avoided by choosing a partner who shares your lifestyle.

8) Compatibility IQ:

Choose a life partner who has a compatible intelligence level, a person who can appreciate and comprehend what you think and the way you think. When a drastic disparity exists in intelligence, one risks becoming disinterested and slowly disengaging conversation, sharing ideas, and exploring insights because the other one "just doesn't understand." This often results in not feeling valued, appreciated or loved, which generates feelings of hurt and anger. Because we naturally seek to share our thoughts, insights, and ideas with others, when our spouse is incapable of understanding then another may be found with whom to talk, confide or share ideas, which can undermine the strength of the marriage and forge bonds with another.



9) Same Religion, Belief System or Philosophy of Life:

Our beliefs influence our habits, choices, and daily home routines. A committed Christian may want to go to church and raise their children with Bible stories and Christian education. Whereas, an agnostic, or non-committed Christian, may prefer to go to ball games, work around the house and not attend church on weekends, not have Bible stories in the home and not spend money on Christian education or donate to church charities. Such differences can be a source of conflict and strife in a marriage. Choosing someone who shares the same philosophy increases the likelihood of harmony in the home.

10) Have your prospective spouse meet your family and friends and get feedback from them:

During the dating process emotions generally are intense, deep and passionate. Oxytocin and dopamine are surging, which give us that giddy sense of pleasure, happiness and joy. However, these same changes in brain chemistry can interfere with objective thinking and ability to accurately assess a prospective life partner. One way to guard against overly emotional decision-making is to include the perspectives of people you know, love and trust, people who you know love you and have your best interest at heart. Hear their feedback, insights, concerns, or affirmations and then carefully evaluate their feedback in light of the evidence and act on the evidence.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Some Christians believe...” Why do some prefer to believe this?

Because of fear—fear of making a mistake, fear of being guilty, fear of doing wrong, fear of being responsible. So, this view that God has predetermined exonerates people from any personal responsibility and places it all on God’s shoulders. They don’t have to engage any effort to overcome any selfishness in their lives, it is up to God, so why try.

What evidence do we have that this view is wrong?

- Quantum physics demonstrates what is called the observer effect, that a particle remains in a state of uncertainty until acted upon by the observer and it is the choice of the observer measuring it that determines what the particle does. This provides a physics evidence base for freedom to choose, our choices actually do make changes in the outcomes
- The law of liberty—love can only exist in an atmosphere of freedom, without genuine freedom of choice there can be no love. Computers cannot love and love cannot be forced by threats of punishment for not loving.

Read second paragraph, “Fortunately, as Seventh-day Adventists....” Does this mean that if God has chosen for all to be saved then all will be saved? Why or why not? Does this mean we can overrule God’s choices?



Read fourth paragraph, “The Lord does not force...” Well said!!!! And because this is true then all the doctrines of God using power to inflict pain, suffering and death for sin must be rejected. Does that mean there is no punishment for sin? No, it means that the punishment for sin doesn’t come out from God, but from unremedied sin. This is the big difference.

Satan wants beings to believe God is the source of pain and death, thus we become afraid of God and don’t trust Him. The truth is that pain and death come out from sin, from breaking God’s law, and God is the source of healing and life.

This is why the Bible says that the power of sin is the law—what does this mean? 1Cor 15:56 How do you explain it?

TUESDAY

Why does it matter who we choose as friends?

Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” 1Cor 15:33 NIV84

Does this mean we should not interact with people who are not Christians?

No, but it requires a certain maturity of character to effectively share God’s kingdom with those who don’t know it. If we are insecure, fear rejection, need to be accepted by others, cannot tolerate it when people think we are weird or out of touch, then we are not mature enough to interact with those who don’t know God because we will be too easily influenced by their values in order to avoid conflict, argument, disagreement, being disliked, rejection.

What is required in order for someone to be an actual friend? That they love you and are interested in your welfare.

So many people who come to see me approach relationships from a fear, not love, their motive:

- fear of not being liked
- fear of rejection
- fear of being laughed at or making themselves look stupid
- fear of not being loved
- fear of not being good enough

And thus they seek to get approval, acceptance, validation, love from others in order to make them feel good about themselves. This, make them vulnerable to people who are also needy, insecure, and who seek to control others to make themselves feel powerful. Thus, they are easily manipulated with validations and threats of rejection.

A real friend will not pressure you to do things you don’t want to do, but will respect your boundaries.



THURSDAY

Choosing a course—what direction to go with life.

They have done evaluations of workers and found there are generally three types of workers:

Those whose jobs are:

- jobs—they work for the paycheck and weekends and are generally unhappy workers
- careers—they work for the promotion, corner office, advancement and are generally unhappy workers
- calling—these are fulfilling what they believed is the purpose of their lives and are generally happy workers

FRIDAY

Why do we have freewill today? Because of God's grace intervening in our hearts to negate the power of selfishness to give us freedom to choose.

Can we become enslaved to sin?

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Thank you to all of our supporters!!! We appreciate your prayers and financial support.

To let you know what is IN THE WORKS in addition to our weekly class:

- A weekly 15-minute radio show/podcast will start in April
- Audio version of the Remedy is in production, three quarters through and hope to have it by the end of April.
- **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!** January 17-19, 2020, in Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport) we will have a Come and Reason Ministries: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly.

April 3-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Sophia Bulgaria.

May 10,11, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Barrie SDA Church, 140 Mapleton Ave Barrie, ON L4N 9N7 Canada

May 18, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be a speaker at the Love and Transformation Institute: The Epidemic Rise of Anxiety, Depression and Suicide at the Phoenix Seminary, in Scottsdale, AZ.

June 8, 2019: Dr. Jennings will present The Aging Brain Seminar at Mid Columbia Medical Center, in The Dalles, OR.

July 10, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the 3rd Global Health Conference, sponsored by the General Conference of SDA and held at Loma Linda University.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

January 17-19, 2020: Come and Reason Ministries: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. Dallas TX.



Family Seasons Lesson 3 2Q 2019

Preparing for Change

By Dr. Wendell Moses

Memory Text: “Righteousness will go before Him, and shall make His footsteps our pathway.”

Underlying premise of lesson: You can and should prepare for changes within the realm of family life.

Marriage, Parenting, Old Age, and Death

What do you think about when you hear the word preparing?

- Prepared?
- How can you prepare for change?
- When do you know that you are prepared for change?
 - After it happens and your position/attitude/status after the change happens.

Classification of Change:

- Expected
- Unexpected
- Inevitable
- Planned
- Unplanned
- Miraculous
- Real events, situations, etc
- Imagined, feared, suspected, etc
 - Y2K preparations for end of time

Which types of change do you do the best with? Which types of change do you do the worst with?

Is there a way of converting one type of change to another without engendering fear / apprehension?

Look up on Google for the word “preparedness books”

- 10 Must Have Survival & Preparedness Books
- Titles: Most of these are based on fear.

47 y.o. father with heart attack

Parents of child with rare genetic defect (1/30000)

The Bible as a case-book rather than a code-book

- Stories of how others who lived in different cultures and times than ours - coped with life, changes and expectations.



- How did Jesus & Disciples prepare for change:
 - Lack of scriptural references in “Heretical” podcast
 - Cultural, occupational, presence, Gentiles
 - Conflict sermon by Randy Roberts

Matthew 20:17 - 19 On the way to Jerusalem for the last time, Jesus in a private conversation, talks to the disciples as they walk along the road about His upcoming trial, persecution and death and subsequent resurrection.

- The very next story: vv 20 - 22 tells of the mother of James and John coming to Jesus asking Him for special position for her two sons.
- Matthew 20:20-22 (GNT with Deuterocanon) Then the wife of Zebedee came to Jesus with her two sons, bowed before him, and asked him for a favor. "What do you want?" Jesus asked her. She answered, "Promise me that these two sons of mine will sit at your right and your left when you are King." "You don't know what you are asking for," Jesus answered the sons. "Can you drink the cup of suffering that I am about to drink?" "We can," they answered.
 1. Six days later, both fled when the mob came to arrest Jesus.
 2. Why were they unprepared?
 - (1) wrong event happened
 - (2) sudden changes
 - (3) Sudden, unplanned, fear.
 - (4) self assessment was wrong.
- Smudged mirror may provide an inaccurate image.
 1. Hair messed up and couldn't be fixed.
- The Law through which you see the world, needs to have the correct orientation.
 1. Law of Love
 2. Law of selfishness
 3. Same event is seen by two groups at the end of time:
 - (1) one is fearful
 - (2) one group is ecstatic and joyful

Cultural Preparedness:

- Story of woman of Tyre and Sidon: Matthew 15:21 - 28
- “And they all learned their lesson and made friends with all the non-Jewish people and welcomed them into their homes.” ---- NO!
- Peter got into trouble with his fellow church members when he welcomed Cornelius messengers into a Jewish home and later ate with them.



Luke 14:25-33 (GNT) Once when large crowds of people were going along with Jesus, he turned and said to them, "Those who come to me cannot be my disciples unless they love me more than they love father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and themselves as well. Those who do not carry their own cross and come after me cannot be my disciples. If one of you is planning to build a tower, you sit down first and figure out what it will cost, to see if you have enough money to finish the job. If you don't, you will not be able to finish the tower after laying the foundation; and all who see what happened will make fun of you. 'You began to build but can't finish the job!' they will say. If a king goes out with ten thousand men to fight another king who comes against him with twenty thousand men, he will sit down first and decide if he is strong enough to face that other king. If he isn't, he will send messengers to meet the other king to ask for terms of peace while he is still a long way off. In the same way," concluded Jesus, "none of you can be my disciple unless you give up everything you have."

2 Corinthians 1:4 (NLT) He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.

Preparedness for worship, communion, atonement:

- Matthew 5:23-24 (GNT) "So if you are about to offer your gift to God at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, go at once and make peace with your brother, and then come back and offer your gift to God."
- Why does this work?
- Does this also work in the family?
 - Why
- Preparation for the second coming:
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:1-7 (GNT with Deuterocanon) There is no need to write you, friends, about the times and occasions when these things will happen. For you yourselves know very well that the Day of the Lord will come as a thief comes at night. When people say, "Everything is quiet and safe," then suddenly destruction will hit them! It will come as suddenly as the pains that come upon a woman in labor, and people will not escape."
 - "But you, friends, are not in the darkness, and the Day should not take you by surprise like a thief. All of you are people who belong to the light, who belong to the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, we should not be sleeping like the others; we should be awake and sober. It is at night when people sleep; it is at night when they get drunk."
 - What is the reaction of your gut to the reading of these texts?
 - For many years this topic raised anxiety, fear, and dread in my mind.
 - 1. Why?
 - My wife has been in North Carolina taking care of some of life's details regarding her mother.
 - 1. I didn't know when she would be coming back



2. She said she would be coming back shortly
 3. The timetable was somewhat indicating her return was near.
 4. I was looking forward to it.
 5. I was not fearful
 6. I did little things that I thought she would appreciate upon her return.
 7. If truly I knew God as my friend (talked to him that way), looked at the signs of His coming as something pointing to something good, I need not be afraid.
 8. I tend to concentrate on the negative.
 9. I always need to remember that it is the Devil and not God that is the accuser of the brethren.
10. The Pharisees and the religious teachers so misrepresented the character of God that it was necessary for Christ to come to the world to represent the Father. Through the subtlety of Satan, men and women were led to charge upon God satanic attributes; but the Savior swept back the thick darkness which Satan had rolled before the throne of God in order that he might intercept the bright rays of mercy and love which came from God to us.... {FH 32.5}
11. In plain language the Savior taught the world that the tenderness, the compassion, the love that He manifested toward humanity, were the very attributes of His Father in heaven. **Whatever doctrine of grace He presented, whatever promise of joy, whatever deed of love, whatever divine attraction He exhibited, had its source in the Father of all.** In the person of Christ we behold the eternal God engaged in an enterprise of boundless mercy toward the fallen race.—Signs of the Times, August 20, 1894. {FH 32.7}

Unfortunately, I think the gist of the lesson is stated in a way of inducing uneasiness and bordering on fear.

- Fear of failure
- Fear of inadequate preparation
- Fear of the future.

Sabbath:

Read the last paragraph: “This week, let’s look at some of the changes that **sooner or later, in one way or another, most of us face and how these changes can impact family life.**”

SUNDAY

Unprepared

1 Corinthians 10: 1 - 13 ends with a promise

- God is faithful
- God protects us
- God is with us



EGW quote: “The greatest want of the world, is the want of men . . .”

Three failures: I wish it had ended with three successes

2 Timothy 1:12 (GNT) “But I am still full of confidence, because I know whom I have trusted, and I am sure that he is able to keep safe until that Day what he has entrusted to me.”

MONDAY:

Preparing for Marriage

- Texts given as criteria for a life partner candidate:
 - 1 Corinthians 13
 - Galatians 5:22, 23 (fruits of the Holy Spirit)
- Read the next paragraph: “Preparation for marriage must begin . . .”
- Last week Tim gave a good overview of criteria for a healthy relationship.
 - Go back to the PDF file for last week’s lesson for an overview.
- The process of selection:
 - Where do you look?
 1. I like to dumpster dive for “treasures”
 2. beginning to collect wood for wood turning from discards
 3. be careful for where you look
 - (1) the qualities of fine woodworking supplies and potential marriage partners are generally found in certain locations and not in others.
 - We need to prepare ourselves prior to looking for others.

TUESDAY:

Preparing for Parenting

How many are parents?

How were you prepared for the role / task?

Maturity of self is probably more important than other qualities.

Who do you take as an authority for your parenting plans and values.

- Patients parents amaze me with their goals, beliefs, values, expectations.

Read the last paragraph of the day’s lesson:

- “If before the birth of her child she is . . .”
- Autism
 - Epidemiology: Age of the father
 - Animal studies: Stress of the mother during pregnancy
 - Environmental exposures
 - Geography
 - Genetics



- Phthalates

WEDNESDAY:

Preparing for Old Age

Can you prepare for it? Or is it something that just happens?

Live the life that God gives you.

“If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as a Michaelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.'”

Here is where the model of 1 Corinthians 13 and Galatians 5:22,23 come into play.

- By beholding we become changed
 1. 2 Corinthians 3:18 (GNT) “All of us, then, reflect the glory of the Lord with uncovered faces; and that same glory, coming from the Lord, who is the Spirit, transforms us into his likeness in an ever greater degree of glory.”
- Romans 6:1-6 (GNT) “What shall we say, then? Should we continue to live in sin so that God's grace will increase? Certainly not! We have died to sin—how then can we go on living in it? For surely you know that when we were baptized into union with Christ Jesus, we were baptized into union with his death. By our baptism, then, we were buried with him and shared his death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from death by the glorious power of the Father, so also we might live a new life. For since we have become one with him in dying as he did, in the same way we shall be one with him by being raised to life as he was. And we know that our old being has been put to death with Christ on his cross, in order that the power of the sinful self might be destroyed, so that we should no longer be the slaves of sin.”
- If we make God our trust, we have it in our power to control the mind in these things. Through continued exercise, it will become strong to battle with internal foes, and to subdue self, until there is a complete transformation, and the passions, appetite, and will are brought into perfect subjection. Then there will be daily piety at home and abroad, and when we engage in labor for souls, a power will attend our efforts. The humble Christian will have seasons of devotion which are not spasmodic, fitful, or superstitious; but calm and tranquil, deep, constant, and earnest. The love of God, the practice of holiness, will be pleasant when there is a perfect surrender to God. {RH May 19, 1885, par. 3}
- But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He “will abundantly pardon,” He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:7-9. God’s forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but



reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. And again he says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1}

THURSDAY:

Preparing for Death

This page is infected with fear.

- Read the second paragraph: "Many times, of course, death comes. . ."

Hunter S. Thompson quotes Showing 1-30 of 688 "Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming "Wow! What a Ride!" — Hunter S. Thompson, *The Proud Highway: Saga of a Desperate Southern Gentleman, 1955-1967*

- He committed suicide at age 67
 - Many times (while in the emergency room) I have seen the effects of such choices
 - Hey Bubba, Hold my beer and watch this!
 - truly the 8 last words
 - We are witnesses of people who have tried to flaunt the laws of gravity, Newtons laws of motion, and the laws of good health.
- And yet. . . the Fear of Death is almost universal
 - Hebrews 2:14-15 (GNT) "Since the children, as he calls them, are people of flesh and blood, Jesus himself became like them and shared their human nature. He did this so that through his death he might destroy the Devil, who has the power over death, and in this way set free those who were slaves all their lives because of their fear of death."

1 Corinthians 15:24-26 (GNT) "Then the end will come; Christ will overcome all spiritual rulers, authorities, and powers, and will hand over the Kingdom to God the Father. For Christ must rule until God defeats all enemies and puts them under his feet. The last enemy to be defeated will be death."

Thanatopsis by William Cullen Bryant Last paragraph:

"So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."



“So Live . . .”

Read this paragraph at both my parents funerals.

Echos Pauls statement quoted earlier in our discussion:

- 2 Timothy 1:12 (GNT) “But I am still full of confidence, because I know whom I have trusted, and I am sure that he is able to keep safe until that Day what he has entrusted to me.”
- There are few of us who arrive like Moses whose eyes were not dim and his stamina not waned.



2Q 2019 Family Seasons Lesson 4 When Alone

by Lori Atkins

Before we start our study, we received this sad but incredibly moving email this week and I wanted to share it with you:

“My son, Reagan (24 y/o), died in a car accident on my wife's birthday, 3/22/2019. He was a 1st yr med student at the Washington State University School of Medicine and had just been accepted into the Air Force. He was on top of the world, and his trajectory was so exciting for all of us. The loss is horrifying and tragic, the pain is so heavy and unrelenting. But we have the peace that passes all understanding knowing that his knowledge of an unwavering God of love was sure and steadfast. He often talked of this God to his friends, he engaged me frequently on this topic as he knew how excited I was about this new freedom that I had been experiencing over the past few years. I have been on the journey through Dr. Jennings books, lectures, and lessons...and Reagan had caught the excitement. In his gym bag were both *Could It Be This Simple* and the *God Shaped Heart*, he was reading them both and talking about them to his friends. We thank God for this miracle of the soul that liberates and causes us to seek and love Him more. We are giving these books to those who will be attending the multiple memorial services over the next few weeks. We know that God will continue to touch lives and change hearts. Reagan's friend said of him at a recent memorial service at the medical school, ‘Reagan could love everyone because he knew how much he was loved by his God’. A true testimony of a life touched by a God of Love.

“I firmly believe that God had led me into the Truth of the Everlasting Gospel as presented by Dr. Jennings for this very moment in my life, the sudden loss of my son Reagan. My wife and I have celebrated in the glorious spirit of love and truth. Had this tragedy occurred 5 years ago, I shudder to think how I would have reacted. God is good all the time. He has prepared me, my wife, my marriage, my family (3 remaining siblings) for this! Hallelujah! Come quickly Lord Jesus. I will once again hold close my beautiful boy, presented to me by the God of Love who makes beauty of loss and grief.

Thank you so much,”
M. Lyndon Dieter, MD
(used with permission)



INTRODUCTION

So what comes to mind and how do you feel/react/respond when you think about “being alone”?

Discomfort? Bliss? Fear or panic? Freedom? Sadness? Maybe a combination of those?

You know a bunch of folks have *never* actually experienced being alone. How many of you have ever truly been alone? I was almost 40 years old before I ever really spent any time alone. Now I had these big, grandiose dreams of moving out on my own, so after my sophomore year in college I moved out of my parents’ home and to Orlando, where I rented my own apartment... got a big job at Florida Hospital. Impressive, right?

Well, hold your applause, because my mom came with me on the start of this little adventure - you know, just to make sure I got all situated and settled. I spent a total of 4 days in my own apartment...with my mom, until the night we came home to motels full of roaches so large that they stuck out both ends of the trap, and the roaches (or palmetto bugs, as they are affectionately referred to) that managed to avoid the hotels were flying around the room! That was a Friday night. The next day we went to Sabbath lunch at the home of my mom’s oldest and dearest friend. She was working at the hospital in North Carolina where I was born and brought me from the nursery so my mom could hold me for the first time, so I had known her for my entire life. She said, “oh, go get your stuff and you can stay with us until you find somewhere else to stay.” Well, needless to say, 3 years later I still lived there when I graduated from college, and did not move out until I got married soon after. It wasn’t until I got divorced in 2003 that I knew and experienced what it is like to truly spend time alone. I didn’t really like it - it was uncomfortable, it was too quiet, there were too few distractions. I experienced all the emotions I just asked you about - discomfort, peace and quiet, fear and panic, relief, sadness.

Saturday’s lesson starts with a rather horrific story about a young woman found dead in her apartment, which is a tragic enough story in itself, but the fact that she had been dead for over 10 years made it so much worse! How does that even happen in this age of constant contact and communication...it seems unimaginable, right?

What about the difference between being alone and being or feeling lonely...is there a difference? Are they mutually exclusive or can they even be juxtaposed? Can you actually feel lonelier when you are less alone (around more people)? How does that work?



And what about all this technology? We are supposed to be so much more connected, with innumerable ways to be contacted - so many that it is nearly impossible to go unplugged or off the grid. But, are we really more connected, are we really in closer communion with each other?

Is it possible for me to know everything about what's going on in your house, in your life, in your travels - at least what you decide to post and share on social media - to the point that I really feel like I know you - but not really know you or connect with you at all?

Have we traded in real, substantive companionship and connection and instead settle for this substitute of likes and emoji'd comments in our faux communities (now called "groups" or "pages")?

And are there consequences for that new norm?

Recent studies, conducted in 2018, show that there clearly are some consequences, and we are reaping them. Social science researchers define loneliness as the emotional state created when people have fewer social contacts and meaningful relationships than they would like — relationships that make them feel known and understood. Essentially, if you feel lonely, you are lonely by definition. One out of two Americans now falls into this category! How has social media and camera phones contributed to this epidemic?

In a recent study by Cigna of 20,000 people, about 47 percent of respondents reported often feeling alone or left out. Thirteen percent said there were zero people who knew them well.

The U.S. is not unique in this respect: Loneliness is reaching epidemic levels throughout the developed world.

Forty-one percent of Britons say the TV or a pet is their main source of company, and the U.K. has created a cabinet-level minister to deal with the problem of rampant loneliness.

A government study in Japan found that more than half a million people spent at least six months at home with no outside contact.

It is no accident that the US research study was performed by health insurance company, Cigna!

Former U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy said, 'During my years caring for patients, the most common pathology I saw was not heart disease or diabetes, it was loneliness.'



And what health impacts does loneliness have? It makes people sick.

A 2010 study by Brigham Young University found that loneliness shortens a person's life by 15 years, about the same impact as being obese or smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Other studies have found connections between loneliness and a wide range of health problems, including increased risk for heart attacks, stroke, and cancer. Lonely people are more likely to suffer from insomnia, depression, and drug abuse. They are also more likely to suffer from more rapid cognitive decline in old age.” (<https://theweek.com/articles/815518/epidemic-loneliness>)

Any idea why loneliness is so destructive? Remember, this has nothing to do with physically being alone - I know many people who have partners and spouses and families around, but feel terribly alone.

We were designed to be in relationship - in true connection and communion with God and with others - the memory text from Genesis 2 says the “Lord saw it was not good that man should be alone...” But this week’s lesson looks at this issue of companionship, and relationship, and alone-ness during various phases of life that most of us have likely faced at one time or another...and many times not by choice.

Upon coming up out of the water, Jesus bowed in prayer on the river bank. A new and important era was opening before Him. He was now, upon a wider stage, entering on the conflict of His life. Though He was the Prince of Peace, His coming must be as the unsheathing of a sword. The kingdom He had come to establish was the opposite of that which the Jews desired. He who was the foundation of the ritual and economy of Israel would be looked upon as its enemy and destroyer. He who had proclaimed the law upon Sinai would be condemned as a transgressor. He who had come to break the power of Satan would be denounced as Beelzebub. No one upon earth had understood Him, and during His ministry He must still walk alone. Throughout His life His mother and His brothers did not comprehend His mission. Even His disciples did not understand Him. He had dwelt in eternal light, as one with God, but His life on earth must be spent in solitude. Alone He must tread the path; alone He must bear the burden. Upon Him who had laid off His glory and accepted the weakness of humanity the redemption of the world must rest. He saw and felt it all, but His purpose remained steadfast. Upon His arm depended the salvation of the fallen race, and He reached out His hand to grasp the hand of Omnipotent Love. – {DA 111.5}



SUNDAY

Companionship

We are asked what are the basic ideas or *principles* of life being discussed in Ecclesiastes 4:9-12?

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

How many of us here can testify to this concept? Even introverts, who don't mind being alone—maybe even crave it at times—we still want and need companionship and connection and community.

My precious family - both by DNA and adoption - and my dear friends - who might as well be family - have literally saved my life...more than once!

Indeed we were made for companionship, designed for fellowship with other humans. We know this by looking at the example of Adam - he walked and talked with God, and was able to draw comfort from that close relationship. But the closeness of God to Adam in Eden didn't stop the Lord from saying, “It is not good that man should be alone.” He knew that even with intimate fellowship with God in a world undamaged by sin, Adam still needed human companionship...so how much more must we?

Sadly, there are people in our church, in this class, where we work, where we live, who may have no one to turn to, no one to help them up when they fall down, and who may be longing for that companionship and connection.

You have heard of the acronym TGIF, right? (not the restaurant) But have you heard of TGIM? The quarterly quotes an unmarried man who says, “The hardest day for me is Sunday. During the week, I am surrounded by people at work, on Sabbath I see people at church. But on Sunday, I am all alone.”

TGIM - thank goodness it's Monday - is a well-known phrase among the singles crowd. Again, we cannot assume that just because there are a lot of people around, that a person cannot be lonely. Some of the loneliest peeps live in big cities and have multiple interactions with others, but still feel alone, isolated, and in need of true connection.

Keep cheerful. Do not forget that you have a Comforter, the Holy Spirit, which Christ has appointed. You are never alone. If you will listen to the voice that now speaks to you, if you



will respond without delay to the knocking at the door of your heart, “Come in, Lord Jesus, that I may sup with Thee, and Thee with me,” the heavenly Guest will enter. When this element, which is all divine, abides with you, there is peace and rest. – {AH 350.3}

MONDAY

The Unmarried Life

More precisely, The Never Married Life, and the second paragraph says, “Most people think that being married is God’s will for them” - primarily because of our memory text from Genesis 2. Do you think that most people believe that? And is it God’s will that people be married?

I believe it is God’s will that His people be healed and restored and transformed back into Christlikeness...and there may be situations - in the bounds of a healthy marriage relationship - where that can happen more effectively and efficiently, and be beneficial to both individuals and their children and their families, etc.

But there are other situations where healing and restoration can be obstructed and sabotaged by an unhealthy relationship or a dysfunctional marriage. Is it necessarily God’s will for *that* person to be married? Now don’t get me wrong, God can certainly save, heal, and restore marriages and relationships - it’s what He does - but if he has to choose between saving you (and your spouse), and saving your marriage, I believe He will choose you.

The quarterly refers to 1 Cor 7:25-34 and asks us to discuss the good reasons Paul gives for remaining unmarried (from The Remedy):

“Regarding those who are single, I have not been given any direction from the Lord, but will share my personal opinion as one who—by the Lord’s mercy—has your best interest at heart and is therefore trustworthy: Because of the present crisis the church is facing, it is my opinion that it would be best for you to remain as you are. If you are married, do not seek a divorce; and if you are single—don’t look for a spouse. If you do marry, you have not sinned, but marriage brings many new stressors and responsibilities (such as children); [those of you who are or have been married...does marriage bring many new stressors and responsibilities?] and given the current crisis the church is facing, I want to spare you as many problems as possible. What I want you to understand is that we have a mission, and the time to complete it is limited, so don’t let your spouse distract you from fulfilling God’s purpose for your life—don’t get stuck in grief, but realize that when we have fulfilled our mission, Christ will return and grief will turn to joy. If you are happy in this world, then open your eyes to God’s reality and become unhappy with the world; use your resources to fulfill God’s mission—not indulge self—and



don't get engrossed or preoccupied with the world's entertainment, politics or agendas, because the world as we know it will soon be gone. I want you to be free from the worries, stresses and anxieties of this world, so that you can be most effective in God's cause. A single man can focus all his energies on fulfilling the Lord's work, but a married man has responsibilities to his wife and family, and his energies are divided. An unmarried woman can focus all her energies on fulfilling the Lord's work and devote her entire self to God's cause, but a married woman has responsibilities to her husband and family. I am not placing any restrictions upon you, but sharing this wisdom for your good, so that you may decide how to live your lives completely devoted to the Lord.”

All too often the story of Adam and Eve is reduced to a commentary on marriage.

The aspect of being alone contained in that story is relegated exclusively to the singleness of unmarried life...but, and get your mind around this, Eve's creation did not solve a singleness problem...it solved a human aloneness problem.

Eve was not only a wife; she was a friend, coworker, spiritual companion, and the locus of Adam's social life - as he was to hers.

These facts should be encouraging for those who are not married. Many single folks have been burdened by the divine proclamation in our memory text that “it is not good for man to be alone,” and have seen it as a virtual condemnation of single life...but this is simply not true. We can be single and yet not alone, because of the human presence of family, friends, and the people we live with, work with, and go to church with.

At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer.—
DA, 669-670

What about the urge, the impulse, the drive for self-sufficiency that comes from being single/unmarried. Is needing help from others a sign of weakness?

Is there a prize at the end of this life contest for those who asked for help the least?



How to guard against the inherent selfishness and self-focus that comes from being alone or by yourself?

TUESDAY

When A Marriage Ends

The lesson suggests that the phrase “dysfunctional family” is basically redundant since every family is, to some degree, dysfunctional...and isn't that the truth? It also mentions the degree to which the family has been attacked, and has in many ways borne the brunt of the devastating consequences of this earthly infection of fear and selfishness.

Besides death, one of the toughest things a family can experience is divorce...I'm guessing that any of you who have experienced it, like I have, can certainly confirm that to be true. In fact, in many ways it is a sort of death and produces that wide range - the entire gamut of emotions - from shock to sadness and grief, to anger, to guilt and shame, to relief, to fear and anxiety.

So many things to fear - the unknown/unfamiliar, financial worries, the potential harm/damage to children, impact on salvation...and many do also experience periods of depression and, of course, loneliness.

The verses listed in the middle of Tuesday's lesson are the main references to divorce in all of scripture (there are a couple more in Exodus and Deuteronomy...and there are parallels of the Matthew texts in Mark as well), and the lesson asks “what broad principles concerning divorce can we gather from the following verses”?

I help to facilitate a Life After Divorce study group, where we delve deeply into these 5 texts. But for this class, what is the most common response we hear when asked “how does God feel about divorce?”

Of course, God hates divorce...and why does he hate divorce? Because He hates all deviations from His perfect design.

Why did divorce get singled out so specifically? We have to remember, this whole Great Controversy is not about us...but we have a critical role to play - we are key evidence, we were designed to be Exhibit A, Exhibit B. God created humans in His image so that they could reveal truth about Himself. He designed marriage to demonstrate God-like love. Divorce is the outworking of selfishness, and it occurs when love breaks down and hearts harden. Because divorce results in pain and injury to His children, God hates divorce.



However, *what God detests even more than divorce is the destruction and eternal loss of His children.* Marriages that perpetually violate love and liberty are gross counterfeits of the benevolent principles of God's character. Such marriages masquerade as bastions of love, while misrepresenting Him and destroying both husband and wife.

The 3rd and 4th paragraph in Tuesday's lesson are quotes from The Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual, and the last sentence in paragraph 3 states,

“When a couple's marriage is in danger of breaking down, every effort should be made by the partners and those in the church or family who minister to them to bring about their reconciliation in harmony with divine principles for restoring wounded relationships.”

What divine principles might those be? The Law of Love? The Law of Liberty?

In chapter 6 of Dr. Jennings' book, *Could It Be This Simple*, regarding Shadow People, there is a section called Marriage and the Law of Liberty.

“Unfortunately, many good people suffer ignorantly within marriages that cruelly violate the laws of love and liberty, believing they are required to stay in such destructive situations. But God has never required this. His purpose for us has only and always been our healing and restoration. Therefore, He desires our separation from everything that interferes with His working in our lives...Marriage relationships that cause or allow freedom, individuality, and autonomy to erode will result in the destruction of the image of God within. And if freedom is not restored, one's fitness for heaven will be ruined. It is one of Satan's most subtle traps. When love and freedom cannot be restored within the marriage; when staying in the marriage results in individuals being so dominated and controlled that it erases their individuality and autonomy, then they have a **God-given responsibility to extricate themselves** from such destructive relationships.”

I have been telling you that God understands you...he gets you...but he is unable to identify or relate to your broken marriage, right? Wrong. He does!

Jeremiah 3:6-10 tells the story of God's divorce from the Israelites. He loved Israel, He proposed to Israel, He made vows and entered into a covenanted relationship with them. But, repeatedly in the Old Testament, God talks about the Israelites' adultery against Him...and because of her waywardness and



unfaithfulness to Him, God declares in Jeremiah 3:8 that He gave Israel a “certificate of divorce.”...and He hated it, and it broke His heart. I’m telling you, He gets it.

WEDNESDAY

Death and Loneliness

For now, this side of heaven, death is a reality for all of us - and all our relationships, including marriage, will eventually end in death. And as we know, death was never part of God’s design for life - we were created to live forever. We have become used to death, we just take it for granted - it’s inevitable. But, we still struggle to make sense of it.

I guarantee you the Dieter family is trying desperately to make sense of Reagan’s death, and many times we just can’t. Sooner or later, we all get to face the reality of our own mortality, as well as the loss of loved ones, and maybe even our closest companion or spouse.

These seasons of hurt or alone-ness are identified with and empathized with and felt by our lord and savior - surely He has borne our griefs, He feels our pain, and He understands loss and loneliness.

How do we help people in our orbits who may be suffering with the devastating pain and aloneness of losing a spouse or loved one?

With the consecrated worker for God, in whatever place he may be, the Holy Spirit abides. The words spoken to the disciples are spoken also to us. The Comforter is ours as well as theirs. The Spirit furnishes the strength that sustains striving, wrestling souls in every emergency, amidst the hatred of the world, and the realization of their own failures and mistakes. In sorrow and affliction, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone,—these are the times when, in answer to the prayer of faith, the Holy Spirit brings comfort to the heart. (AA 51.1)

The children of God are not left alone and defenseless. Prayer moves the arm of Omnipotence. Prayer has “subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire”...If we surrender our lives to His service, we can never be placed in a position for which God has not made provision. Whatever may be our situation, we have a Guide to direct our way; whatever our perplexities, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend. If in our ignorance we make missteps, Christ does not leave us. His voice, clear and distinct, is heard saying, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” Not one sincere prayer is lost. Amid the anthems of the celestial choir, God hears the cries of the weakest human being. We pour out



our heart's desire in our closets, we breathe a prayer as we walk by the way, and our words reach the throne of the Monarch of the universe. They may be inaudible to any human ear, but they cannot die away into silence, nor can they be lost through the activities of business that are going on. Nothing can drown the soul's desire. It rises above the din of the street, above the confusion of the multitude, to the heavenly courts. It is God to whom we are speaking, and our prayer is heard. – {COL 174.1}

THURSDAY

Spiritually Single

This was a new term for me. It's used to describe folks who are married, but their spouses have different beliefs/practices, so they end up coming to church alone or with just the kids, attending potluck alone, going to social activities alone, because the spouse can't or won't participate. They feel alone and maybe left out of "family" ministries, maybe they can't contribute financially as they'd like to, and they may feel spiritually like a widow or widower. How can we reach out to these folks?

Conclusion

When the Lord approached Adam and Eve after their sin, they did one of the most disappointing yet profound actions in Scripture: they "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God."

Sin created a self-damaging condition: *a desire to live alone without God*. But He is not easily deterred, and the prophetic pleas of the Hebrew prophets testify to that fact. God culminated His pursuit of lost humanity with the Incarnation of His Son Immanuel, God with us. The Incarnation echos the Eden account.

As sin is ravaging the world, God sees that it is "not good" for man to "be alone" or apart from Him; so He sends a "helper", one "corresponding to" Him. The word for "helper" in the Genesis Septuagint is the same word used in Hebrews 13:6: "The Lord is my helper."

But instead of succumbing to the temptation and drive to save self, Jesus loved completely to the point of death, so that one day we could all hear a "great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God, never to be alone again.

The Saviour would have passed through the agony of Calvary that one might be saved in His kingdom. He will never abandon one for whom He has died. Unless His followers choose to leave Him, He will hold them fast.



Through all our trials we have a never-failing Helper. He does not leave us alone to struggle with temptation, to battle with evil, and be finally crushed with burdens and sorrow. Though now He is hidden from mortal sight, the ear of faith can hear His voice saying, Fear not; I am with you. “I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore.” Revelation 1:18.

I have endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive chord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live.



Family Seasons Lesson 5 2Q 2019

Wise Words for Families

by Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

What a joy and privilege for Christie and I to share this message and see so many hearts moved, the tears in people's eyes, the freedom from fear so many people told us they now experience and how incredible this truth about God is.

One lady came up, with the Bulgarian version of CIBTS in her hand and pointing to the word "Biblical" said, "Whenever I see the word Bible on something I never read it. But after your lecture I am going to read this."

One of the translators who translated my talk, *The Science of Belief* and then translated about an hour of Q&A afterward said, "I am an agnostic, but I really like the God you presented here."

One little girl brought me this handmade card. Another lady brought me this picture of Jesus she had drawn. Others brought flowers, which we could not bring back, but very much appreciated. The love of God was poured out and hearts were being healed.

Thank you for all of you who support this ministry, you make this possible!

The New Paradigm pamphlets are being shipped out and if you have read it and like it and would like more to share in your local community, please email us and we will ship them anywhere in the US for free. Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand should be available soon.

Has anyone had any feedback from those who have read this pamphlet that they would like to share with the class?

David Siebert an online listener from South Africa, sent in this insight from EGW found in 15 MR 58.2:

There are those who suppose that they are set to guard the actions of their brethren and sisters, and if these souls step out of the line that they have marked out, they think that they must put on the restricting line. Oh, what a farce this is! **Such a course is not after God's order.** He invites, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." **Let no human agency seek to outline the duty of his fellows, or to force his opinions upon another, lest he get in the way of the Lord's counsel.** - 15MR 58.2



SABBATH

Read second paragraph, “Whatever our situation...” They quote Proverbs 1:8, “My son, hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother” —this sounds like guidance to a child who has reached the age in which they can think for themselves. If so, is this a Bible Proverb that is supposed to be applied to all people, or is it specific for this one son?

Does it matter who the parents are as to whether a child should follow the instructions of the parents?

If a parent teaches their child lies or destructive principles should the child follow those principles?

So, at some point, are people to think for themselves or merely follow what their parents have taught them?

What are the keys to a godly life?

- John 17:3 knowing God
- John 8:32 the truth—what truth, would it be the truth about God and His kingdom of love?
- Ps 119:165 “Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble.”
 - Would knowing and loving God’s law be a key?
 - What if we substitute God’s law for man’s law?
 - And what type of law is God’s law?
 - What type of law is man’s law?
 - So what happens if we teach that God’s law functions like man’s law, a system of rules that requires legal accountability and imposed punishments? Is there any wonder that Christianity has failed thus far to prepare the world for Christ’s return?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “The godly person...” What is the problem with committing adultery? The lesson suggests the problem is that we must answer to God—is that the problem?

What does the idea that the problem is that we must answer to God reveal? In other words, why would the lesson say that we must answer to God for committing adultery—what is the underlying belief that would cause them to say this?

Would it be the idea that God’s law functions like human law and God is the ultimate law-enforcer of the universe?

And if this were how things worked, that sin is breaking rules and gets us in trouble with God and one day we must answer to Him, then what is the solution for sin? To get some legal adjustment by some method—to get the enforcer to pardon or forgive.



This leads to questions like the one I got from a Christian high school student:

If God will forgive you then why can't you have sex before marriage?

Where does this question place the problem with sin? The problem is not in the sin, the problem in this false view is what God will do to you.

It is like asking, "If your father will forgive you for smoking two packs a day what is wrong with smoking cigarettes?"

It is all based on Satan's lie about God's law and it exactly what we get with the way Christianity has been taught for over 1000 years. This is what Paul prophesied to Timothy about, that at the end of time there would be all this terrible behavior but with a form of godliness without any power to change lives.

What is the truth? God's law is design law and what happens to the person who commits adultery? Do they have more peace, more happiness, more contentment, more love, or do they have more fear, more worry, more distrust of others, do they sear their own conscience and harden their hearts—unless they repent and are healed by God?

Does God have to do anything to them to injure them for their adultery?

But is adultery or sexual sin the worst of sins?

I read this in a book *Steps to Christ*:

God does not regard all sins as of equal magnitude; there are degrees of guilt in His estimation, as well as in that of man; but however trifling this or that wrong act may seem in the eyes of men, **no sin is small in the sight of God.** Man's judgment is partial, imperfect; but God estimates all things as they really are. **The drunkard is despised and is told that his sin will exclude him from heaven; while pride, selfishness, and covetousness too often go unrebuked. But these are sins that are especially offensive to God;** for they are contrary to the benevolence of His character, to that unselfish love which is the very atmosphere of the unfallen universe. He who falls into some of the grosser sins may feel a sense of his shame and poverty and his need of the grace of Christ; but pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give. {SC 30.1}

What does this mean?

Does this mean there are sins that are unimportant? No! why? Because all sin damages the sinner. If all sins are damaging, why are some more serious than others? Because of the impact the sin has on the person—the sins which more quickly damage the ability to respond to the Holy Spirit—which impair the ability to be aware of how one is out of harmony with God and His law of life are the most



serious. The sins of the physical pleasures often cause guilt, shame, and problems in this life which alert the person that something is wrong and increases the opportunity to repent and seek help. But the sin of pride often leads to self-sufficiency and success in this world and interfere with the ability to realize how the heart is infected with selfishness.

This is why leprosy was a metaphor for sin because leprosy damages the ability to feel pain so one doesn't even realize they are being injured.

What is it about sexual sin and adultery that is so damaging and why does Satan attack us in this way?

This aspect of our being is designed by God for the greatest level of bonding and unity possible. Adultery is a breach of trust and causes terrible internal guilt, shame, self-recrimination that if not repented of results in hardening the heart and destruction of godliness and love.

Sexual promiscuity damages the ability of persons to enter into the deepest levels of intimacy, bonding, and unity and thus causes emotional isolation, increases fear, insecurity and divisions.

Satan is a divider and does not want unity of love and thus attacks humanity in all areas where unity is a godly experience in order to introduce discord and selfishness.

So why is adultery and sexual wrong? Is it because we will have to answer to God and God will use His power to punish or that it breaks God's design and causes pain, suffering and the destruction of one's soul if not healed by God?

Proverbs says:

For a man's ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all his paths. The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast. He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly. Prov 5:21-23

What do you hear? Do you hear God causing pain and suffering and death for punishment of sin? Why do the wicked die? Because the wicked are ensnared by their own choices and die as a result of their own actions. Galatians 6:8 the one who sows to the carnal nature from that nature reaps destruction.

Read last paragraph, "In the human fallen condition..." Is sexual sin an unpardonable sin?

- Judah visited prostitutes
- David and Bathsheba
- Solomon with 700 wives 300 concubines
- Many of the Patriarchs practiced polygamy
- Simon the Pharisee and Mary Magdalene

Simon had led into sin the woman he now despised. She had been deeply wronged by him. By the two debtors of the parable, Simon and the woman were represented. Jesus did not design to



teach that different degrees of obligation should be felt by the two persons, for each owed a debt of gratitude that never could be repaid. But Simon felt himself more righteous than Mary, and Jesus desired him to see how great his guilt really was. He would show him that his sin was greater than hers, as much greater as a debt of five hundred pence exceeds a debt of fifty pence. {DA 566.5}

Is the sexual instinct, desire or longing, sin? No, it is a God designed desire. So, it is not wrong to feel sexual desire.

What has Satan done to exploit this desire? He has changed our understanding of reality. He has obscured people's view or understanding of sin, by replacing the truth about God's law, so people think it is merely rule breaking and not violations of how life and health work.

Also, it is not merely sexual desire that leads many into sexual sin, but often emotional emptiness, loneliness and fear of rejection—a longing to find love and substituting sex for genuine love. **I think this is one of the greatest deceptions that leads to sexual sin of all**—that sex is substituted for a genuine trusting love relationship before sex.

It is like many people who seek happiness, which is a by-product of healthiness, but instead of seeking healthiness people substitute pleasure seeking.

Additionally, 1 out of 3 women are sexually assaulted or exploited in some way before the age of 20. Such assaults can alter a person's developing sense of self and if not healed properly result in acting out behaviors based on internalized lies from the abuse. Such lies as:

- I am ugly
- I am dirty
- I am worthless
- I am ruined

Such ideas create greater sense of insecurity and fear of rejection and longing to be validated by others, which leads to greater fear of saying no when people try to take advantage. This can lead to many sexual encounters merely trying to make themselves feel loved. But it is all driven by unhealed wounds of the past.

On my trip this past week I read a fictional book entitled *Dawn of Wonder* by Jonathan Renshaw, which had a very interesting scene I want to share with the class about past trauma. The book is set in a fantasy world similar to our own but with different names of places. The main character, Aedan, was raised by an abusive father who beat his mother and when Aedan tried to intervene was himself severely beaten, and from that point on was repeatedly abused verbally and physically by his father, until at age 12 he left home to enroll into an academy to train marshals. Aedan's past abuse caused him shame, terrible fear and insecurity that, at times of confrontation, caused him to freeze and be unable to act to help his friends, compounding his self-loathing. Near the end of the book he finds



himself in a situation in which he and a teen female friend are about to be attacked by a brutal murderer. Aedan wants to act but is paralyzed by fear and then he suddenly has a life changing experience. As I pick up the story see if you can see in this story any elements of God's plan to cleanse us from sin and heal our wounds? Do you see obstacles in this description to our healing and do you see anything that could apply to the cleansing of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment?

This was it then. All his life had been for nothing, for waste. Like arrows raining down in a thick and deadly hail, sharp thoughts began to run him through with such speed that everything else turned to a nightmarish stillness. He had failed. Failed Kalry. Failed Liru. Failed Peashot, Hadley, Osric. He had shamed himself and disgusted all who had supported him. Perhaps it was right that it should end here. He had caused enough ruin. Shaft after shaft pierced his mind—shafts that quivered and rang and screamed of pitiful failure and utter worthlessness. What was the point of living when he would continue to fail those who leaned on him?

Then, from within, another thought rose into the chaos of his hammering, shaking mind, a thought that stood out with icy clarity. He knew where the blame lay. His father. His father had planted the weakness in his bones that had caused him to wilt before Dresbourn, before Iver, before the Fenn, and now before Rork. It had meant injury not only to him, but to those he cared about.

Aedan's long-brewed, potent swill of violent resentment bubbled up inside him, turning his vision black. He would hate his father forever. Even in the grave. This hate was the one thing that couldn't be taken from him, the only thing left to him.

A faint, choking sob tugged at his ear, did not hear it, because everything suddenly disappeared. It was like being struck through by solid light. Heat built up in his chest until it seemed it would burn him to cinders, but instead it worked on him like the warmth of the morning sun. Power was crackling and sparking around.

Then he heard a voice that was the roar of thunder and the gurgle of a stream, a voice as old as the sky but filled with the lightness of a child's laughter. "Aedan," it said. And in that one word there was enough to make his heart burst. He was already on his knees, and he was glad of it. He could not understand what was happening, but he wanted to kneel before the one who spoke with this voice.

A warm, singing wind rose up and as it blew, the statue, Kultûhm, DinEilan, Vallendal—they misted and dwindled away until they were gone. Around him was starlight. His feet touched the ground, but it was like standing on clear ice, for stars glittered far beneath him too. The singing began to build, a growing, thrilling exultation that all but seared him with its beauty. Then it was as if a shroud made of stars was dropped. At first he could see nothing but the brilliance of pure, solid light pouring down around him.



When his vision cleared a little, he found himself before a great throne. It was not just a chair—it was more like a mountain before which even the heights of DinEilan would have been dwarfed. The upper reaches rose among the stars, lost to his eyes. Then, like an eruption of all the lightning ever to burn the skies, the throne was filled, and Aedan immediately dropped his eyes before one who was simply beyond the limits of sight or comprehension. The radiance was overwhelming. And in that untainted light, there was no hiding.

Of all the times he had found himself where he did not belong, none came anywhere close to this. Never had he fallen so far short of the requirements for entry, yet here he stood, and there was no bluff, no excuse, no argument he could make for himself that would hold up in this place.

Until now, he had always thought of himself as good and noble of heart. Yes, there had been some wrong choices, but it was an unasked-for history that had forced him into those paths. Those choices were his father's doing, his father's fault. He was damaged, not guilty.

He had loathed himself at times when seeing the warped changes taking place, but how could he blame himself? Measured against his father or any of the other tyrants he had known, it was obvious that he was on the better side of the line. Reasoning this way, he had always felt justified. Aside from a few smudges, his soul was clean.

But now, instead of being compared against dirt, he was searched by the radiance of utter purity. He gasped at what was revealed. He stood as a hog dripping filth, a hog that had somehow slipped into the royal throne room, blinking and stinking, and realising for the first time that there was a measure as high above the ways of the sty as life is above death. What answer could he make?

As he lowered his gaze, he saw that he was holding a deep cauldron. When he looked inside he almost vomited. He did not need to be told what it contained. It was the vile mixture of all the hatred stored and brewed for his father, the debt he had kept, that he intended to settle. It was his treasure.

"Kneel," the voice said, shaking the ground. He tried, but the cauldron was as big as a storage vat. It prevented him from reaching his knees. Afraid to look up, he cringed, fearing that he would be told to release it, knowing he could not—would not—and dreading the wrath that would follow.

"I'm sorry," he whispered, thinking not only of his unbending knees, but of all the filth of the sty he had brought with him, and his inability to rid himself of it. He would be thrown out. He should be thrown out. That would be justice. He began to turn away.

The next words were quiet, but they caused every muscle to lock and hold him in place. "If you choose, you may walk away from me, Aedan. But I will not walk away from you."



“But ... I don’t understand,” Aedan stammered. “Am I here to be punished?”

“You are here to be freed.” The words rumbled like an avalanche, and the shudder in Aedan’s chest was beyond any emotion he had ever known. That word, kneel, echoed again in his mind. In it rang not the groans of enslavement, but the song of freedom. He knew why. It was about belonging, the right kind of belonging.

It was isolation that led to enslavement. He had discovered that. Though there was more to fear before this throne than in ten thousand of Kultúhm’s giant beasts, it was not wrath that he sensed or dread that welled in him. An invisible torrent surged from the throne, washed through him, wrapped around him.

He felt as if he were a fish that had hatched and managed to survive in the muddy pool of a dry riverbed, and was now being swept up into soft, clear waters. It was unlike anything he could define. This was defining him. And then he looked into the cauldron. The fumes were poison, and the container stood between him and the throne. It blocked part of the life-giving flow, leaving a shielded place where bitterness still coursed through his veins and gathered in dark clots. Did he really want this?

The decision was more intimidating than any bridge-or cliff-jump, but he drew a breath, and in his mind, leapt free of the old, dark refuge. He tried to pull the cauldron away from him, but he could not. It was as if it had grown into his skin.

“Help me!” he cried. There was no surge of power, just the faintest tingling in his arms. He looked down and pulled again, and this time, it tore partly away from his skin. The pain was intense, and as the raw skin was exposed, he felt a sudden vulnerability, for the cauldron had been a kind of shield.

But from the river that was rushing around him, he drew courage and wrenched again. The cauldron ripped free, and once he had torn it loose, he flung it down on the ground where the noxious liquid poured out and was washed away. Finally, he was able to fall to his knees, and as he did so, the stains that covered him began to fade.

Then, from a distance, he saw his father. His fist clenched automatically and he felt something in his grip. It was a dagger. He understood at once what he needed to do, what he had never been able to do before. Looking not at his father, but towards the foot of the throne, he opened his hand and dropped the blade, releasing judgement to one higher.

As the dagger melted away, light flooded that part of him that he had kept hidden by the cauldron, kept in bitterness and shadow, and he yelled with fright at what was revealed. Crouching in that inner bastion of hate, that long-guarded place where he had so often fled and braced himself with fantasies of revenge, he saw it. It was not strength that had kept him



company in that place, but a coiled, venomous thing of fear. His numbing, paralyzing fear. A lying, twisted demon that now looked up at him with more hatred than he had ever known.

But the light that illuminated suddenly became solid, a pure rushing torrent. It struck the twisted shape with power both infinite and effortless, tearing it loose and flinging it out, its screams fading to nothing. The bitterness and poison slowly washed away.

It was peace, deeper and broader than the starfields around him. It was belonging. It was freedom.

Kneeling before the one who could only be the Ancient had not been the cost of freedom, but the means.

For a long time he laughed and wept and laughed again, released. p 606-611.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “The characters...” What are the qualities that make healthy fathers?

- Love for God and others
- Understanding God’s methods and principles
- Ability to listen and understand
- Having self-governance, so doesn’t fly into rages, doesn’t have addiction problems, doesn’t have spending problems
- Willingness to tolerate emotional discomfort to do what is good for their family
- Setting and enforcing healthy boundaries
- Has good time management
- Ability to teach his children God’s methods and principles

If a parent has all these attributes and lives them consistently, does that guarantee their children will grow up to be godly adults?

Read second paragraph, “In the end...” What does it look like to love the mother?

- To adore her, cherish her, sacrifice for her, value her including her ideas and opinions
- What about speak honestly to her, in kind ways—even if it is saying he doesn’t like a meal she prepared?
- Does it mean giving the wife what she wants all the time?

Is it best for children for parents to remain married in all circumstances? Why or why not?

What if a parent stays with a spouse who persistently abuses the other spouse either physically, verbally or emotionally? Is that good for children? Is it good for either spouse? What is the action that love takes toward a spouse that is abusive? Why?



TUESDAY

What is the difference between discipline and punishment?

Discipline means to disciple or teach and its focus is on the benefit, health, growth, good of the one being disciplined.

Punishment is about punitive consequences and is focused on the law and ensuring the law is enforced.

The lesson gets this right when it says in the second paragraph, “Through Christ discipline is seen not as punishment, not as an expression of authority, but as redemptive correction.”

But we only get this right when we reject imperial law views of God’s law and understand design law. If we believe God’s law is imperial/imposed, then we ultimately teach God as the inflictor of punishment—this undermines love and trust.

So, I love this sentence, “not as an expression of authority” punishment as an expression of authority is exactly how imperial law works, how sinful beings work, how Satan has alleged God works, that God in order to be just must punish sin. But this is a lie. God disciplines to bring us back to the ways of life, but if we refuse He doesn’t have to punish because the results of refusing Him is death.

What do you understand these Proverbs to mean?

- Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him. Prov 22:15 NIV84
- The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother. Prov 29:15

What is the rod of discipline? Does this mean a switch, a beating, a caning? Or does it mean a shepherd’s rod which is to protect and guide?

If it is a shepherd’s rod, does it mean it never spansks?

One of the keys to healthy discipline is consistency. Even when the discipline is severe, if it is consistent, so the child knows where the boundaries are and how to avoid the discipline and sees it applied evenly to all violations, then life becomes predictable and the child can internalize a sense of safety and security. But the inconsistent application of discipline, no matter how severe, even if just a verbal correction, causes significant problems for several reasons:

- it increases uncertainty, fear, anxiety, and upregulates amygdala increasing anxiety problems and self-doubt, this leads to insecurity, timidity and dependency on others—seeking to get others to tell them what to do for fear of being wrong.



- Example of walking on tile floor with some of the tiles being on concrete and able to hold your weight and other tiles being spun sugar that you fall through to spikes below.
- it undermines the child's ability to trust you and thus develop the ability to trust others in life. If you are inconsistent in your word with your child your child cannot trust you. Many parents allow inconsistency thinking they are being kind or merciful, but in reality, they are inciting terrible fear, doubt, uncertainty and planting seeds of relationship conflict with their child for years to come.

Another key to discipline, in addition to consistency, is to apply it in love, that you have dealt with your own feelings of frustration, irritation, anger and instead of disciplining with those feelings prominent, you focus on your love for the child and you discipline because you want what is best for them. When you have this motive in your heart during the discipline it changes the overall dynamic. The child will feel less like you are mad at them or don't like them, and more like you care about them.

WEDNESDAY

The Bible says that a merry heart does good like a medicine, what are the benefits of humor or merry heart?

- Researchers have described laughter as a “powerful form of exercise that gives you more of a cardiovascular workout than many 'regular' aerobic activities.”¹
- two stages of laughter have been described, the arousal phase, elevating the heart rate, and the resolution phase, resting of the heart.²
- Cardiologists at the University of Maryland found those patients who were suffering from myocardial infarction (MI) were 40% less likely to laugh. However, laughter was shown to be prophylactic against MI.
- Furthermore, an article by Miller M, et al. at the University of Maryland found beneficial effects of laughter on the blood vessel. Mental stress was shown to degrade nitric oxide, and therefore, laughter minimized the negative effects of stress by reducing the break down of nitric oxide and thus, leading to vasodilatation.³ On average, laughter increased blood flow by twenty-two percent, and stress decreased blood flow by thirty-five percent.⁴
- Laughter had shown to affect the release of various immune mediators.^{5 6 7 8 9}

¹ Laughter Yoga International. Kataria M, Kataria M; <http://www.laughteryoga.org/>

² Diggs, T. S. *Laughter: Is it Healthy?* Magic Stream. <http://home.hiwaay.net/~garson/laughter.htm>.

³ Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Nitric oxide; [Revised December 24, 2008]. http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nitric_oxide&oldid=259865728.

⁴ Vascular Medicine; Watching funny movies boosts blood flow to the heart. Health & Medicine Week, 1660. Research Library database. (Document ID: 980266611); 2006.

⁵ Berk LS, Tan SA, Fry WF. Eustress of humor associated laughter modulates specific immune system components. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*. 1993;15:11.

⁶ Berk LS, Tan SA, Fry WF. et al. Neuroendocrine and stress hormone changes during mirthful laughter. *American Journal of the Medical Sciences*. 1989;298:390–6. [[PubMed](#)]



- Psychoneuroimmunological studies demonstrated connections between the brain and the immune system, such as the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis and neural supply of lymphoid tissues.¹⁰
- In a study performed by Berk LS, et al., they found increased blood levels of interferon-gamma in ten healthy fasting males after being shown a comedy video ($p=0.02$).¹⁰ As a result, interferons have become a line of pharmacotherapy in viral infections, systemic carcinomas, hepatitis B and C, in addition to the development of antiretroviral drugs.
- There are two types of stress: distress (the negative type), and eustress (the positive type also known as mirthful laughter). Distress increases stress hormones such as beta-endorphins, corticotrophins and catecholamines, but laughter (a form eustress) decreased these hormones, fortified activity of natural killer (NK) cells, activated T cells and B cells and increased Ig levels. Thus, laughter is capable of combating the negative aspects of distress and fortifying the individual's immune system to help fight against various immune mediated illnesses.^{5 6 7 8}

Does this give any insight into why the Bible says we must call the Sabbath a delight? What happens if we observe the Sabbath but it is a rule, a restriction, a time of all the things we can't do which only causes us distress? Is the Sabbath a blessing to us then? Are we actually keeping the Sabbath if it is not a delight?

This is a key to all God's laws—they are design laws, but the real benefit is the impact on the heart/character. Love cannot be commanded; therefore, we cannot enforce God's laws with threats. The only way to truly keep God's law is from a free heart. To promote God's kingdom with any other method than love, truth and freedom is to advance Satan's kingdom.

Thus, one of the founders of the SDA church wrote:

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. **This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened.** To know God is to love Him; **His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan.** This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of

⁷ Berk LS, Tan SA, Napier BJ. et al. Eustress of mirthful laughter modifies natural killer cell activity. Clinical Research. 1989;37:115A.

⁸ Berk LS, Tan SA, Nehlsen-Cannarella SL. et al. Humor associated laughter decreases cortisol and increases spontaneous lymphocyte blastogenesis. Clinical Research. 1988;36:435A.

⁹ Martin RA. Is Laughter the Best Medicine? Humor, Laughter, and Physical Health. Current Directions In Psychological Science. 2002;11(6):216–8.

¹⁰ The Laughter - Immune Connection. Berk LS, Tan SA; [Revised November, 1996]
<http://www.hospitalclown.com/Past%20Issues/Final%20PDFs/Vol%202-2Berk.pdf>.



the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Mal. 4:2. {DA 22.1}

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so—[what kind of law is this describing? This is imperial imposed law, human law, the type of law that penal substitution theology operates upon. It is a fraud that cheats people from God's true healing plan] **will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey.** When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. **True obedience is the outworking of a principle within.** [Where is the focus of true obedience? Healing the heart, not legal accounting, this is design law] **It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God.** The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}

A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. [why? Because this is a violation of the Law of Liberty and always results in rebellion or the destruction of individuality. This is what happens when we replace God's design law with the imposed law lie...people either reject the belief in God or become unreasonable believers in God who teach things that are non-sense like God is love and loves you but will torture you if you don't love Him.] By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897}

THURSDAY

What are the qualities of a truly wealthy wife according to Proverbs 31?

Read third paragraph, "These extensive talents..." The lesson gets this right, it is not about the talents or abilities, but about the traits of character. While we may not all have the same talents or abilities, through Christ we can all have mature character and it is this maturity of character that is most valuable of all: trustworthiness, compassion, reliability, faithfulness, kindness, industry—others?

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Thank you to all of our supporters!!! We appreciate your prayers and financial support.

To let you know what is IN THE WORKS in addition to our weekly class:

- Audio version of the Remedy is in production, we have finished recording and are in final editing
- A weekly 15-minute radio show/podcast is now available
- **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!** January 17-19, 2020, in Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport) we will have a Come and Reason Ministries: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly.

May 10,11, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Barrie SDA Church, 140 Mapleton Ave Barrie, ON L4N 9N7 Canada

May 18, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be a speaker at the Love and Transformation Institute: The Epidemic Rise of Anxiety, Depression and Suicide at the Phoenix Seminary, in Scottsdale, AZ.

June 8, 2019: Dr. Jennings will present The Aging Brain Seminar at Mid Columbia Medical Center, in The Dalles, OR.

July 10, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the 3rd Global Health Conference, sponsored by the General Conference of SDA and held at Loma Linda University.

July 19,20, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Living Truth SDA Church, 970 Oxford St. West London ON, Canada.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

I want to thank Ventsi Bosev and all our new friends in Bulgaria for inviting me to Sofia and what an incredible experience. We spoke in public halls and the first three nights standing room only, with 70 people standing outside the entire two-hour lectures. We moved to the University of Sofia on Friday and then to a hotel convention center for Sabbath. The past conference president said it was the most successful and well attended church event in Bulgaria since 1993. Huge positive responses from attendees. Three out of four attendees were not church members.



Family Seasons Lesson 6 2Q 2019

The Royal Love Song

by Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

Warning this lesson explores God's design for marital intimacy and human sexuality and may contain themes not appropriate for younger audiences.

Before we get to the lesson I want to share an email:

Dear Dr. Jennings and Team

I have written this letter 100's of times in my head. I can add no more to any of the stories you have already received about how this ministry has brought Light to the darkened hearts and minds; smashed distortions with beautiful truths melting the hardened heart, stimulating the intellect and giving a burning desire to share the beautiful truths of God's character and His design law with anyone who shows the least bit interest!!

A little about me. I was brought up SDA all my life. My father was a Minister and there was a lot of pressure to conform and be "good". I was good at being "good". I thought my life was going along well until it all started falling apart and I could not figure out why!! I had kept the rules, did the rituals, at least most of the time, surely God had enough mercy to forgive a few slip ups!!!!

In my search for: "God, why is this happening to me", I came across your book, Could it be this Simple? As I write, my heart goes out in gratitude to our FAITHFUL GOD who is ever true to His word, If you seek you will find, If any man lacks wisdom come unto me, and so on..... And I did find, God started revealing to me the many distortions I held. Not only about His character but His principles and how He has designed His universe to operate. Oh how my heart thrills!!! When I listen to your SS lessons I can hear a similar thrill and excitement in your voice about the overwhelming awesomeness of it all!!!!!!!!!! It always make me smile! Don't hear many people these days getting excited about God and His plans for us!! Even though it is clear He has nothing but the best for us in mind. Oh, the lies we believe..

If I were to recount how God, through this ministry, has brought to life the beauty of truth to me, dismantling one distortion after another, it would be a book!!! So I will mention only one.

In the book, Could it be this Simple?, the Myths of forgiveness gripped me. There was only one myth I did not hold!!! I remember thinking, Wow, I have this all backwards. At that point in time, I was in a drained emotional and spiritual state and didn't know how to take action on the information. I didn't even go to your web site.



But God knew my heart and He was not finished. He brought the myths around again a couple of years later through the Healing the Mind Seminar webcast. (I ached and longed for healing of mind and heart) As I listened to the presentation the Spirit was convicting me of the truth of what I was hearing. I was happy and angry all at the same time. Happy to have the light of truth break through the darkness revealing a wonderful, beautiful way, of understanding God and His plan for His children. Angry because I felt deceived and cheated by the church, my family and myself!! That is when I decided to cooperate with God in removing the distortions about His character of love and His design law. My hardwiring was so entrenched, I needed to listen to that section 7 times before I understood God's principles and how to apply them in my everyday life. God is still revealing areas this distortion affects. Praise Him for His loving mercy in healing and restoring me back to His original design!!

Literally I have gone from death to life. It is a journey I look forward to every day. God showed me I had been living out Is. 50:11 – Walk in the spark of your own fire and I will have nothing but torment. (I'm paraphrasing) That was my life, torment- emotionally, relationally, spiritually and physical health! The insidiousness of holding a distorted view of God is it distorts views on every aspect of life.

My yoke is easy and my burden is light. Matt. 11:30 I use to think, "If You call this light, I would like to know what heavy is"!!! Now I am daily, getting a better perspective. Praise GOD!!

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed". Jh. 8:36 KJV

"So if the Son sets your hearts and minds free from selfishness, you will be free to love indeed". The Remedy

I pray for you, your family and your whole team daily. I will ever be grateful to God for this ministry and your cooperation with the Spirit.

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, "Among the seasons..." How did God design marriage to function? In God's design was there to be a hierarchy in marriage with one spouse ruling over another?

From the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*:

God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided "an help meet for him"--a helper corresponding to him--one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be **one with him in love and sympathy**. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, **signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet**



as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, **she was his second self**, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation. **"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh;** but nourisheth and cherisheth it." Ephesians 5:29. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and **they shall be one."** {PP 46.2}

God celebrated the first marriage. Thus the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe. "Marriage is honorable" (Hebrews 13:4); it was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the Fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise. **When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man's social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature.** {PP 46.3}

How did God design marriage to function? With equality of the two partners in other-centered love, neither ruling over the other.

What happened? Sin, they infected their hearts with selfishness and love was displaced as the primary motivator to action.

When God said to Eve that her desire would be for her husband and he would rule over her, was God making a new design for marriage? Did God say, "Well, my original design in Eden isn't quite right. I need to have men rule over their wives"? No!

Was God saying, "Eve you sinned and deceived your husband so you need a minder, a handler, a supervisor, someone to think for you and tell you what to do. So I am instituting a new rule that you must submit to your husband and let him tell you what to do?" No!

God, was merely diagnosing the reality of what they did to themselves. He said, "Eve, you have infected yourself with fear and selfishness and love and trust are no longer the primary motivators in your heart. Therefore, the natural results of the selfish are that the strong will dominate the weak and the weak seek the protection of the strong. So, Eve, you will desire your husband, but he will rule over you."

Does God want people in this sinful world to continue to live dominated by fear and selfishness?

What does God want for each human heart?

- To be reborn
- recreated in the inner man
- to have the law written on the heart and mind—what law?



Would having the law of God written on the heart and mind mean that trust and love displace fear and selfishness and we get transformed back to God's original design?

Then what would marriage look like? Would it be equality between the two partners?

And would this translate into how we treat each other? Would it also translate into leadership roles in the church?

Do we see that the so-called headship theology in which people are put into a hierarchy based on gender is part of sin infecting God's creation? It is not part of God's design—God's design is equality of human beings submitting to the one true Head Jesus Christ.

In Jewish tradition the Song of Songs is considered an allegory of God's relationship with His people. The first and second century Rabbi Akiva, when asked if they should reject this book said, "God forbid! [...] For all of eternity in its entirety is not as worthy as the day on which Song of Songs was given to Israel, for all the Writings are holy, but Song of Songs is the Holy of Holies." (Schiffman, Lawrence H., ed. (1998), *Texts and Traditions*, Ktav, Hoboken, pp 119-120).

What do you think of when you think of the "Holy of Holies"? The sanctuary? And what transpires in the Holy of Holies in the sanctuary? Atonement—is there anything about the Song of Solomon that fulfills this function? What is happening in marital intimacy? Are two becoming one? Is that atonement?

When you think of the Day of Atonement or Investigative Judgment are you thinking of a wedding—a honeymoon, of the intimacy of love?

Why not? What is happening during this time in history? Jesus is cleansing His bride. Jesus is bringing the hearts and minds of His people into complete unity, intimacy, oneness with Him. For those who trust Jesus, He enters into the most holy place of our beings to remove all defects and impurities and to **instill** His perfection, His love, His goodness, His life into our hearts and minds—this is a union of minds/hearts/beings.

Can you see how sexual intimacy in which, in love and trust, life is deposited from one to another to form a new life, is a beautiful metaphor for God's plan to save us? In love and trust we open ourselves up to Christ who deposits His life into us and we are reborn—a new life begins. This is becoming one—in marriage with the spouses, in Christianity with God. This is openness, this is being known, this is healing and restoration. It is beautiful! It is lovely! It is wonderful! It is a mystery!

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ **to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,** ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, **without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish**, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but



he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—³⁰ for we are members of his body.³¹
“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the **two will become one flesh.**”³² **This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.** Eph 5:25-32

What obstructs God’s plan to accomplish this in people’s hearts?

The false legal lens of imposed law that teaches the Day of Atonement and Investigative Judgment is a judicial process a legal accounting. Such teachings close hearts, create barriers and instead of people disrobing, opening themselves up to the presence of Jesus, people instead put up barriers, beg for a covering to hide them from their Groom.

God cannot complete His mission of reuniting humanity to Himself in perfect unity until we reject the imperial law lie and stop teaching penal substitution theology in our institutions.

The lesson points out that Song of Solomon is an inspired book to teach God’s beautiful plan for marriage.

But, have you ever wondered, why God chose Solomon to write this inspired book on God’s plan for marriage?

Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines—how is it God chose him to write a book that is considered to be the epitome of divine plan for marriage? In other words, if God’s plan for marriage is monogamy why would God have the greatest polygamist of all time write the book on marriage?

Why was God angry at Solomon and took the kingdom, except one tribe from him? Was it because of marrying many women? No, it was because of allowing his many wives to lead him into worshipping other gods. If he had not worshipped other gods, God would not have disciplined him so. Which means, that God’s chastisement of Solomon was not for having many wives, but for worshipping false gods.

So, why did God choose Solomon to write this book on marriage?

To understand this we must understand a couple of other points. First, Israel is not only historical, but metaphorical.

What I mean is that there were millions of descendants of Abraham who lived during Bible times, yet we have recorded in Scripture only a very small number of individuals. God selected from these real historical events the events He wanted recorded in Scripture to tell, not only historical facts, but reveal a larger reality—God’s plan of salvation.

These things happened to them [Israel] as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. 1Cor 10:11



For instance, there were seven miracle births in the Bible—all historical facts, but also all teaching a larger reality—the coming Messiah:

1. Sarah-Isaac: The promised one who will be sacrificed
2. Rebecca-Jacob: Overcomes fear and renamed Israel the father of the nation built upon twelve sons; Jesus overcame temptation to be the cornerstone of the church built upon twelve apostles
3. Rachel-Joseph: Sold into slavery, became ruler to save people; Jesus became a servant but is exalted to be ruler
4. Monoah's wife-Samson: Blessed with strength to deliver Israel and rule over them; Jesus has the strength to deliver us from sin and rule the universe
5. Hannah-Samuel: Became High Priest; Jesus is our High Priest
6. Shunammite woman-Child died and was resurrected; Jesus died and rose again
7. Elizabeth-John the Baptist: Greatest of prophets; Jesus was the greatest of all prophets

Before we understand why Solomon, with 700 wives, was chosen to write this book on marriage and intimacy, we need to understand Solomon's origins.

David committed a terrible sin in seducing Bathsheba and murdering Uriah. When did sexual relations between David and Bathsheba stop being sin for David and why?

The only way this can be answered is to reject the human law lie of imposed rules and return to God's design law for life.

Under imposed rules the answers that given are:

- When David repented—but isn't repentance turning away from sin—did David turn away from Bathsheba or did he embrace her and have more intimate physical relations with her?
- When he married her—is God's law superseded by human custom? If I moved to a country today where polygamy is legal would the church say it is okay for me to take a second wife and marry her legally? Why not?

The imposed law view never gets the answer right. But design law is about restoration to Godliness. So, when David experienced a new heart and right spirit and had selfishness removed and Godly love restored within David then had the motive to heal, as far as possible, the damage his sin had caused Bathsheba. So, in that culture he, if David was going to be like Jesus, now that his heart was renewed, he had to restore to Bathsheba what he had taken. What had he taken?

- Her good name and reputation
- Her home
- Her income and security
- Her livelihood
- Her hope of being a mother
- Her husband who loved her



So, in that culture, the only way David could act in Godly love and restore what he took was to marry her and love her—which he did. Thus, David is no longer living in selfishness, but in harmony with God’s design for life.

Notice, in the object lesson of Israel, David, when acting in selfishness had a child with Bathsheba—and what happened to that child? It died—which teaches a lesson that sin/selfishness breaks God’s design for life and results in death.

But, David, after being healed in heart and acting in Godly love had another child with Bathsheba—and who was that child? Solomon—the child of wisdom, revealing that only in harmony with God’s design is there life and this is true wisdom.

So, now we turn to Solomon, why does God choose Solomon to write this book?

In the song:

- Solomon is a shepherd and Jesus is depicted as the Shepherd
- Solomon is the wisest in history—who is the true person of wisdom?
- Solomon means “peace” who is the Prince of peace?
- Solomon is the son of King David, who is the descendant of David who is to reign as the King of kings?
- Solomon is the groom and Jesus is the groom and the church the bride

In other words, Solomon, in addition to being a real historical figure, is a representative of Christ. With this in mind, is there any reason you can think of that Solomon (representing Christ) would have 700 wives, and be the one to write about a single intimate relationship epitomizing God’s design for marriage?

Does Jesus have intimacy with more than one person? Does Jesus have intimacy with more than one species? But does Jesus interact with each person as if they were the only one, i.e. their relationship is personal and specific and loving?

Is it possible God had these events recorded in Scripture because they are not only historical, but they teach a larger reality in metaphor of Christ’s union with His people? If so, we can see how this lesson is quite corrupted by Solomon when he worshipped false gods and why God had to take action to demonstrate the worshipping of false gods was not only wrong for Solomon, the nation at that time, Solomon’s wives at that time, but also misrepresented Christ’s victory over all temptations.

SUNDAY

What is the Biblical view of the human body?



Human beings are integrated, our individualities are embodied. We cannot experience, grow, share, learn and love without a body. The body is not evil and the spirit somehow holy, the body is part of our total being and required for actual functioning.

However, because of sin, our bodies are decayed, filled with disease and defects, and can become a source of temptation to us, either powerful desires or powerful discomfort can tempt us. Some are tempted to act in ways to cause positive feelings of pleasure, others are tempted to be angry and frustrated and discouraged because of feelings of pain.

Read last paragraph, “Powerful sexual taboos...” Are we comfortable talking about this topic?

If God created us as sexual beings, if this unity in marriage is part of God’s design, if it is the culmination of true intimacy and love which also acts our God’s plan for unity with us, then why are we uncomfortable talking about it?

In Eden, how were Adam and Eve dressed? In light—which would mean what? Would it mean that they had barriers to being known, that they were hiding part of themselves, or that they were totally open and known by the other?

What happened after Adam and Eve sinned? They ran and HIDE because they were afraid, they made coverings to HIDE themselves. Why?

They felt guilt and shame; they didn’t want to be known; they wanted a covering to hide them from God and they hid themselves from each other.

In the union of marriage, even in this sinful world, there is disrobing, taking off of the coverings, revealing oneself, becoming naked and exposed to the other.

What is required to be able to do this without fear, without guilt, without shame?

Love and trust—love which is bidirectional—you love the other person but you also KNOW that you are loved, cherished, valued, for WHO you are, not for your body. This requires uncovering your true self BEFORE sexual intimacy, becoming known in heart by your partner so that genuine trust is experienced.

Love and trust cast out fear. When we have come to KNOW the other and find they love us and that they are trustworthy, then we can disrobe both emotionally and physically and enter into that physical unity with our marriage partner. We can talk openly about our most secret selves, because we know we are united with one who loves us and wants our best.

When we get to heaven how do you think we will dress? Will we be known? Will we be open? Will we be afraid or ashamed? Will we have intimacy with others? With whom will we have intimacy in heaven?



So, why do you think there is so much fear and shame around sex? Because there is so much fear and shame in our hearts, and sex is a place of great vulnerability, of great openness of placing oneself in a place of undress and we fear being hurt, not being enough, being rejected.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “Solomon invites her...” Why can there be no force or manipulation in this intimate setting?

Does this apply to God’s relationship with His people?

Does this mean God does not use force or manipulation on human beings?

Does this mean that theologies that teach God is the source of inflicted punishment and death for sin are lies? What theologies do this? The penal legal ones.

Do you see that Christianity is deeply infected with lies about God that undermine love and trust, that obstruct God’s plan to heal us, to bring us to at-one-ment with Him?

The message for this time is the message of love, the truth about God, that He is a being of perfect love whose laws are the protocols upon which life is created. Only in union with Him is their life.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “God had a special...” Will we have gender opposites in heaven? Do angels have gender? What did Jesus mean when He said there will be neither marriage or giving in marriage but we will be like the angels?

Is gender the primary point we should focus on as Christians—or is it something else?

Read second paragraph, “Scripture disapproves...” Do you agree?

Did you notice the paragraph focuses on sexual practices, but Jesus focused on the desires of the heart? What happens if a person has a heart desire they never practice?

What happens if persons practice male/female sex within a legal marriage, but their hearts are actually desiring someone of the same sex?

If you are a heterosexual, imagine for a moment living in a culture where 97% of the society is homosexual and heterosexuality is considered evil and you, in order to avoid being stoned, marry someone of the same sex. What would you experience if you had intimacy with them—would it be positive and uplifting or destructive?



What if a person is homosexual and because of social pressure enter into a heterosexual marriage what would that be like for them? Would it be positive and uplifting or destructive?

In Romans 1 starting in verse 18 Paul describes that the wrath of God comes because the people rejected the truth about God, exchanged the knowledge of God for images made with their own hands. In other words, they were involved in Roman cult worship and Paul describes that God's wrath is giving them up to reap the results of their choices and he lists what happens with a long list of destructive consequences on of which is the following:

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

²⁶ Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. Verses 24-27

Did you notice that at first it is sexual impurity with each other, i.e. heterosexual sexual promiscuity—fertility cult worship. Then, what happened—they “exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.”

Can you exchange a blue shirt for a red shirt if you don't first possess a blue shirt?

The Bible is not describing people born with various genetic and biological differences because of sin altering our human genome. The Bible is talking about those who are clearly heterosexual degrading themselves with activities that change their healthy normal desires for desires they did not previously have.

What is the image of God? Is God a being with perfect vision? So would a person with blindness represent the image of God? Should we oppose activities which cause blindness? Should we oppose people who are blind?

In OT times Levites with bad vision could not function as priests—should we set this up as a rule in our churches that any pastor who needs glasses must be fired? Why not? Why did Israel have this rule? Because Israel was not just historical people but acting out a larger reality. Because Levites with vision problems could not be priests, does that mean people with vision could not be saved?

But what about the prohibitions in the Old Testament? We must remember the recording of the OT is not just historical—but metaphorical, Israel are actors on a stage to act out a larger reality. Thus, many things that were prohibited for them were prohibited because of what they represented in the larger reality, not because that activity was itself wrong. For instance:



- They must not marry women defiled by prostitution or divorced from their husbands, because priests are holy to their God. Lev 21:7
 - Why? Does this mean a believer today is not to marry a woman who was a prostitute but has found Christ and been renewed? Or a woman who divorced her husband because he was unfaithful?
 - Then why were the priests forbidden to do this? Because of the metaphorical application—we are to be married to Christ and Christ is not a prostitute and He will not divorce us.
- The daily priest could not serve if they had any physical deformity (crippled foot or hand)
- The daily priest could not serve if they had skin lesions, were hunchbacked or dwarfs
 - Does this mean that today we should not allow any to serve in ministry who have any physical deformities, or skin lesions?
 - How do we understand these prohibitions? In the theater these actors could not play the roles accurately with these disorders for they symbolize spiritual leaders who are blind, or leaders who are not partaking of the remedy that would heal them.
 - “Say to Aaron: ‘For the generations to come none of your descendants who has a defect may come near to offer the food of his God. ¹⁸ No man who has any defect may come near: no man who is blind or lame, disfigured or deformed; ¹⁹ no man with a crippled foot or hand, ²⁰ or who is hunchbacked or dwarfed, or who has any eye defect, or who has festering or running sores or damaged testicles. ²¹ No descendant of Aaron the priest who has any defect is to come near to present the offerings made to the Lord by fire. He has a defect; he must not come near to offer the food of his God. Lev 21:17-21
- ‘The high priest...must not let his hair become unkempt or tear his clothes Lev 21:10
 - Does this mean that our conference presidents can’t serve if they let their hair become windblown or get a tear in their clothing?
- He must not enter a place where there is a dead body. He must not make himself unclean, even for his father or mother... Lev 21:11
 - Does this mean that our church leaders cannot go to the funeral of their own parents?
 - No, in the theater the High Priest represents Christ and Christ is the source of life and would banish death so the High Priest needed to stay away lest the lesson be drawn that death wins in Jesus presence.
- ‘The woman he [High Priest] marries must be a virgin. ¹⁴ He must not marry a widow, a divorced woman, or a woman defiled by prostitution, but only a virgin from his own people, Lev 21:13,14
 - Should we require this for our church leaders?
 - Why was this required for the High Priest?
 - The bride of Christ must be pure in heart and loyal to Him



Do we understand the prohibitions on homosexuality in the same way? That we should oppose activities which damage or alter what is healthy on any level, but we don't condemn people who have various differences that they did not choose?

The lesson asks what the church's attitude should be toward homosexuals?

They should be introduced to Jesus and loved as children of God!

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "The Song of Solomon..." What is a friend?

What is required for genuine friendship?

Can you have a friend who is not a spouse?

Can you have a spouse who is not a friend?

Why is it the best when your spouse is your best friend?

The Bible says:

A friend loves at all times... Proverbs 17:17

Does Jesus want to be friends with us?

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. John 15:15 NIV84

What does it mean to be a friend of Jesus? Is more required in friendship than just to love? Do friends in addition to love also understand? God is clearly our friend, but are we God's friends? What is required to be a friend of God?

Would it be that we come to love God? And would it be that we come to understand who God is, how He functions, His methods and designs? Would it be that we agree with and support God and God's cause?

Who in the Old Testament is described as God's friends?

- Moses
- Abraham



And both did what? Argued with God, why? What was their concern? Both were concerned with God's reputation, with how God would be perceived by others.

Are we?

WEDNESDAY

Why is sexual intimacy designed by God for marriage relationships and not all other relationships?

Because only in a healthy marriage is sexual intimacy healthy—in other relationships sexual intimacy becomes destructive. It is that simple.

And sex in marriage is only healthy if there is love in the marriage. Sex in a legal but loveless marriage is also not health, but destructive.

Thus, sex as God designed requires love and trust to be established prior to the physical union. Then, the physical union causes changes in the brain's reward and bonding circuits such that we come to experience our partner with greater joy, love, reward than others.

But, when sex happens outside of a loving marriage relationship, it can cause changes in reward pathways leading to sexual addiction or unhealthy attachments (dependency cycles).

Thus, the healthiest attachments and relationships are those in which people have remained chaste until a loving trusting marriage relationship.

FRIDAY

Discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

To let you know what is **IN THE WORKS** in addition to our weekly class:

- Audio version of the Remedy is in production, we have them recorded and now doing final editing
- **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!** January 17-19, 2020, in Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport) we will have a Come and Reason Ministries: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly.

May 10,11, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Barrie SDA Church, 140 Mapleton Ave Barrie, ON L4N 9N7 Canada

May 18, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be a speaker at the Love and Transformation Institute: The Epidemic Rise of Anxiety, Depression and Suicide at the Phoenix Seminary, in Scottsdale, AZ.

June 8, 2019: Dr. Jennings will present The Aging Brain Seminar at Mid Columbia Medical Center, in The Dalles, OR.

June 28, 29, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Windsor SDA church in Windsor, Ontario Canada

July 10, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the 3rd Global Health Conference, sponsored by the General Conference of SDA and held at Loma Linda University.

July 19,20, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Living Truth SDA Church in London, Ontario Canada.

September 13,14, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Gentlebrook Intermediary Care Facility, Hartville, OH.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

Family Seasons Lesson 7 2Q 2019

Keys to Family Unity

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

Marissa Johnson, an online listener, sent in this:

I did quite enjoy your comments about functioning in a healthy family and its impact on both the person and community. I wanted to share one description of what taking personal responsibility for the impact of damaging parental behavior on the person that I heard one time and that I have in turn shared with my kids and my nieces and nephews. For me it has been helpful and I suspect could offer some help to others.

Imagine one's life is characterized by a car. On vacation, you visit San Francisco. And while parked on one of the hilly streets of San Francisco, while you are out sightseeing, a car parked uphill from yours suffers a loss of control (parking brake failure). What is the impact on your car? How much damage could occur? And then, the owner of the car whose brake system failed comes along, finds the two cars collided with each other. Instead of being responsible, they take away their car without leaving any kind of notification to the owner (you) of your own car. This is done out of fear of reprisal, loss of insurance, loss of money, fear of the hassle, etc. So then they leave the site. It is a hit and run type event. Later in the day you return and find your car smashed and not able to be driven. At that point: whose responsibility is it to get the car moved and returned to drivable condition? The other guy? Or yours? Since you own it, it is yours. NO you did not cause the damage, but repair of it, in the face of hit and run damage, is your responsibility. Both for your own benefit to be able to drive and for that of your family and community so that you can still report for duty in your job, get the kids to school, etc.

This simple illustration, though not perfect, has been helpful in dealing with others (parents, teachers, friends or other family members.) who cause hurt and damage.

Thank you for your good work and for showing us all another way to consider and apply grace.

What lessons are there in this metaphor?

We are not responsible for the choices of others, for things done to us, either good or bad—but we are responsible—when we grow to the age of comprehension and ability to discern and decide—for the choices we make.

- Do we reject healthy avenues and options when they are available or do we participate in them?
- Do we have a mindset of personal responsibility that we have the responsibility to be the healthiest, most mature individuals we are capable of becoming regardless of our histories—or



do we have the mindset that others owe us something—that we either cannot or will not grow, mature, develop until some other person or group or government apologizes, shows us love, pays reparations or some other action?

I have many patients who have been abused by their own families while children, or have been bullied in school, or have been treated unfairly or cruelly by society—yet they all don't end up with the same outcomes. Some of these persons have taken the approach of healing and developing themselves, others have taken the approach of trying to get the offender to change to show them love, remorse, sorrow, to in some way acknowledge their wrong and try to make amends OR the person tries to make the wrongdoer pay them some recompense. Which approach do you think results in the best outcome for the person who was abused? Why?

If a person takes the approach of focusing on healing their wounds, becoming the healthiest most Christlike person in governance of themselves they are capable of becoming through God's grace—does that mean:

- the wrong done to them was a good thing?
- the wrong wasn't wrong?
- the person who did the wrong to them gets away with it?
- Why not? Because of design law—the person who does wrong damages themselves, sears their conscience, warps their character, hardens their heart.

SABBATH

Read memory text: “that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:21 NKJV)

What is Jesus talking about? Is there a theological term for this? Atonement!

If Jesus is describing atonement—what must happen in order to achieve what Jesus is describing?

Where is the action happening in order for us to be one with God and each other?

Where then is the work of Christ and God occurring?

Then, on the Day of Atonement, what is Christ doing? He is healing His people, restoring in them His character of love—there is nothing legal going on, there is healing and restoration.

We must reject the imperial law lie and rise up as a people to give the final message of mercy to the world—the truth of God's character of love, that His government operates on design law of love—which means we must be healed to live in His presence.



Read second paragraph, “Yet, whether as parents...” If we all struggle with the same sinful fallen nature—what then is the solution that brings salvation? A new nature—can we create that new nature?

Does a legal blood payment of a sinless sacrifice to an offended God to pay a legal penalty create a new nature?

So, if we need a new nature, and we can’t create it and a payment to God doesn’t create it—how do we get a new nature?

Jesus became human and as a human being, using His human abilities, He was tempted in every way just as we are yet without sin (Heb 4:15). And in His humanity, He loved perfectly and refused to use His abilities to save self. Thus, when He died on the Cross, He, in His humanity, destroyed the infection of selfishness and developed a perfect, sinless human character. As Hebrews says, “once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him” (Heb 5:9 NIV84).

Bible perfection is not mere sinlessness it is maturity of character. Character cannot be created it must be developed; Jesus had to develop a perfect sinless human character in order to be our Savior. He had to actually fix the damage Adam did to the species.

Thus, in Jesus, the species human was saved and Jesus simultaneously developed a perfect human character that becomes the template for all who trust Him.

Jesus did what we could not do and now He offers to give us a new heart and right spirit to transform us by the application of His perfection if we trust Him.

EGW puts it this way:

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. [why does the law require righteousness? for the same reason the law of respiration require we breathe—it is the law upon which life is built. This is no arbitrary rule, it is simple how life works] He cannot meet the claims of God’s holy law. But **Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character.** [Didn’t Christ have a perfect character before coming to earth? Why would He need to develop one? Christ had a perfect divine character, but what He did on earth was to develop a perfect HUMAN character. Did Christ develop a perfect HUMAN character by exercising divine abilities or human abilities? Human—He was tempted in every way JUST AS WE ARE, yet without sin.] **These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** [where to we receive this gift in a ledger or in our hearts and minds?] His life stands for the life of men. [Where does his life stand for ours? As the new head of a renewed humanity. He represents the human race in God’s heavenly counsel taking the place Adam would have had] Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. [Our past sins are not counted against us in some legal ledger, what matters is the condition of our hearts and minds. It would be like a patient who had Ebola and had bloody diarrhea that ruined clothing and furniture, there is no concern



over past symptoms the only concern is are they infected and dying today or are they healed] More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character**, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2} [So, for those who trust God, the Holy Spirit takes the perfection of Christ and imbues it into our hearts. We get new desires, motives, attitudes, insights—all the goodness we experience is a gift of God but we must simultaneously choose to TRUST God and identify with these new motives and principles by putting them into practice in how we live.]

What is justice and justification? The healing, fixing, restoring, regenerating, recreating sinners back to sinlessness by the infusing of Christ's character into the hearts of all who trust Him. This is atonement! **It is NOT legal; It is actual.**

So, in families: can there be healthy families if each person is looking to get for self? Is there a difference in taking responsibility for oneself and looking to get for self?

Can we have healthy families if family members refuse to take responsibility for themselves?

Healthy relationships REQUIRE healthy people AND healthy people are in governance of themselves—thus healthy people take ownership of their own issues, problems, and responsibilities and choose to cooperate with God for their healing, maturing, and decision-making.

Healthy families REQUIRE health parents and healthy parents are in governance of themselves.

What are the core principles that result in healthy families?

- **Love**—love for others such that one is willing to sacrifice self for others. The mindset of looking out for the eternal best-interest of the other, of making decisions and using one's ability to bless the other. This often requires the practice of the next principle...
- **Willingness to tolerate the pain** that a loved one will experience as they make choices on their own—i.e. not being overly protective or overly rescuing when mistakes are made, or apply appropriate discipline to educate and teach, or healing interventions when necessary that might be painful.
 - Love will risk being misunderstood, even hated, to do what is right.
 - Health parents are willing to allow their children to be mad at them in order to do what is best for the children.
- **Freedom**—balancing our actions with the principle of liberty not destroying the individuality of children and not dominating or controlling an adult. Within this principle of freedom love sets boundaries and limits freedom of those who do not have the ability to understand or make decisions for themselves until they are old enough or competent enough to make their own decisions
 - So, in love, parents will limit the freedoms of children to protect them, but parenting them to the point that one day they are set completely free to govern themselves



- Doctors will limit the freedom of psychotic patients treating them in such a way as to restore them to sanity so they can be set free
- Families limit the freedom of persons with dementia but would love to heal them and restore their freedom
- Such limitations on freedom are not violations of love, but the actions of love to protect those who cannot protect themselves
- EGW wrote:
 - **The training of children must be conducted on a different principle from that which governs the training of irrational animals.** The brute has only to be accustomed to submit to its master, **but the child must be taught to control himself. The will must be trained to obey the dictates of reason and conscience.** A child may be so disciplined as to have, like the beast, no will of its own, his individuality being lost in that of his teacher. **Such training is unwise, and its effect disastrous.** Children thus educated will be deficient in firmness and decision. They are not taught to act from principle; the reasoning powers are not strengthened by exercise. **So far as possible, every child should be trained to self-reliance.** By calling into exercise the various faculties, he will learn where he is strongest, and in what he is deficient. A wise instructor will give special attention to the development of the weaker traits, that the child may form a well-balanced, harmonious character. {CG 39.2}
- **Trust**—which requires trustworthiness and what is required to be trustworthy?
 - love the other more than self
 - maturity of self-governance
 - wisdom on how reality works
 - ability to trust
- **Truthfulness**—honesty in communication is key, because dishonesty undermines trust and without trust relationship breakdown. But truthfulness doesn't mean one discloses everything. Jesus said He had much to tell His disciples but they couldn't bear it. Jesus is being honest, truthful in saying this, but He is holding back information. We can hold back information in all truthfulness. But we shouldn't purposely lie or deceive people—it undermines trust.
- **Setting and maintaining healthy boundaries**
 - Never set a boundary you don't enforce—why? It undermines trust because you are not keeping your word.

In the last paragraph, “Yes, in the body of Jesus Christ on the cross all humanity has been reconciled to God and to one another.”

What does this mean? Colossians says that “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself **all things**, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” (1:19,10 NIV84)

Does this text say all humanity has been reconciled to God? No, all things have been reconciled to God, humanity, in the person of Jesus Christ has been reconciled to God, angels who had questions



had them answered and the angels in heaven are settled now in loyalty to God, any beings on any other planets are solidified into loyalty to God, the earth is reclaimed by Christ and will be fully perfected at the second coming. So all *things* are reconciled to God...

But does that mean all humanity been reconciled to God?

If so, then why are we still in a world of sin? Why are there wars, racism, sexism, and all the hostilities we see every day?

I think it would have been more accurate to say that the species human was reconciled to God in the person of Jesus Christ—but the rest of humanity remains in a state of conflict with some individuals being reconciled through what Christ has achieved, but many others refusing to be reconciled and thus the war for hearts and minds goes on. thoughts?

SUNDAY

The lesson points us to Ephesians 2:11-22:

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (that done in the body by the hands of men)—
12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. (NIV 84)

What do you hear? What did Christ accomplish? What did Christ do with the law? What are the two that He made one?

What law lens do you understand this through?



See if this helps, the same passage from *The Remedy*:

Therefore remember that you, who were born into the dark superstitions of the world, were considered "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcised" (as they experienced bodily circumcision by human hands).¹² That was before your minds were enlightened about Christ—and therefore you were separate from him—and you were not members of Israel (who was God's spiritual health-care team), and therefore were unacquainted with God's plan to heal and restore. Your condition was terminal, because you were without God—and therefore without hope—and in the darkness of the world.¹³ But now, you—whose minds were once far away, and who were practicing the principles of selfishness and survival-of-the-fittest—have been enlightened and brought near to God, and are in unity with Christ through the truth revealed when he died.

¹⁴ For Christ himself is the Remedy that heals the species and brings peace. He has removed fear and selfishness that cause division, mistrust, prejudice, and hostility.¹⁵ He did this by partaking of our human condition, and—via the exercise of his human brain—he loved perfectly, thereby destroying in his flesh (in the humanity he partook) the selfish survival-of-the-fittest drive along with the lies of Satan. In this way, he destroyed the need for the law (with all its regulations) to expose Satan's lies and methods. His purpose was to be the template of a new humanity born out of the unification of the two—our selfish, infected condition merged with his sinless state—thereby purging selfishness from the human heart, and transforming, healing, renewing, regenerating and recreating humanity back to God's original ideal;¹⁶ and in this new being, to reconcile the human race—regardless of ethnic background—into loving unity with God and each other through the revelation of truth at the cross, by which he destroyed the lies of Satan, reestablished trust, and removed fear, selfishness, and hostility.¹⁷ He came and demonstrated the truth of God's character and the offer of peace available to all humanity—to those far away in darkness and those blessed with the truth of God's word.¹⁸ For Jesus reveals the truth about God to all, and—through what Jesus has done—all have access to the Father by one Spirit.

¹⁹ Therefore your minds are no longer confused, and you are no longer in darkness and are no longer foreigners, aliens or outcasts, but members of God's house and citizens with God's people—living components of God's heavenly sanctuary²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone—the source of all truth.²¹ In Christ, the entire structure is unified and grows to become a holy temple filled with God's Spirit, revealing God's character.²² And with your minds in harmony with Christ, you too are being healed and transformed—rebuilt to become a dwelling in whom God lives by his Spirit.

Do you see that the plan of salvation is the plan to heal, restore, recreate humanity back to God's original ideal that He intended for Adam and Eve? Thus, God is working through Christ to reveal truth that destroys the lies of Satan and provide us a new sinless character that operates in harmony with Him—this requires we come to genuinely trust God and open our hearts to Him.



Read second and third paragraph, “Picture a large circle...” Do you see the key in finding unity? It is **not** by focusing on our differences; it is **not** by focusing on our similarities; it is **not** by focusing on doctrinal conformity or a list of right rules; it is **not** by focusing on proper government or legislation; it is **not** by focusing on human rights; **it is by focusing on Jesus**—this is the key!

Satan knows that if we focus on Jesus, make Him the center of our hearts, lives, desires, longings, and intentions then we will be transformed and we will come into unity of heart with others. This is a function of the Law of Worship—a design law—the Bible describes as by beholding we become changed. So, Satan wants to take our minds off Jesus—how?

- By substituting a false Jesus for the true Jesus—getting us to conceive of Jesus and God as beings who impose laws and then inflict penalties—this is modern Baal worship, of which the Bible warns. Thus, many will come to Jesus in the end and claim to be His followers but Jesus said He never knew them.
- Business of life’s responsibilities (paying bills, schoolwork, jobs, kids, chores)
- Entertainment (games, internet, TV, books)
- Drugs and alcohol
- Unhealthy relationships
- Focusing on sin, the fear of committing it and the obsession with avoiding it, so one formulates long lists of right rules and lives in fear of breaking them. In other words, we are not focusing on Jesus but ourselves.
- Focusing on doctrinal correctness i.e. a form of Gnosticism of studying to get all the facts, doctrines or rules right but not focusing on Jesus
- Religiosity focusing on performing all the right rituals or being very religious in our lifestyle
- Traumas, diseases, losses, suffering, pain, illness, cruelty, unfairness which can cause doubt and rejection of God
- False philosophies that replace God with either false gods or no God
- others?

Read last paragraph, “Between father and son...” Do you agree?

Would we say that when genuine healthy, loving and trusting relationships occur, that it is only possible because of the work of Jesus through the agency of the Holy Spirit working in those people’s hearts?

What about if we see healthy love in people who claim that they either don’t believe in God or reject Jesus as Savior?

What law lens do you answer this question through?



- Imperial/imposed human law lens: to fail to accept Jesus means one has failed to accept His legal payment, which means that they remain outside God's grace legally and therefore cannot have the benefits of God in their life—they remain lost
- Design law: one realizes that the problem is not legal but a state of being and that God works via the Holy Spirit to bring His principles (character of Christ) into the heart of everyone who values His principles and chooses them wherever they cognitively know about God or not. Thus, people who haven't understood the reality of Jesus and what He has accomplished, but value the principles of God the Holy Spirit still works in them to heal and restore them. (Romans 2:12)

Another way to say this is that wherever we see the principles of God being lived out it is evidence of the Spirit of God at work because humans unaided by God's Spirit are not able to live out God's methods or principles.

TUESDAY

The lesson focuses on selfishness and how it destroys families—how would you describe selfishness? What motivates or increases or drives selfishness?

Fear increases selfishness—fear of not being loved, liked, good enough, getting enough, having enough, getting hurt, being rejected, betrayed etc.

What reduces or combats selfishness? Love and trust—being loved first and then loving others—actually loving the other more than self so one is willing to sacrifice self for the good of another, and experience trust in a trustworthy other.

Most of us recognize the obvious manifestations of selfishness—cruel words, ugly attitudes, stealing from another, etc. but what are some of the more hidden ways selfishness occurs in families—ways we may not recognize as selfish?

- How about a child disobeys and a parent, and the parent, rather than disciplining and enforcing a boundary, tells them not to do it again but lets them off—is this love or could this be a parent who doesn't like the distress it causes them when they discipline so to avoid their own emotional discomfort they don't discipline the child but allow themselves to think they are showing mercy?
- A parent is shopping with their young child and the child sees some candy and wants it, but the parent doesn't want the child to have it. The child makes a scene so the parent buys the candy and the child quiets down. Is this love or selfishness on the parent's part?
- A husband is frustrated because his wife discloses to friends that he recently had a demotion at work. He wasn't yet ready to disclosed this information, and his wife has a long pattern of sharing such information before he is ready. But, rather than confront his wife with his frustration and hurt, he keeps silent to avoid an argument that he knows will ensue.
 - Was the action of the wife an act of love?



- Is the action of the husband to not discuss the issue an act of love or selfishness?
- A husband loves his wife so much and finds her so beautiful that he is certain he isn't good enough for her and it is only a matter of time until she finds another man better than him; so he constantly monitors her, questions her fidelity, accuses her of looking at other men, checks up on her, interrogates her on where she has been, who she has talked to, whether she really loves him and wants to be with him. He claims he only does this because he loves her so much—is this love?
- A wife had an affair with a coworker 10 years ago. She repented of it and has reconciled to her husband and has been loyal since. The husband states he has forgiven her, but frequently reminds her that he has been faithful to her and she cheated, or she was unfaithful, or she disobeyed and sinned and he did not. He is the good and faithful husband, while she is the sinful harlot wife. Is he being loving to his wife or selfish?

Do we recognize selfishness when it isn't taking an action to directly hurt another, but is primarily about protecting ourselves from feeling something uncomfortable?

If we love others are we willing to take actions that are objectively right, healthy, reasonable and good, even if others will be mad at us? Do we love others enough to let them be mad at us to do what is best for them? Remember the slogan "Friends don't let friends drive drunk." This is an example of the principle of love overruling feelings.

WEDNESDAY

Read Ephesians 5:21:

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (NIV84)

Who is to submit to whom?

Read first paragraph, "The word submit..." What is submission? To whom are we to submit? Are we to submit our thinking and individuality to others?

Are wives to submit to their husbands in some way different than the husband is to submit to the wife?

What do you think of these insights from EGW:

A woman that will submit to be ever dictated to in the smallest matters of domestic life, who will yield up her identity, will never be of much use or blessing in the world, and will not answer the purpose of God in her existence. She is a mere machine to be guided by another's will and another's mind. God has given each one, men and women, an identity, an individuality, that they must act in the fear of God for themselves.--TSB 25 (1885). {DG 183.2}



Your course since your marriage, in taking possession of and controlling the means of her [whom] you had made your wife, shows your motives to be wrong. All these things are against you and show on **your part very deep selfishness and a dictatorial spirit which God would not have her submit to. Her marriage does not make null and void her stewardship. It does not destroy her identity. Her individuality should be preserved** if she would glorify God with her body and spirit, which are His. **Her individuality cannot be submerged in you.** She has duties she owes to God which **you have no right to interfere with.** God has claims upon her which you cannot meet. In the providence of God she has become His steward, and this she should refuse to yield to you or any other one. {TSB 29.1}

I beseech you by the mercies of God that you take your position for the right **without reference to the will or judgment of your wife. You have allowed her mind to be a controlling power in your life.** Yet you do not see this or many other things you ought to see because you are not prepared to see them in the light of the Spirit of God. **For years your wife has refused to submit herself to the influence of the Holy Spirit. She has never been transformed in character. She has a strong mind and a powerful influence over you which confuses your judgment, making you in some respects a weak man.** While you allow her to lead you on, while you consent to merge your individuality in hers, anything I may say to you or write to you will be as idle tales. {18MR 263.1}

So, what is a healthy submission?

What do you think of the principle the lesson highlights of “mutuality in self-giving” as a unique Christian principle?

Would relationships of dominance, control, forced submission be in harmony with God’s design? Might the Bible condemn such relationships?

Some believe this type of relationship is exactly what the Bible condemns when it condemns homosexuality. Homosexuality in the Roman world was not loving, mutual self-giving in a committed other-centered relationship.

From an article in the Huffington post, reposted on Yahoo, Evangelical Rev. Canon Steve Chalke, examining archeological artwork from Pompei, which was preserved in volcanic ash in AD 79, about the time Paul was writing his New Testament letters, concludes:

Chalke explains that the Apostle Paul was writing during a time when it was perfectly acceptable for people on the lower rungs of society — slaves, prostitutes, gladiators, refugees — to be sexually exploited and abused by rich and powerful Roman citizens.

The minister claims it was normal and even expected for Roman men to have sexual playthings apart from their wives. This meant having sex with concubines and young boys. Some Roman



women also used people of lower status for their own sexual pleasure, Chalke said. But one thing Romans couldn't do was abuse another Roman citizen.

"Roman boys were protected in a way that slave boys weren't. For a Roman man, sex was a legitimate part of life, but you had to have sex with an inferior and you had to penetrate them, you weren't allowed to be penetrated," Chalke said in his talk...

It was this kind of exploitation of fellow human beings that Chalke believes Paul and other New Testament writers were speaking out against when they wrote these ancient scriptures. When 1 Timothy and 1 Corinthians make references to men who have sex with other men, it's part of a much longer list of people who are exploitative — murderers, slave traders, liars, perjurers, thieves, the greedy, slanderers, swindlers. Chalke believes Paul is warning the early Christian church against engaging in human relationships that are based on exploitation, abuse, and corruption.

On the other hand, he claims, the New Testament has nothing to say about genuine, compassionate love between people of the same gender, as it is understood in today's world. <https://www.yahoo.com/news/could-ancient-porn-change-way-192620480.html>

What do you think about these conclusions?

Here is what the prophet Ezekiel said about the sins of Sodom, see if it fits with what Chalke proposes:

Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. ⁵⁰ They were haughty and did detestable things before me... 16:49.50 NIV84

THURSDAY

What is the Bible plan for marriage?

The lesson points out the plan of committed and loyal love to the other. No doubt this is God's plan for people.

They cite the example of Hosea who married Gomer the prostitute, who was unfaithful on many occasions and how Hosea sought her out to bring her back over and over again.

Is this an example for us in how we should handle the unfaithful spouse?

Or, is this another example of how Israel and the stories in the Bible are not only historic but metaphoric? Was Hosea demonstrating how God wants every person to handle every case of adultery or was Hosea demonstrating how God handles our unfaithfulness to Him?



Why is it wrong to tell Christians that in all cases of adultery the loyal spouse must seek to reconcile the marriage and take the cheating spouse back, even if the spouse has not repented and remains untrustworthy?

Because the goal of true Christianity and love is the ultimate healing of the person in sin. Thus, if a husband or wife loves a cheating spouse they want to see them have the selfishness in their heart eliminated and for them to become like Jesus in character. If the cheating spouse refuses to repent, and the healthy spouse loves the cheating spouse, the healthy spouse must say this is unacceptable and that they will not cooperate with the destruction of the soul of their partner. A divorce, in some situations, may be the only means to effectively communicate this to the cheating spouse. In some circumstance, staying with a cheating spouse can send the message that the cheating is okay and collude with the self-destruction of their character.

This principle is true in all relationships, love seeks to heal and restore, not collude with destruction.

FRIDAY

Read third paragraph, “The secret of family unity...” But what happens in the family if you move closer to Christ but other family members do not?

Here is Matthew 10:34-38 from *The Remedy*:

Jesus said:

"Don't think that I have come to make peace with a selfish world. I have not come to bring peace with selfishness, but a sword to cut selfishness out of the hearts of people.³⁵ I have come to cut dysfunctional family ties: to free a son from selfish loyalty to his father's ambitions and feuds, to sever a daughter from the control of an oppressive and manipulative mother, to cut through the fear and hostility a daughter-in-law has toward her mother-in-law.³⁶ A person's worst enemies are often members of their own family.

³⁷ "Those who love parental approval more than they love me are untrustworthy of me and the Remedy I bring; and those who love the approval of their children more than me are untrustworthy of me and the Remedy I bring.³⁸ Anyone who refuses to die to selfishness and follow me—loving others more than self—cannot be trusted by me to distribute the Remedy I bring.

MONDAY

The lesson focuses again on becoming one through love—what do you understand love to be?

Do you love your house or car? This is not the love that heals, this is the value and appreciation and desire or liking you have for things.



Do people have erotic love? Again, this is not the love that heals and is arousal and physical pleasure.

Do you love your families? This can be Godly love as it is other-centered and really focused on the family member's eternal good. But this can also be ungodly as we can love our family members in a selfish way—for what they do for us, for making us look good, or feel safe, or riding their coattails of achievement etc. which isn't Godly love but love for self and what we get.

The love that heals is Agape—it is the principle of beneficence, of goodwill toward others, of valuing others for who they are, not for what they do, of longing to see the other experience the best, develop themselves to the highest pinnacles of Godliness possible.

Thus, the lesson points us to 1Cor 13:4-8:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸ Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. (NIV84)

What do you hear in this? Do you see God revealed in this description?

Do you see anything in this description that doesn't fit with most Christian theologies?

How about love keeps no record of wrongs? How many Christian theologies teaches that God does keep a very detailed list of all the wrongs every person has committed and will use that on judgment day to inflict proper punishment for each and every wrong?

How to we reconcile this passage of love keeps no record of wrongs with the passages in Scripture that talk about record books and judgment?

What law lens do you look through? What is actually kept or recorded in the record books?

If we use the human law lie—then what is recorded is deeds, acts, behaviors, which contradicts 1Cor 13—because love doesn't keep such records.

If we use design law we realize that individualities are stored, recorded in the record books thus if people retain in their hearts evil, selfishness, deceitfulness, etc. the record of sin is not a wrong done to God or others that God retains in some legal book, but an actual attribute, state of being retained in the heart/mind/character of the one who refuses God's healing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Thank you to all of our supporters!!! We appreciate your prayers and financial support.

To let you know what is IN THE WORKS in addition to our weekly class:

- Audio version of the Remedy is in production, we have them recorded and now doing final editing
- A weekly 15-minute radio show/podcast started in April

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!! January 17-19, 2020, in Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport) we will have a Come and Reason Ministries: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course.

Go to events.comeandreason.com for more

The event is structured to have short 15-30 minute presentations followed by 15 minute round table discussions. Some of the talks include:

- In the Beginning—An Accurate Diagnosis: God’s Design and What Went Wrong
- The Impact of Sin—Fear, Shame, and Isolation
- God’s Law & Government vs. Human Law & Government
- Explaining the Old Testament Through Design Law
- What Jesus Accomplished at the Cross
- Atonement—The Reality and Satan’s Mass Fraud
- Handling the Critic
- The Truth About Hell
- The Judgment
- The Final Message—Preparing People to Meet Jesus
- Effective Public-Speaking Techniques

Some of the goals include:

- Understand, apply, and be equipped to effectively communicate the core differences between God’s kingdom (“design law”) and the kingdoms of the world (“imposed law”)
- Apply design law, the 7 levels of moral development and the great controversy lens to interpreting the Bible and God’s actions through human history
- Effectively explain difficult Bible passages that are used by some to make God appear to be the source of punishment and inflicted pain for sin
- Increase your understanding of the laws upon which God constructed reality to operate and equip you with the ability to expose distortions and misunderstandings that have crept into Christianity
- Improve your ability to effectively communicate truth and draw discussions to decision points

May 10,11, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Barrie SDA Church, 140 Mapleton Ave Barrie, ON L4N 9N7 Canada

May 18, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be a speaker at the Love and Transformation Institute: The Epidemic Rise of Anxiety, Depression and Suicide at the Phoenix Seminary, in Scottsdale, AZ.

June 8, 2019: Dr. Jennings will present The Aging Brain Seminar at Mid Columbia Medical Center, in The Dalles, OR.

June 28, 29, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Windsor SDA church in Windsor, Ontario Canada

July 10, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the 3rd Global Health Conference, sponsored by the General Conference of SDA and held at Loma Linda University.



July 19,20, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Living Truth SDA Church in London, Ontario Canada.

September 13,14, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Gentlebrook Intermediary Care Facility, Hartville, OH.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

November 15, 16, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the SDA Health Worker's Association meeting in Oslo Norway.

2019 Q2 Family Seasons - Lesson 8

Season of Parenting

Lori Atkins

SABBATH

How many parents do we have here in class this morning? Well, I know there is nothing you parents love more than getting advice and guidance from folks who are NOT parents...right? Please just know that I am super sensitive to that fact, and will be deferring frequently today to all you parents out there for the real, real deal.

In Bible times, and historically...babies and children have been kind of a big thing...and were associated with wealth and power and royalty, and even being blessed by God. Many of these women pled..poured out their hearts to God begging for a child - remember Hannah weeping before the tabernacle or Rachel thinking of death as a preferred alternative to barrenness. We talked a little about these miracle birth stories last week, and about how the stories chosen to be recorded in the Bible serve as a historical record for sure, but can also serve to reveal a larger realities or as object lessons. There are 7 examples of barren women who were healed and gave birth and each one of those children are all types of Christ. So...real people, real history, but their stories also serve as object lessons of Christ:

1. Sarah – Isaac – Mount Moriah symbolic of Jesus to be sacrificed
2. Rebekah – Jacob – who became Israel the father of the nation built upon twelve sons, Jesus the cornerstone of the church built upon twelve apostles
3. Rachel – Joseph – who sold into slavery, became ruler to free the people; Jesus went into the slavery of sin in order to free us from it\
4. Monoah's wife – Samson – blessed with strength to deliver Israel from bondage of oppressors and rule over them, Jesus has the strength to deliver us from sin and rule the universe
5. Hannah – Samuel – who became High Priest, Jesus is our High Priest
6. Shunammite woman – child died and resurrected, of course Jesus died and rose again
7. Elizabeth – John the Baptist – who was greatest of the prophets, and Jesus was the greatest of all prophets

Did God miraculously get these barren women pregnant? No, the miracle performed was one of physical healing, like healing blindness, or deafness, but in these cases God healed or restored their ability to reproduce. The women still had natural relations with their husbands that got them pregnant - God did not get them pregnant. Mary was different. In her case no miracle was performed to heal a physical defect or malady that prevented her from conceiving. In her case, God did instill a pregnancy in her, a true miracle birth.

Do you find it odd – that God chose Abraham to be the family through which the Messiah would come, and the first three generations – Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel are all barren, and all require a miracle healing to conceive?

What are the odds...random chance? Or is there a great controversy going on?

Was Satan afoot trying to obstruct God's plan by causing health problems?

We don't have any inspired word that this is what happened, but does it make you wonder?

So Biblically and historically - babies and children super important...what about now, say in this country...what do you think?

Seems like not nearly as much. A 2018 study from the CDC, the birth rate fell for nearly every group of women of reproductive age in the U.S. in 2017, reflecting a sharp drop that saw the fewest newborns since 1987. The general fertility rate sank to a record low of 60.2 births per 1,000 women between the ages of 15 and 44 — a 3 percent drop from 2016. The results put the U.S. further away from a viable replacement rate, which is the standard for a generation being able to replicate its numbers. Women between the ages of 40 and 44 were the only age group to see a higher birth rate in 2017...up 2% from 2016. Indeed, more and more women are choosing to delay marriage and children. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the average age for a woman's first marriage is now over 27—the highest it's been since the agency began keeping track. A 2018 poll from Morning Consult and the New York Times found that most Americans planned to have fewer children than their parents. Almost a quarter of the respondents without kids said they didn't want any, and another 34 percent still weren't sure.

What are some factors that might be contributing to these changing stats and trends?

- Economic concerns - recession, stagnant wages, student loan debt, credit card debt, childcare expenses, loss of second income
- Even though a lot of the economic indicators have improved, people are still not feeling super optimistic about the future.
- Increasing rates of infertility - both male and female...we will talk a bit more about this in Sunday's lesson

So why do you think children were part of God's plan?

Was there a purpose for the establishment of the human family?

What was happening in the universe - what was the cosmic context of creation?

Did children serve a purpose other than increasing the population?

What is the minimum number of participants required for perfect, other-centered love?

The minimum number for genuine other-centered love to exist and function is three—not two. In a relationship of two there can be narcissistic reinforcement—I have seen this in marriages where things were fine until the first child was born and the husband becomes jealous and hostile he no longer commands the supreme attention and affection of the wife.



So was the human family designed as an object lesson...was it designed to illustrate a greater truth? A larger reality?

Perhaps provide us with some insight into the unity and intimacy of the trinity...some understanding of the Godhead and how He governs the universe?

Is this why he created us **IN HIS IMAGE** and gave us the very God-like trait of coming together in love and giving of ourselves to create new beings in our image?

EGW saw it this way:

“There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit--those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will cooperate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ. Evangelism, p. 615.

Here's another quote that gives us some inspired insight, talking about A Child's Influence on Enoch—

“After the birth of his first son, Enoch reached a higher experience; he was drawn into a closer relationship with God. He realized more fully his own obligations and responsibility as a son of God. And as he saw the child's love for its father, its simple trust in his protection; as he felt the deep, yearning tenderness of his own heart for that first-born son, he learned a precious lesson of the wonderful love of God to men in the gift of His Son, and the confidence which the children of God may repose in their heavenly Father. – Adventist Home, 160

Can the parents in the room confirm this? Did having children change your perspective or give you some insights into larger realities or cosmic concepts?

Some of you know Stephanie Land, Dr. Jennings' daughter-in-law and the mother of his grandchildren Lennox and Dexter... She was kind enough to share with me some of the material she had prepared, and had this profound insight.

“Parenting is a huge lesson in self-sacrifice and I think that's one of the reasons it's such a gift from God. We see love in a whole new light when it comes to our children, right? Especially when it comes to understanding God in the Old Testament.

Story after story, we see the CHILDREN of Israel rebelling against their Heavenly parent, God. And like any loving parent, God simply wants the BEST for His children. After all, doesn't He know best?

Last summer, my daughter, Lennox, had a very tiny tick imbedded on the side of her neck. An important side note, a few months prior, we found a large, grown tick on her scalp, hidden by her hair. By the time we noticed it, it had dug deep into her scalp and the removal of the tick



caused her pain, as a small chunk of her skin came up with the tick. So, to be fair, Lennox had a reason to fear the pain that removing a tick can sometimes cause. However, Michael and I tried and tried to explain to her that this tick was much smaller, and it wouldn't be painful like before. She didn't believe us. And she wouldn't let us get anywhere near her neck. Several times, Lennox would say ok, that she would let us get the tick, but as soon as our fingers got close to her neck, she'd wince away. She would not stay still enough for us to successfully remove the tick. No matter how much we tried to reason with Lennox, her fear took over. Her fear kept her from trusting us. Her six-year-old mind didn't understand that a tick NEEDED to be removed. She didn't understand that the longer the tick stayed in her skin, the greater the risk of catching a tick-borne disease. She didn't understand, that if she wasn't perfectly still, allowing us to carefully remove the entire tick, the head could get stuck inside and cause a possible infection. She didn't understand the laws governing her health and that her parents were simply trying to bring her back into harmony with those laws of health.

Are you starting to see the correlation between this story and the children of Israel? We spent hours trying to reason with Lennox...trying to get her to cooperate and obey. The fight was exhausting and draining. Lennox's inability to TRUST us was heartbreaking.

When reason didn't work, we threatened. We told her that if we didn't get the tick off, we would have to leave the fun activity we were doing. We tried bribery. We tried a stern tone. None of it worked. We tried to hold her down with force. But her constant flailing around proved to be a challenge also. She cried. I cried. It was an all-around challenging experience. But at the same time, all I could think about was "Is this how God feels when we don't trust Him?" Do we believe that God knows best? Do we understand that God wants us to obey because His laws are the basis for life and He wants to free us from the dangerous, unhealthy oppression of the law of sin and death.

Michael and I knew better than our 6 year old. God knew better than the children of Israel. Michael and I wanted to protect Lennox from possible disease or infection. God wanted to protect the children of Israel from destructive practices that took them farther away from harmony with His design for life. God knows better.

The question is, do we trust Him...or will we allow fear to take over? Fear inhibits our ability to trust. Even though Lennox usually trusts us, her fear of pain completely dominated her ability to trust us in this situation."

Remember last week, we talked about some core principles that result in healthy families...and this one was key: **Willingness to tolerate the pain** that a loved one will experience as they make choices on their own—i.e. not being overly protective or overly rescuing when mistakes are made, or applying appropriate discipline to educate and teach, or offering healing interventions when necessary that might also be painful.

Love will risk being misunderstood, even hated, in order to do what is right.



Healthy parents are willing to allow their children to be mad at them in order to do what is best for the children...and doesn't this basically describe the entire Old Testament? How about it parents...how difficult is it to allow some natural consequences of poor decisions...or to know when and when not to rescue or intervene?

SUNDAY

Childless Parenting

Infertility is more common than most people think, and I'm guessing most of us here knows someone who is or has struggled with infertility.

Today, as many as one in seven couples trying to have a baby will experience infertility. In fact, recent studies show that after a year of trying, 15 percent of couples are unable to conceive a child. And, after two years, 10 percent of couples had still not achieved a successful pregnancy. That's dramatically different than it was 20 or 30 years ago. What's more, infertility is expected to increase in the future. By 2025, almost 10 million couples will encounter problems in having a baby.

What are some possible reasons for this? Well women are waiting later in life to get married and have children, which will inherently result in higher infertility - for couples who are under 30 and generally healthy, 20 to 37 percent are able to conceive in the first three months of trying. After age 30, a woman's chances of getting pregnant start dropping quickly with each year. We have also learned in this class about entropy, and about epigenetics...these are the instructions that sit on top of genes and tell them how they should be expressed...and about the ~1000 or so genetic and epigenetic mutations experienced by each successive generation. Plus, many of our lifestyle choices - growing rates of obesity and environmental pollution are also likely contributing to the growing infertility problems. Some of these effects are particularly concerning because they can accumulate over generations. Normally, acquired traits—like, say, a sperm count lowered by obesity—aren't passed down from father to son...but some chemicals, including phthalates and BPA, can change the way genes are expressed without altering the underlying genetic code, and that change is inheritable. Your father passes along his low sperm count to you, and your sperm count goes even lower after you're exposed to endocrine disruptors. That's part of the reason there's been no leveling off even after 40 years of declining sperm counts—the baseline keeps dropping.

So, over 50% of folks want fewer children than their parents had...25% of those with no children don't want any...34% more weren't sure...increasing infertility rates...all of which has a whole bunch of societal and political and financial ramifications for the future - and all of which is thankfully beyond the scope of this class. But there are a bunch of precious people out there who want nothing more than to be parents and are struggling with infertility, and miscarriages, and shots, and surgeries, and all sorts of heartbreaks and disappointments and emotional roller coasters and my heart goes out to them. The lesson also mentions those amazing folks who choose to adopt children as a way of becoming parents. How many think you have to give birth in order to be a parent?

MONDAY

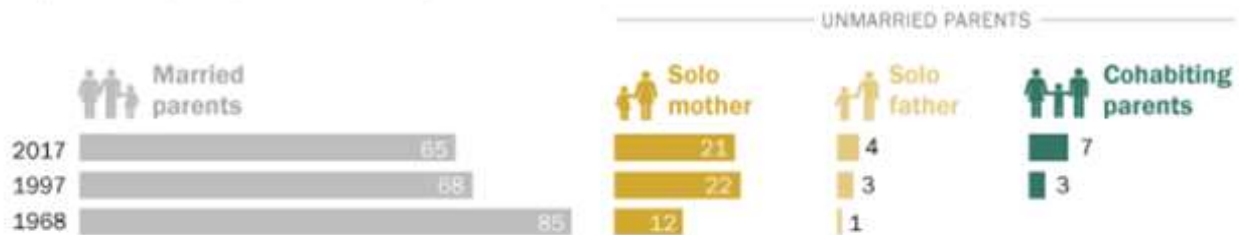
Single Parenting

I have nothing but mad respect for the single parents out there - it has to be one of these most challenging roles to be in, on almost every level - logistically, physically, emotionally, financially, and spiritually.

Current single-parent stats: The share of U.S. children living with an unmarried parent has more than doubled since 1968, jumping from 13% to 32% in 2017. That trend has been accompanied by a drop in the share of children living with two married parents, down from 85% in 1968 to 65%. All told, 24 million U.S. children younger than 18 are living with an unmarried parent. Most (15 million) are living with a solo mother. In comparison, 5 million live with cohabiting parents and 3 million live with a solo father.

About one-in-five children are living with a solo mom

% of children younger than 18 living with ...



Note: Children who are not living with any parents are not shown. Data regarding cohabitation available since 1997 only.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Current Population Survey March Supplement (IPUMS).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

I love the last paragraph in Monday's lesson: "We as a church have the responsibility to help single parents. James wrote, "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble" (James 1:27, NKJV).

One could add, in principle, "and single parents in their trouble, too." The help we can offer does not have to be just financial. We could allow them to have some respite by taking their children for a little while so they can do other chores, rest, pray, and study God's Word. We can serve as mentors to their children or help repair things around the house. We can be God's hands in numerous ways to help support single parents.

Without passing judgment as to how they came to their situation, what specific things can you do to encourage and help single parents?" (I wonder why they included that first phrase?)

I consider this a similar situation to those among us struggling with loneliness and alone-ness - we certainly need to be more aware and sensitive to those needs, but we are also not mind-readers. I find most folks are generous and more than willing to help if they know there is a need, so if you are



struggling please reach out and let someone know that you need help cus lots of us would love the opportunity of giving and helping.

TUESDAY

The Joy and Responsibility of Parenting

The lesson describes the process of making your favorite dish - you follow a recipe, you add all the required ingredients, you follow all the instructions, and most of the time you get the desired results.

Then it says, “parenting is not like cooking”...why?

What are parents and educators responsible for? For their conduct in parenting and educating! Are parents and educators responsible for outcomes?

What is probably the most well-known, popular, commonly used (and perhaps mis-used) Bible text about parenting/child-rearing? Yes...of course, it's Proverbs 22:6 - in traditional translations, it reads: train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Now we have discussed other possible translations and interpretations in this class, but what really surprised me is that the teachers quarterly delved into some of these other options in depth. It says:

“Proverbs 22:6 is a rare verse possessing just the right amount of translational ambiguity and theological consequence to produce either existential hope or psychological trauma—or both. It is an exegetically juicy bit of Old Testament wisdom literature whose potential English translations can be virtual opposites of each other. Studying this verse can serve as a microcosm for the challenge, thrill, and surprise that make deeper Bible study all worth it. No matter how one translates this text, it does not mean that every wayward child is the direct result of bad parenting. So, this verse should be taken as a general principle about how experiences in earlier years can have long-term consequences.”

The Hebrew in this text reads only “according to his way”, but it has traditionally been interpreted as “in the way he should go”. There is also some disagreement on the Hebrew word “na’ar”, which has traditionally been translated as “child”...but may instead refer to an unmarried young adult, which means the text would involve adolescents/teenagers rather than toddlers...and would read “Train an adolescent in his own way, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

The text is now understood as a promise, not that good parenting guarantees good results, but that lax parenting that caters to the teenagers’ undisciplined “way” will have long-term deleterious results.

Which seems like the more accurate in regard to actual outcome promises? The second!

When God raised Lucifer and Adam, there were no mistakes – He did everything perfectly – then if the first translation were true, then God would be responsible for failing to parent Lucifer and Adam correctly, but this is not the case. It is a proverb, telling us that if we fail to do any job, let the child be



in charge of it's rearing, it will grow up self-centered, self-indulged, narcissistic and will not depart from it. However, the traditional interpretation can be used to teach a general principle, that good outcomes are enhanced by good investments, but such good investments do not guarantee good outcomes.

WEDNESDAY

Parenting as Disciple-Making

What does disciple-making mean? What is the definition of disciple?

A disciple is a student, a pupil, a learner...so discipling or disciple-making means to teach, instruct, train, and...from the root word, discipline.

Remember another one of last week's keys to family unity? Freedom—balancing our actions with the principle or law of liberty...not destroying the individuality of children and not dominating or controlling an adult.

Within this principle of freedom, love sets boundaries and limits freedom of those who do not have the ability to understand or the maturity to make decisions for themselves until they are old enough or competent enough or mature enough to be trusted to make their own decisions.

- So, in love, parents will limit the freedoms of children to protect them, but parenting them to the point that one day they are set completely free to govern themselves.
- Such limitations on freedom are not violations of love, but the actions of love to protect those who cannot protect themselves

And this profound quote from last week: **“The training of children must be conducted on a different principle from that which governs the training of irrational animals. The brute has only to be accustomed to submit to its master, but the child must be taught to control himself. The will must be trained to obey the dictates of reason and conscience. A child may be so disciplined as to have, like the beast, no will of its own, his individuality being lost in that of his teacher. Such training is unwise, and its effect disastrous. Children thus educated will be deficient in firmness and decision. They are not taught to act from principle; the reasoning powers are not strengthened by exercise. So far as possible, every child should be trained to self-reliance. By calling into exercise the various faculties, he will learn where he is strongest, and in what he is deficient. A wise instructor will give special attention to the development of the weaker traits, that the child may form a well-balanced, harmonious character.”** {CG 39.2}

Where else in the bible do we read about self control? It is the final fruit of the spirit!

Do we have a very good chance of discipling or teaching our children the fruits of the spirit...without being imbued with them ourselves?



These qualities cannot flow out from us if the Holy Spirit has not filled us with them to begin with! Such a weighty, sobering (and at times terrifying) responsibility for parents...and really nothing should get us on our knees quicker. Based on what we know about the design law of worship - the fact that we become like the God we admire, esteem, worship...and if we are going to be teachers, instructors, disciple-makers...does it matter the kind of God we are worshipping and the kind of God we are becoming like? And if we are making students, learners, and followers of our children...does it matter the kind of God they are being taught to follow?

THURSDAY

Fighting for Your Prodigal Child

My only experience on this topic is from the child's perspective, but I am getting a glimpse of what that fight must have looked like by watching my close friends pray over, and labor for, and burden for their own children.

We meet regularly and pray circles around our children and now grandchildren...but as we've discussed here today, sometimes we don't even know what to pray for. We know God will not violate the law of liberty or their free will...and honestly, we wouldn't want Him to...so we pray for the Holy Spirit to do His work in their lives - convict them of any wrongdoing and destructive behavior...soften their hearts, even if they are questioning and searching and rebelling, keep revealing truth to them, in love...remove the lies and distortions so they can see clearly and make accurate and informed decisions. We pray for their protection - physical, mental, and spiritual - while they are searching and questioning and making those decisions. We pray that substances and destructive behaviors would lose their appeal and become miserable and distasteful.

My other recommendation is to learn how God's law(s) work and how they function in reality. Worship Him who *made* the heavens and the earth - Whose laws are the protocols upon which life and reality operate.

By worshipping a God like this...and thereby becoming like Him - this God is attractive, this God is magnetic, when we lift Him up, He draws all to Himself.

Do. Not. Stop. Praying. And trust God with the outcomes.



2019 Q2 Family Seasons - Lesson 9

Times of Loss

Linda Ojala

SABBATH

Memory Text - "Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ." Philippians 3:8

Listen to what Jesus said to his disciples, "**In this world you will have trouble**, but take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:23

Loss was never God's plan.

- The "circle of life", as we call it, was never the plan.
- Survival of the fittest was never the plan.
- Eve wanted the knowledge of Good and Evil, to be like God.
- She felt like God was holding out on her, keeping something from her, not sharing.
- Now we all have the knowledge of good and evil, much to our dismay, and the dismay of the watching universe.
- Paul said, "For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like those condemned to die in the arena. **We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to human beings.**" 1 Corinthians 4:9

God has lost a great deal, and throughout eternity knew it would happen.

"The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and **HIS HEART WAS FILLED WITH PAIN.**" Genesis 6:5-13

"The Lord said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So, I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey....And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them.'" Exodus 3:7-9

Adam and Eve's many losses: loss of innocence, the tree of life, their perfect garden home, the animals that provided the animal skins they wore, unselfishness (replaced by selfishness, conflict, blame, and a desire for control and supremacy over each other), death of Abel, and finally one of them lost their spouse, then the surviving partner lost his or her own life. **So many losses as a result of one decision.**

And of course, **Jesus coming to earth and offering the ultimate sacrifice of His life.**



Based on my reading and study, my view is:

- Eve took the attitude of God as being harsh, running them out of the garden and away from the tree of life just because of this one little error.
- Then Cain took her attitude and felt like it was such a little thing to do something a little different than what God asked for.
- After all, he was bringing an offering, and the offering was to the correct God.
- But it was an offering of the fruit of his own work.
- He was not going to humble himself to ask his younger brother Abel for a lamb from the herd that his brother tended.
- He missed the whole point of the offering – pointing to salvation through the sacrificial Lamb of God.
- Sadly, though Ellen White talks about seeing Adam in heaven (The Great Controversy, Pages 647, 648) she does not mention seeing Eve.
- Adam was not deceived by Satan or his wife.
- He put his love for his wife above his love for God, thinking he couldn't live without her.
- He didn't think that if God gave him Eve, he could certainly give him another companion.
- So, after all is said and done, he might spend eternity without her anyway.

Some believe that one of the changes that occurred after Adam and Eve's fall was that instead of having open honesty, it was **the birth of what we call the subconscious.**

- We not only hid from God, we hid from ourselves.
- Peter thought he knew himself when he said he would never betray Jesus, but he didn't know.

Can you imagine what eternal life will be like without loss?

- It's all we've ever known – fear of loss or actual loss.
- On this earth, I'm more surprised when things go well, rather than when things go badly.
- But in the new world, consider a world where **everyone you meet would care more about your well-being than their own.**
- **No need to fear anything or anyone.**
- **Now think about the greatest loss of all – loss of eternal life** in that environment.

The challenge to faith in God is often due to loss, and Satan loves to push this button!

- IF God is in control, what kind of God would allow this kind of world?
- **God could have practiced “selective breeding” like the Nazi's were attempting.** He could just have not created any being that he knew would make bad choices. What's wrong with that? No one else would know.
- **But God would know...His character is based on love and freedom.** Creating a free universe means his creations would have to be free to choose...even wrongly. Even if it hurt him deeply and cost Him dearly.
- **Satan had made serious accusations about the character of God, and God allowed him to demonstrate the results of Satan's leadership.**



- **If God had destroyed Satan, a being who stood next to God, the universe of intelligent beings would have misunderstood God's character, and developed fear of Him.**
- **Habakkuk asked this question: "Why do you tolerate wrong?"** Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds. Therefore then law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted." Habakkuk 1:3,4
- **"You came out to deliver your people, to save you anointed one. You crushed the leader of the land of wickedness, you stripped him from head to foot. With his own spear you pierced his head when his warriors stormed out to scatter us, gloating as though about to devour the wretched who were in hiding.... Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights." Habakkuk 3:13-19.**

We say, "God is in control", but this is what the Bible says:

1 John 5:19 – **"We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.** We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true – even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life."

We should be asking "what is God in control of?"

- He is in control of himself and how he deals with our dying planet and the beings he created
- He gives us freedom to use the gifts/attributes he gave us.
- He doesn't decide for us how we are going to use those gifts.
- We see Jesus as the parent, choosing to die instead of us.

Nicole Nordeman has written and performed a beautiful song about this called, "Gratitude", which you can find and listen to online. I highly recommend listening and thinking about the lyrics.

- It made me look at things differently; it helped me to see why we should be grateful in all things
- That even if we don't get things we ask for immediately, we can be grateful that God uses the tough times to teach us extremely important lessons in how to trust in God.
- **Learning to trust God supremely is one of the most important lessons to learn, and it can only be done by experience with Him.**

SUNDAY

Loss of health

We are thousands of years from the tree of life; and we all feel it, too, especially when it comes to our physical health, unless we are killed by trauma first.



- We may be born with illness or genetic issues, or gradually develop them over time as we age.
- We feel the helplessness of loss.

How many parents have, especially as they have dealt with an ill child, wished they were sick instead of the child? What do each of these cases have in common?

Matthew 15:22-28 – Canaanite Woman begging for Jesus to cast out the demon in her daughter that was causing her to suffer terribly. Jesus said, “It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs.” She said, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table. Jesus said, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Mark 5:22-24, 35-43 – Synagog ruler, Jairus, fell at his feet pleading earnestly for the healing of his dying daughter. Jesus said, “The child is not dead but asleep.” and raised her back to life

Luke 4:38,39 – Simon(Peter)'s mother-in-law had a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her.

John 4:46-54 – Royal officer came to Jesus and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death. Jesus told those listening, “Unless you see miraculous signs and wonders, you will never believe.” The officer again asked him to “come down before my child dies,” Jesus replied, “you may go. Your son will live. The man took Jesus at his word, and found that his son got better at the very time Jesus spoke those words, so he and all his family believed.

In each case it was a family member asking for Jesus' intervention to prevent sickness, dying or raising from death.

How do we react when we or our loved ones are sick or dying? Shock, anger, despair, shouting or acting out?

We may feeling like saying, as David did, “My God, my God, why have you deserted me? Why are you so far away? Won't you listen to my groans and come to my rescue? Psalm 22:1

- David took his questions, anger and pain directly to God; he sang and wrote about it.
- While Job endured unspeakable pain, he experienced a deeper intimacy with God. He said, “I heard about you from other; now I have seen you with my own eyes.” Job 42:5
- Paul had some type of chronic illness, and how he dealt with it tells us that suffering can equip us to comfort others, it can give us compassion for others who are hurting, and it can enable to minister more effectively, if we don't allow it to break us. 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

Job complained to God about his loss of everything and terrible case of head to toe boils.



- Interestingly, when he finally got to talk with God, notice that **God never told him why this had happened to him.**
- He didn't accuse Satan or gives Job a reason, like "you were being tested".
- **He told Job about His amazing creation.**
- **If God could do all that, Job could trust Him to have Job's best interest at heart.**
- My experience in explaining to my young children that I was going to get a divorce: I didn't want their relationship with their father to be harmed, so I just told them, "You know me. You know how hard I work, how I try to fix things and solve problems, and finish what I start. **Just trust me that if there was any other way to solve this, I would do it.**"

We can't see God and perhaps don't hear Him either, but Christ's representatives can be seen, heard, hugged and cried with.

God would like our help with this, rather than living life selfishly, doing what pleases us and is fun and entertaining.

MONDAY

Loss of trust

Who hasn't been the victim of someone's betrayal of trust? Betrayal by a family member is even worse.

- "Faithful are the wounds of a friend. Profuse are the kisses of an enemy." Proverbs 27:6
- Put another way, **An enemy stabs you in the back; a friend stabs you in the front.**
- Forgiveness is the oil of friendship.

"If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God....But I call to God and the Lord saves me. Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice. He ransoms me unharmed from the battle waged against me, even though many oppose me. God who is enthroned forever, will hear them and afflict them – men who never change their ways and have no fear of God. My companion attacks his friends, he violates his covenant. His speech is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart; his swords are more soothing than oil, yet they are drawn swords. Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall." Psalm 55:12-14, 16-22.

We have to decide if we should leave the relationship or attempt to repair and rebuild the relationship. It is a very individual thing, and this idea should prevent us from judging others.

How can both trust and the relationship be healed and saved?



Matthew 6:14,15 – after teaching his disciples 'The Lord's Prayer', Jesus said, “**For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.** But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

James 5:16 – Jesus' brother James said, “Therefore **confess your sins to each other and pray for each other** so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

1 Peter 5:6,7 – Jesus' disciple Peter said, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. **Cast all your anxiety of him because he cares for you.**”

1 John 4:18 - Jesus' disciple John said, “**There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment.** The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”

My Grami's story of rearing nine children through the depression, having less than an eight grade education, with a husband who only came back home long enough to sire another child, then off to the gold mines he would go.

- He did not provide for his family, but left my grandmother with tremendous debt. But she paid off every penny.
- She learned to trust completely in God, and guess what? God fulfilled His promises to be “your true husband” and “a father to the fatherless.”
- God performed many outright miracles that enabled her to keep the children fed, clothed, educated, healthy and together throughout their entire childhood and into adulthood.
- Ultimately, my grandfather was gone for ten years, after which he came back to Grami, was rebaptized and Grami forgave him. They remained married until the day he died.
- My mother felt she couldn't forgive him, though, because of how he had treated her mother.
- Ultimately, Grami taught my mother to forgive him, and pointed to preparation for the unselfish life of love in heaven as the thing we should be pursuing now on earth.

Rebuilding broken trust is a **journey** that begins with a sincere acknowledgment of the hurt and confession of the truth, whatever the offense and whoever the offender.

- When adultery has been the cause of the breach, healing begins when the betrayer confesses, with complete openness. There can remain nothing hidden, or else, when it is found out (and it will be found out), it will destroy the trust that was reestablished.
- The second time trust is breached, it becomes even harder to heal.
- Healing may feel like it comes in a one step forward – two steps back process, but many have been able to rebuild their broken relationship and developed a deeper, more intimate, more satisfying, and happier marriage.

That said, we can't always heal a relationship or trust, as much as we might wish it.



- I was unable to repair my first marriage, which ended in divorce after eighteen years.
- It took a very long time to recover from that.

TUESDAY

Loss of trust, continued

Research reveals that the home is the single most violent place in society, including Christian homes.

- Violence is an assault of any kind – verbal, physical, emotional, sexual, or active or passive neglect that is committed by one or more persons against another in the family.
- Abusive behavior is the conscious choice of a person to exercise power and control over another. Victims are not responsible for causing the abuser to abuse.
- Abusers distort and pervert love, for “love does no harm.” Romans 13:10
- **Genesis 37:17-28 – Joseph's brothers plotting to kill him**, but sold him into slavery instead.
- **2 Samuel 13:1-22 – Absalom's gorgeous sister Tamar raped** by her half brother Amnon
- **2 Kings 16:3; 17:17; 21:6 – Kings of Judah Ahaz and Manasseh sacrificed their children in the fire** to the gods.
- We watch it in the news and are horrified, but we only see the tip of the iceberg.
- ***“For Children who are broken...,”*** a small Berkley Books, New York published book. It consists of a poem written by Elia Wise during her therapy as part of her recovery from childhood abuse.

Many times the abused turn into the abuser, if not healed. They are like a raging fire inside, and anyone who gets close to that person for any reason will get “burned.”

- I believe I was shown a very healing way of praying, while in prayer after being raped, but would also be helpful for any type of sexual abuse:
- **That since he made you one with him against your consent, that gives you the ability to pray for him as if he were you.** Things he would not pray for himself.
- **In prayer, I envision myself walking through his mind**, opening doors, turning on the lights, and inviting the Holy Spirit to enter the rooms, to clean out the mess, to show the person who he really is and to give him the insight and courage to turn to God for help and recovery.
- I leave the results to God, but it gave me a sense of power. Power for good, and it was a big part of my recovery.

Would you choose to be the abused or the abuser?

- If you really think about it, **most people would choose to be abused, rather than switch places with and become the abuser.**
- **We inately feel that something is very wrong with the abuser;** but the victim of abuse is being preyed upon, they are not harming someone.
- Professional treatment can facilitate change in an abuser's behavior but only if the person takes responsibility for the behavior and seeks such help.



- To those who will open themselves to His presence, God is able to do exceedingly abundantly to help abusers stop abusing, to repent of their attitudes and behavior, to make restitution in every way possible, and to embrace the quality of agape love to heal their own hearts and to love others.

Question from the lesson: Why is it important to provide safety and caring acceptance rather than offering advice about how to live better with the abuser?

WEDNESDAY

Loss of freedom

Addictions – Drugs, alcohol, tobacco, gambling, pornography, sex, food, workaholism, extensive online use and gaming or reading unhealthy material.

- Addicted is when you are unable to stop even when you know that it is harming you.
- “They promise freedom to everyone. But they are merely slaves of filthy living, because people are slaves of whatever controls them.” 2 Peter 2:19
- You become a slave to whatever you are addicted to, and by so doing, you lose your freedom and often harm your family.
- Many people claim that Christianity is merely a crutch, but I have experienced that it is the strength to take the bullets of life and heal from them, so you don't pass them on to others.

Psalm 107 – Shows 4 ways we go wrong, and the 4 unique answers God immediately provides when we ask. Every one of these solutions is illustrated in the New Testament by Jesus:

Type one: ignorant

- Some wondered in desert wastelands, finding no way to a city where they could settle. They were hungry and thirsty....Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them from their distress.
- **He led them by a straight way to a city where they could settle....he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.**

Type two: addicted/obsessed

- Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains, for they had rebelled against the words of God...so he subjected them to bitter labor [consequences]; they stumbled, and there was no one to help. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.
- **He brought them out of darkness and the deepest gloom and broke away their chains...he breaks down gates of bronze and cuts through bars of iron.**



Type three: rebels

- Some became fools through their rebellious ways, and suffered affliction because of their iniquities...they drew near the gates of death. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.
- **He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave.**

Type four: busy, busy, busy, imbalanced

- Others went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. They saw the works of the Lord. His wonderful deeds in the deep,. For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths...they were at their wits end. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress.
- **He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desire haven.**
- **(NOTE: this is the only group that acknowledges God, and have a “desired” haven).**

My experience with needing to get out of an unhealthy dating relationship. At one point, I was dating a man who wasn't a Christian, and I could feel the relationship pulling me away from God. I prayed that God would not pay attention to the decisions I was making, that my deepest wish was that He never let me go, no matter what. Within 2 weeks of that prayer, I felt strong enough to end that relationship, which opened the way for God to bring a wonderful Christian man into my life. In many ways, we are all like the demoniac on the beach, who could only “show up” in front of Jesus, and hope that Jesus could read the desires of his heart. And Jesus freed him.

If you let demons in, they will trap you:

- Demon possessed man on the beach – so trapped all he could do was get in front of Jesus and hope Jesus could read the desire of what was left of his heart. When he begged to go with Jesus, Jesus told him to return home and tell how much God has done for you. Luke 8:26-39
- **Let the Lord Jesus Christ be as near to you as the clothes you wear.** Then you won't try to satisfy your selfish desires.” Romans 13:14
- **Nature hates a void.** You can't leave bad without reaching toward the good.
- **Once demons are cast out, they will return** with others if your heart is not filled with God's goodness and protection, and you will be worse off than you were. Luke 11:24-26
- **Mary Magdalene had 7 demons cast out.** There is a reason we need to do an about face on the direction we are going, and keep our hearts always connected to God. Luke 8:2

Elizabeth Ann Smart – Kidnapped and kept by a man and his wife for 9 months, all the while sexually abusing her.

- When she was rescued, her mother gave her advice that she said has helped her in her recovery.
- She said that **the best revenge is a life well lived.**
- They may have taken 9 months from her, but **holding onto that would only allow him to control more of her life.**
- He and his wife were convicted and sent to prison.



- Elizabeth went on to marry and have children, and now gives talks to others about how she survived and now thrives following this unthinkable experience.

Things that people can do that have helped us in our tough times:

- Keep our confidence
- Weep with those who weep
- Understand when we don't have energy to do "friend things"
- Hug and listen
- Be a true friend – example of one of my true friends. I told her I was too busy to get with her to do an activity because I had a bunch of work to catch up on, I had company coming and the house needed cleaning and food needed preparing. I was at my wits' end. Without me asking, she came over, cleaned my whole house and brought food for my company.
- Give no advice, unless sincerely asked – my grandmother said she had given up giving advice, because the wise don't need it and fools won't heed it.

THURSDAY

Loss of life

My story – within the last 1 ½ years, my only sibling who was younger than me, my father, his brother, who was one of my favorite uncles, and a dear friend all died.

I thought I could be strong through this process, but it has thrown me for a loop. You have the medical issues prior to death, then the death, then the financial issues to deal with after death.

Isaiah 57:1,2 has brought a lot of comfort to me during this time,

“The righteous perish, and no one ponders it in his heart; devout men are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil. Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death.”

Daniel, a person extremely close to God, was told by a heavenly being what would happen to him at death,

“As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance.” Daniel 12:13

As a nurse, I have experienced that there are things far worse than death.

- Long, drawn out painful periods of disease and disability, loss of the mind, rejection by friends and family, and loss of support.
- I have been asked to help patients die sooner, because they are so miserable with nothing but seemingly endless days of pain with no hope for recovery.



- Sometimes I think we have gotten too big for our medical britches. Just because we CAN do something, does that mean we should?
- I have felt that we are often kinder to our pets then we are to our loved ones and patients.
- Hospice did a survey that showed it was a faster, easier death for someone terminal if when they couldn't eat, they weren't forced fed or given water. Very quickly, the minerals in our bodies would go haywire and cause the person to become sleepy and confused.
- However, if we step in and give them food and IV fluids, etc. they often remain wide awake and conscious throughout most of the now drawn out process of dying.

I have a cousin who, because of heart birth defects, has died and been resuscitated multiple times. She assures me that dying is easy. It is living that is hard.

The prospect of dying being easy seems to give those living in pain the idea that committing suicide is the answer to living a pain-filled life.

I have at times been in so much psychological pain that those thoughts came to me. **The only things that stopped me was the knowledge that it would break my family's hearts, and my intense curiosity about what might happen the next day after I killed myself.**

I thought that with my luck, the best thing ever would have happened on the next day. So I pushed on, got help, and am so very glad I did.

When we are in such despair, we often have such a narrow view. A careful choice of a friend, pastor or counselor to share with can give you insights you wouldn't have thought of yourself. They might even have been through something very similar to what you are going through. They can be the light at the end of your tunnel, then in the future, you have insight as to how to be the light at the end of someone else's tunnel.

A woman came onto Dr. Phil's show. Her plan was to talk about the death of her teenaged daughter and how it so greatly affected her, how she couldn't move on. Then she planned to go home and kill herself, and be done with it. She later came on to Dr. Phil's follow up show, revealed what her plan had been and how Dr. Phil's counsel had affected a complete change in her outlook. He had asked her to answer some questions: Did she have a good relationship with her daughter? **Yes.** Did she have good memories of the seventeen years of her daughter's life? **Yes.** Would her daughter want her to focus on the one day of her death, or on the entire life of great memories? **Her life of good memories.** Will you do what your daughter would have wanted you to do? **Yes.**

Paradigm change saved this mother's life!

Normal responses to grief include: shock, denial, despair, depression, anger, guilt, regret, sadness, and anxiety. The goal of grieving is not to eliminate all your pain or the memories of your loss. It is to process the loss, to put things into perspective. In the final stage of recovery, you begin to have a renewed interest in daily activities and to function normally from day to day.



My whole life has changed for the better. And best of all, God keeps finding ways of making my life useful, so that no matter what age I am when I die, I will have spent it bringing God's goodness into this dark world.

After you die, it will be a blink of time.

- Like when you go to sleep at night, and wake up each morning. You have no idea how long you were asleep until you look at your clock and calendar.
- It could be 5 minutes or a thousand years.
- The last thing my sister said on the day she died was, “when I open my eyes, I will see Jesus.”
- For her, the spiritual war and the battle is over. She can rest.

It is we who remain behind that are left with that hole in our lives.

- **Romans 8:31-39** – If God is for us, who can be against us.
- **1 Corinthians 15:52-57** – We shall not all sleep, but **we will all be changed.**
- **Revelation 21:4** – **He will wipe away all tears, there will be no more death, mourning, crying or pain.** The old order of things has passed away.
- **“The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”** 1 Corinthians 15:26.

FRIDAY

Further thought

When I have advocated to my patients, friends and family to seek professional counseling, I am often met with the response, “I am not crazy!” My response is:

- **Everything we know we learned from others.**
- We developed “**cards to play**” in the the game of life – actions we saw others use, we read about or tried out.
- We might have been using those same cards fairly successfully throughout our whole lives until something dire happens.... our cards don't work! We use the cards even more fervently...still no help!
- Professional counselors have gone to school many years to learn other cards to play in dealing with the tough things of life, both inside ourselves and outside.
- Going to a counselor can give you some additional cards in your hand, cards that really work, that solve difficult problems, etc.
- Most people will then say to me, “Well, that would probably help, I could do that.
- And they often allow me to assist them to find help to add to their hand of cards.

The well known Psalm 23:

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear



no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

One day I noticed that the “person” of this psalm changed from the third person “he” to first person “You.” I asked, where had things gotten personal and intimate with God? The answer, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for YOU are with me....”

“Two men looked from prison bars; one saw the mud, the other saw stars.” Dale Carnegie.

My lifelong pen pal and now Face book friend does not believe in going to the doctor. She believes that if God wants you to be healed, He will heal you. That didn't stop her from calling and asking my opinions and recommendations when she was faced with various medical problems through the years. When we finally met face to face years later, I told her that I believe that God often uses people to help him heal others. Why? Because just like being God's disciples and part of spiritual healing of others, it is good for us to be part of the physical healing of others. He gives us intelligence and insight into how the body works, what makes it sick, what remedies the sickness.

Why would He not want us to join Him in healing others?

Forgiveness – It releases you from the control of the one who wronged you, sets you free. It doesn't excuse, doesn't forget, doesn't prevent consequences or punishment. It set YOU FREE!

- **Eva Moses Kor's story – an identical twin experimented on by Dr. Mengela in the concentration camp**, first trying to locate and take vengeance on those who tortured her and the other children, then finally her progression to forgiveness.
- What a relief it has been to her – so healing!
- But many of her fellow holocaust survivors belittled and harrassed her for forgiving.
- Her own husband was one of those who felt that to forgive was to allow those wicked people to get a “free pass”.

There comes a point in your life, when you realize that **turning the page is the best feeling in the world**, because there is so much more to the book than the page you were stuck on.

There are many who regret their bad behavior and examples to friends, family and children, whose hearts are cut to the quick when they see their children following their example, rather than learning from it, but they can take heart that they can also **become an example of recovery**.

What a relief it is to find out that **you are only one tool in God's toolbox. He is infinitely creative in his solutions**. It is not all up to you! **“All we have accomplished, you have done for us.”** Isaiah 26:12



“Praise our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard; he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping. For you, O God, tested us; you refined us like silver. You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs. You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance....Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me. Psalm 66:9-12, 16.

My daughter sent this as a text to me not long ago:

“There was once a group of women studying the book of Malachi in the Old Testament. As they were studying chapter three, they came across verse three, which says: **'He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.'** This verse puzzled the women, and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out about the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible study.

That week this woman called up a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver. As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest as to burn away all the impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot – then she thought again about the verse, that 'he sits as a refiner and purifier of silver'. She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined.

The man answered, 'Yes', and explained that he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left even a moment too long in the flames, it would be damaged.

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, **'How do you know when the silver is fully refined?'**

He smiled at her and answered, 'Oh, that's easy. When I see my image in it.'

If today you are feeling the heat of this world's fire, just remember that God the Father has His eyes on you.”

Philippians 4:4-8 - “Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice? Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters, **whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or**



praiseworthy – think about such things.”

Psalm 91:14-16 - “Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.

- He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble.
- I will deliver him and honor him.
- With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.

“Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, 'Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, **he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution HE WILL COME TO SAVE YOU.**'” Isaiah 35:3,4

2019 2Q Family Seasons - Lesson 10

Little Times of Trouble

by Tim Jennings

I received the following email after my trip to Barrie Ontario:

Hello,

I just finished attending Dr. Jennings presentations at the Barrie church this weekend. I wanted to thank him for coming and am very appreciative that his schedule is posted on the website! I'm not local to Barrie and just stumbled across the info that he would be visiting. I've been following the podcast for years and it was great to hear the concepts all together and in person.

Thank you also to the Come and Reason class for sharing your teacher, having great alternates that teach when Dr. Jennings is away, and for someone always asking the questions I'm thinking :)

May God continue to bless this ministry.

*Thanks again,
Kelleigh*

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "The writer of Proverbs..." Do we agree with the goal of trying to stop an argument or disagreement before it escalates? The old Barney Fife rule—"Nip it in the bud, nip it, nip it, nip it..."

The lesson points us to Romans 14:19 as giving us the tools to do this, which reads:

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. (NIV84)

What does this mean and how does it help prevent conflict?

Can a person take an action that they believe will lead to peace but it actually causes more division?

When Peter initially agreed with the circumcision group from Jerusalem—do you think Peter was trying to create more conflict or avoid it? But, if Paul didn't correct Peter would Peter's action have led to more peace or greater division? Why?

What is the reason that an action, taken with the best intentions, could cause more division?

If it is out of harmony with reality—i.e. breaks design law, such as perpetuating a falsehood.

Could this issue be involved in the divisions in the church over women's ordination—could people be motivated to bring peace, to avoid conflict, but take positions that actually cause more division?

What principles incite greater division?

Why was it wrong for Peter to side with the circumcision group—was it only because they clung to a symbolic ritual as having some actual value, or was there another reason? Did the circumcision group, in addition to the error on the importance of circumcision, have a deeper error in the way they operated—namely the method they wanted to employ to advance their view?

What method did the circumcision group want to employ? Ostracization and coercion. What is the method of God? Truth, presented in love, leaving others free.

What happens when we try and coerce others? It is a violation of the Law of Liberty and always damages love and **incites** rebellion.

In the current debate over women's ordination, what methods are being used by the two sides?

Is one group advocating for liberty, for freedom, for allowing the various conferences and unions to have the freedom to decide what works best in their churches but never force anyone to ordain women? Is the other side using the methods of freedom or are they working to coerce, enforce, and dictate to others on this subject?

So, when we consider doing what leads to peace, can we expect peace while violating God's design law, such as the law of liberty?

This is why the SDA church was set up with local control, to protect against central authority dictating rules, to protect the principle of freedom.

Romans 14:19 from *The Remedy*:

Let us therefore consider the wellbeing of others, and do whatever we can to assist in their healing and to promote peace with each other.

Does this make it any clearer? When you consider the wellbeing of others, one needs to understand design law, what actually brings health and healing to the entire person, mind, body, spirit.

MONDAY

Back in Lesson 7 on Sunday, they quoted a section from *The Adventist Home* page 179, I am expanding the quote just a little more to what they referenced:

The cause of division and discord in families and in the church is separation from Christ. To come near to Christ is to come near to one another. The secret of true unity in the church and in the family is not diplomacy, not management, not a superhuman effort to overcome difficulties--though there will be much of this to do--but union with Christ. {AH 179.1}

Picture a large circle, from the edge of which are many lines all running to the center. The nearer these lines approach the center, the nearer they are to one another... {AH 179.2}

The closer we come to Christ, the nearer we shall be to one another.{AH 179.3}

Do you see the key in finding unity? It is **not** by focusing on our differences; it is **not** by focusing on our similarities; it is **not** by focusing on doctrinal conformity or a list of right rules; it is **not** by focusing on proper government or legislation; it is **not** by focusing on human rights; **it is by focusing on Jesus**—this is the key!

Satan knows that if we focus on Jesus, make Him the center of our hearts, lives, desires, longings, and intentions then we will be transformed and we will come into unity of heart with others. This is a function of the Law of Worship—a design law—the Bible describes as “by beholding we become changed.” So, Satan wants to take our minds off Jesus—how?

- By substituting a false Jesus for the true Jesus—getting us to conceive of Jesus and God as beings who impose laws and then inflict penalties—this is modern Baal worship, of which the Bible warns. Thus, many will come to Jesus in the end and claim to be His followers but Jesus said He never knew them.
- Business of life’s responsibilities (paying bills, schoolwork, jobs, kids, chores)



- Business in good activities, ministries, serving others to the point that we don't have time for God, rest, or our own health
- Entertainment (games, internet, TV, books)
- Drugs and alcohol
- Unhealthy relationships
- Focusing on sin, the fear of committing it and the obsession with avoiding it, so one formulates long lists of right rules and lives in fear of breaking them. In other words, we are not focusing on Jesus but ourselves.
- Focusing on doctrinal correctness i.e. a form of Gnosticism of studying to get all the facts, doctrines or rules right but not focusing on Jesus
- Religiosity focusing on performing all the right rituals or being very religious in our lifestyle
- Traumas, diseases, losses, suffering, pain, illness, cruelty, unfairness which can cause doubt and rejection of God
- False philosophies that replace God with either false gods or no God
- others?

We must learn how to keep our minds and hearts fixed on Christ.

The lesson points out that we must learn to forgive—what prevents people from forgiving others?

Seven Myths of forgiveness:

- Forgiveness means restored trust
- Forgiveness comes after the offender says they are sorry
- Forgiveness equals salvation—this is the false legal idea that the problem of sin is a legal problem and we need legal forgiveness or pardon.
 - Recently, I had someone say to me, forgiveness costs something to the one who forgives. A price must be paid to forgive. If I stole a million dollars from God and I couldn't repay Him, and God forgave me, that would cost God a million dollars. What is the problem with this idea and analogy?
 - It is based on imposed law—a million dollars is an arbitrary construct—it has no real value and is nothing to God. So this analogy traps us in an imposed law worldview.
 - Let's use a design law analogy to get at the truth:
 - If your child disobeyed your instructions not to mess with the various chemicals in the garage, but drank antifreeze and was dying from renal failure, would something need to be done in order to get you to forgive your child? Or would you instantly forgive them?
 - Would your forgiveness save them?
 - What else is needed in order to save them? A remedy.



- If you donated a kidney to save them, would that cost you something? Is the cost or price necessary in order to forgive or to save?
 - It did not cost God something to forgive us; it cost Him something to heal and save us.
 - And if you didn't give a kidney to save your child, would it cost you?
 - Would it have cost God to not send Jesus? "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."
 - The reality is that once Adam sinned it was going to cost God something—but the cost was not to forgive, it was to save.
 - Now, this is the way we use and understand the concept of forgiveness today. However, some in the past have used the concept of forgiveness to mean the entire process of reconciliation—the offended forgiving, the offender repenting and being changed and the relationship being healed. In that context, we could not be forgiven (reconciled to God) without the death of Christ. But that is not how the term forgiveness is used by people today.
- Forgiving someone means what they did was okay
 - Forgiveness leads to greater vulnerability
 - Forgiveness means forgetting
 - Forgiveness means the offender gets away with it

Read last paragraph, "You must accept..." Hmmm... what do you think of this idea of accepting your spouse's faults?

Doesn't it depend on what we mean?

Is there a difference between making mistakes and choosing evil?

Yes, there is a difference from make a math error in your check registry and accidentally over drafting a check and purposely writing fraudulent checks.

We should accept the human foibles, oversights, forgetfulness, shortcomings, and slips that occur with all people. But we should accept any action or activity that purposely embraces and promotes evil. Why? Because such actions destroy the heart, mind and character of the one we love.

- So we should not accept addictions in our spouse—we should love our spouses with addictions. But if the spouse refuses to address, acknowledge, deal with or in any way seek to overcome i.e. get into recovery, we should not sit quietly by and accept. To do so enables the addict.

- We should not accept infidelity
- We should not accept abuse, mental, physical, emotional, spiritual or sexual
- We should not accept betrayal of trust

What underlying attitude or motive allows one to accept the imperfections of their spouse?

Knowing that each spouse loves the other so much they both want to be perfect for the other and are grieved anytime they come up short.

TUESDAY

The lesson focuses us on our memory verse for the week which is Ephesians 4:26: "Be angry and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath." NKJV

Is it sin to be angry?

The Bible is filled with references to God being angry: "The Lord's anger burns against his people" (Isaiah 5:25 NIV84).

God certainly does not sin and, in fact, is slow to anger: "But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness" (Psalm 86:15 NIV84).

So, there must be some aspect of anger that is not sin. Yet, the Bible also describes anger as cruel and foolish and something to be avoided:

- "Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?" (Psalm 27:4 NIV84).
- "Mockers stir up a city, but wise men turn away anger" (Proverbs 29:8 NIV84).
- "Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools" (Ecclesiastes 7:9 NIV84).

Moreover, the New Testament gives strong injunction that those who are becoming like Jesus are to get rid of all anger:

- "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:31, 32 NIV84).
- "Now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips" (Colossians 3:8 NIV84).

So, how do we make sense of anger? How can we be instructed to get rid of all anger—and that anger is unwise and for the fools—yet God is described as getting angry?

The issue is the motive and the focus of the anger:

- Righteous anger is always motivated by love for people and focuses on destroying the disease of sin in order to heal and save people
- Sinful anger is motivated by selfishness and focuses on punishing, hurting, or destroying people, while perpetuating sin and selfishness

Here is a simple example: Doctors have righteous anger toward pathogens (measles, polio, Ebola) and diseases (cancer, Alzheimer's, multiple sclerosis, etc.). They seek to destroy all disease and pathology to heal and save people. But doctors do not have anger toward sick and dying patients.

Of course, doctors do get angry at activities that spread disease, especially when it is purposely spread—HIV-infected individuals who spread the disease with dirty needles or unprotected sex. But doctors still love the addict or prostitute who is spreading the disease. It's just that, while seeking to cure those currently infected, doctors also want to prevent the spread of the disease to protect all who are not yet infected.

Doctors also offer remedies for HIV and methods to stop its spread, but when a person refuses to take the remedy and to use methods that prevent infecting others, doctors get angry not only at the disease, but they also get angry at the refusal of the person who rejects the treatment. And how much greater the anger when the person who refuses lifesaving treatment is the doctor's own son or daughter?

Why are the doctors angry? Because they love the dying person and know they can save them, if the terminal individual would only let them.

This is righteous anger—never seeking to harm the person, but always motivated by love to heal and save, even when a person refuses healing and chooses paths that destroy themselves and others. This is the anger that God expresses:

As the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice offering healing and restoration, do not reject the true Remedy and darken your minds as you did in the rebellion in the desert, during the opportunity to partake of God's cure, where your fathers broke my heart by trying their own remedies and rejecting the truth which I brought and for forty years patiently tried to heal them. That is why I was so angry with what happened to that generation, and said, 'Their minds continually reject the healing truth, and they refuse to practice my ways of health and live.' So I granted them their persistent choice and said, 'Since they refuse the truth—the Remedy I freely offer—they will never be able to enter my rest and get well'" (Hebrews 3:7–11 *The Remedy*).

Jesus also expressed anger at the hardness of heart that obstructed His healing love, but He still loved those whose hearts were hard:

He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored (Mark 3:5, 6 NIV84).

And what does righteous anger, which is a manifestation of love, do to those who persistently refuse healing? It acts to restrain and to protect until the point that the person is healed or no further intervention will be helpful—and then love let's go, with sadness, and allows the person to reap what they have chosen: pain, suffering, and death. But it never retaliates. Love is angry, because it didn't have to be this way! Righteous anger doesn't act to torture, inflict harm, or cause suffering and torment.

When Israel persistently rejected God and insisted on damaging their hearts, minds, and characters by engaging in idol worship, God—like a loving doctor whose patient refuses rehab and insists on injecting themselves with harmful substances—set them free to reap what they chose. Without God's protecting presence, enemies of all sorts came in and attacked them; they reaped what they had chosen, a life separated from God.

And God was angry, because it didn't have to be that way!

Selfish anger, however, is not motivated by love for others, nor is it angry at the suffering that sin is causing others. Rather, selfish anger is an anger about the wrongs we experience—done to us or to what we value—not for love for others. Examples of this include:

- Anger at not getting our way
- Anger at having our ideas challenged or refuted
- Anger at having our projects and pursuits interfered with
- Anger at having our self-promotion thwarted or name maligned
- Anger at being assaulted, injured, robbed
- Anger at having been embarrassed
- Anger of envy—someone else getting what we have wanted
- Anger of perceived unfairness—someone else having more than we do
- Anger when someone questions our authority, disobeys, or disrespects us
- Anger at having not lived up to the family standard

This type of anger leads to selfish acting out—seeking to take from another, hurt another, make another person pay for the wrong they have done to us, even killing another in order to protect self,

advance self, or promote self. It wants to ensure the wrong is punished, not remedied. This is the anger of sin and selfishness.

So, are we to have peace with everyone? Why or why not?

When are we to CAUSE divisions?

Are we to cause division, separation, segregation from disease, illness, evil, and those who willfully and knowingly spread it or obstinately refuse any interventions to heal and restore?

"Don't think that I have come to make peace with a selfish world. I have not come to bring peace with selfishness, but a sword to cut selfishness out of the hearts of people.³⁵ I have come to cut dysfunctional family ties: to free a son from selfish loyalty to his father's ambitions and feuds, to sever a daughter from the control of an oppressive and manipulative mother, to cut through the fear and hostility a daughter-in-law has toward her mother-in-law.³⁶ A person's worst enemies are often members of their own family. (Matthew 10:34-36 *The Remedy*)

What sword is wielded to cut out selfishness—the sword of truth and love!

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Sometimes unresolved conflict...” Do we agree that all forms of abuse are contrary to God’s kingdom of unselfish love?

Then why is it that abuse rates are no different in Christian homes than non-Christian homes? All of the following are the same:

- Domestic violence rates
 - physical abuse
 - emotional abuse
 - spiritual abuse
 - sexual abuse
- Child abuse rates both physical and sexual

Should people who claim Jesus as their Savior abuse their families less than people who do not?

Why is it then that this is not the case?

Because the true gospel of Jesus Christ has been, to a great degree, replaced with a fraud, a pagan construct that has a form of godliness but no power to transform.

All legal religions, including penal substitution theology, are based on the lie that God's law functions like human law. In this worldview, sin is legal, it is breaking rules, and thus it requires punishment. God, in order to be just must inflict punishment. The solution, in this false worldview, is to get someone to pay the penalty.

It is taught that Jesus came to earth, had all sins placed on Him and punished by the Father and this paid the legal penalty. Now what we need is to accept the legal penalty to get the record of our misdeeds erased from or properly legally accounted for in the heavenly courts. Then we are legally declared to be righteous, even though we are not.

There are other versions of the same basic falsehood: We must confess to a priest, take Eucharist, do penance, and have the priest intercede for us, and pray to Mary and the Saints to get the application of the sacrifice of Jesus to our legal account in heaven so we can get the legal penalty properly punished and our sins legally resolved.

But all of these teachings give people a false solution (false remedy) to a false diagnosis, and thus there is no healing, transformation, or recreation into Christlikeness. People stay selfish in heart and abuse their families.

But worse, studies show that the more religious one is the more likely they are to abuse their families—why? Because of design law—How things actually work in reality. The law of worship—by beholding we become changed. We actually become like the God we admire and worship. So, if we worship an imperial dictator, whose law works like human law, a system of rules that require infliction of punishment. Then the more ardent a follower of such a god the more we become intolerant of rule breakers and seek to impose what we believe to be right upon others—first our families, then our societies.

Conversely, studies show that people who pursue spiritual development, which is the development of internal maturity of character, abuse their families less. Meaning, the more spiritual i.e. mature in character, the less we abuse our families.

We only develop spiritually when we reject the lies about God and return to the truth of His character of love as revealed in Jesus and worship God as Creator, understanding His laws are design laws and that the punishment for sin comes from breaking the law, not from God. We must reject the legal lie which has corrupted so much of Christianity.

Bottom pink section reads, "How unfortunate that some cultures all but condone abuse of women. Why should no Christian ever fall into that kind of behavior, regardless of what their culture allows?"

Are their cultures in the world today that treat women as inferior to men—that don't allow women to be educated, own property, drive or be independent? They subjugate women to little more than property?

What is the cause of this? Do they have some false belief about men and women?

What about a religion that teaches that leaders must not marry and thus must remain celibate and only males can serve as priests?

What about churches that teach only males can be ordained? Do such teachings send messages that women are inferior to men?

Who would you rather have as your pastor, ordained and fully credentialed—Ellen G. White or David Koresh? Too obvious—what about EGW or Ted Wilson? Who do you think is more qualified to lead the church?

If you say EGW, how can it be—she is a female?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “The writer of Hebrews...” Any concerns about the ideas described?

What about this, “Even when we take all the steps necessary, some people who have hurt us will still not listen and change.”

What is wrong with this statement?

They didn't say, “some people who have sinned against us” they said “some people who have hurt us.”

What is wrong with determining whether you have been wronged by whether you were hurt by someone? In other words, taking the position “If you hurt me then you did something wrong” what is wrong with this position?

It could be we experience hurt because we are wrong and the other person was correct! If we merely focus on our hurt feelings we can be deceived. We must instead, when hurt, focus on the truth—why am I hurt, not “hey you hurt me.”

How many times did the religious leaders in Christ's day get upset, offended, or their feelings hurt at something Jesus was saying or doing?

The disciples even tried taking the position of the lesson—to get Jesus to stop and perhaps make amends to the Pharisees:

“Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?” Matthew 15:12 NIV84

One of the problems in society today is the idea that if I get my feelings hurt it is your fault.

The healthy approach is to step back and ask, “What is the truth? Why is this hurtful to me? Is it hurting my pride because I have gone on record with a wrong position? Have I been caught in the act of wrongdoing? Or, is the truth, no, I have done no wrong, the other person is actually sinning against me that is why it hurts?”

So, first assess the underlying reason—if the hurt is because of your own error then address it. If it is because of someone sinning against you, then decide whether there is a redemptive action you can take or not. Jesus remained silent when He was being mistreated abused and crucified, there was no action He could take that was going to stop them.

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “Too often...”

What is the problem? It is inconsistency—the uncertainty of never knowing where the lines are causes terrible anxiety, and further instills distrust in the child, creates the attitude “it doesn’t matter what I do because it is all random, so do whatever I want.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **Audio version of the Remedy is Now available for Streaming:** Download SoundCloud's free mobile app. **You do NOT have to purchase** a subscription! Just search for "Remedy NT" or use this link https://soundcloud.com/the_remedy_nt/albums and you will find and stream it at no cost. Just click "follow" on the album and you will go to it easily in the future. We are working to try and determine the best way to deliver the audio files in a free, secure, non-distributable, and non-editable way and would like to hear back from anyone who knows of such a service/method. We want it to be in a format that is what you want. We think CDs are not what people use any more, not sure memory sticks are the way to go, the platforms like SoundCloud or Audible in order to download require you to purchase an account with them. We are not inclined to set things up to require you to pay ongoing subscriptions to these platforms when we are giving away the product for free. So, any input from you on how best to deliver these files for free, OFF-LINE listening is greatly appreciated.
- Come and Reason with Dr. Tim Jennings weekly Podcast is now broadcasting, please follow us.
- **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!** January 17-19, 2020, in Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport) we will have a Come and Reason Ministries: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly.

References Requested:

I would like to compile a reference source for God's design laws, a list of Bible verses and other writers' quotations that describe God's various design laws.

Therefore, I am asking our listeners, whenever you come across a quotation from anyone, or a Bible verse, that describes or demonstrates a design law in action, please send it to us at: topics@comeandreason.com and put "**DL Reference**" in the subject line. Once we compile a sufficient list we will post it online for everyone to have.

June 8, 2019: Dr. Jennings will present The Aging Brain Seminar at Mid Columbia Medical Center, in The Dalles, OR.

June 28, 29, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Windsor SDA church in Windsor, Ontario Canada

July 10, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the 3rd Global Health Conference, sponsored by the General Conference of SDA and held at Loma Linda University.

July 19,20, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Living Truth SDA Church in London, Ontario Canada.

September 13,14, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Gentlebrook Intermediary Care Facility, Hartville, OH.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

Family Seasons Lesson 11 2Q 2019

Families of Faith

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

Davie Siebert an online listener sent in this EGW quote that I had not seen before:

There needs to be far more lessons in the ministry of the Word of **true conversion than of the arguments of the doctrines**, for it is far easier and more natural for the heart that is not under the control of the Spirit of Christ to choose doctrinal subjects **rather than the practical**. - 17MR 143.2

This is one of the goals of Come and Reason Ministries to make God's Word practical—to demonstrate God's methods and principles and how they apply to our lives for healing and transformation, not merely to argue a point of doctrine.

SABBATH

Read memory text: "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1,2 NKJV

What does "author and finisher of our faith" mean? Does it have anything to do with righteousness by faith? Is it a way of referring to the plan of salvation?

Could we say "He is the author and finisher of the plan of salvation?"

Is this the same or a different message from what is taught in the sanctuary symbolism?

Then could we say this is the same as righteousness by faith and the same as cleansing the sanctuary?

How are all of this these the same thing? Can someone explain how?

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

When Adam and Eve sinned did God or God's law get changed? Did the condition of the humanity get changed?

Did they get changed in some aspect of their being? In other words, when they sinned were they exactly the same in heart, mind, character, motive and the only change was their legal standing, or did they actually become changed in their being?

What kind of law is God's law? Design law, so what happened when Adam and Eve broke it? They changed themselves inciting a terminal condition.

What then is necessary for human beings to be saved?

A remedy to cure the condition AND restored trust in the one who has the remedy.

What is the remedy? A perfect, sinless, mature, human character.

Could any natural descendant of Adam and Eve develop a perfect sinless human character?

So, how is Christ the author of our faith, or salvation? He came as a human and by using His human capacities He overcame every temptation to sin and developed a perfect, sinless, mature human character. (Heb 5:8,9)

He also exposed Satan as a liar and revealed the truth about God's character and methods thus providing the evidence to restore trust.

So, Jesus is the author of our salvation by taking up humanity damaged by Adam and healing it in His person providing a remedy for our salvation while also providing the truth to restore us to trust in God.

How is He the finisher? Because He directs all the agencies of heaven to apply in us what He has achieved. He said that the Spirit would come and not speak on His own, but only what He hears. The Holy Spirit is listening to Jesus and applying to us the perfection of Christ as we trust Him.

So, the human species was saved in the person of Jesus Christ and each individual human who is saved, is saved by trusting in Jesus Christ and experiencing from the work of the Holy Spirit the renewal of heart and mind and reproducing within the character of Christ—by our willful and active agreement and consent. In other words, our choice to say Yes to God and Yes to every element of His righteousness and No to every aspect of sin as we are confronted with it.

So, justification is, first the human species being set right or put right with God in the person of Jesus Christ. And then, as individuals it is being set right in heart with God, from fear and distrust, to love and trust. We trust Him and open our hearts. The heart is set right.

And sanctification is the daily healing of heart, mind, character that occurs as we grow in our knowledge, relationship and appreciation for God, continually choosing to trust and follow Him.

Bible perfection is perfect love and trust, such that fear and selfishness has been replaced with love and trust to the point that we become like those described in Revelation 12:11 "These are they who do not love their life so much as to shrink from death"

So, righteousness by faith is trusting God and being transformed into Christlikeness of character.

Cleansing of the Sanctuary is Christ working in our hearts and minds to restore us to righteousness and remove all lies about Him and defects from our characters.

Here are some EGW quotes that describe this:

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and **developed a perfect character.** These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. **More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "**be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.**" Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

No human invention can find a remedy for the sinning soul...The fountain of the heart must be purified before the streams can become pure. **He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility.** There is no safety for one **who has merely a legal religion,** a form of godliness. **The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature.** There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. **This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.** {DA 172.1}

The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer.** It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. **Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature...** {DA 671.2}

The Holy Spirit ever abides with him who is seeking for perfection of Christian character. The Holy Spirit furnishes the pure motive, the living, active principle, that sustains striving, wrestling, believing souls in every emergency and under every temptation. The Holy Spirit sustains the believer amid the world's hatred, amid the unfriendliness of relatives, amid disappointment, amid the realization of imperfection, and amid the mistakes of life. Depending upon the matchless purity and perfection of Christ, the victory is sure to him who looks unto the Author and Finisher of our faith. . . . {OFC 211.1}

Read first paragraph, “No matter what stage...” Are we impacted by culture? Of course.

The lesson points out that culture was a powerful factor that influenced the change of Sabbath to Sunday.

What is evidenced by this changed? What does this change reveal about how people think about God and God's law?

So, what is the problem—the day people go to church upon, or how they view God and God's law?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “As the gospel...” What is the gospel—good news—about what?

Do you think the true gospel has been preached around the world or an infected view, the idea of God and Jesus, but distorted in a way that makes God out to be like Satan alleges, the source of inflicted pain and suffering?

So, does the gospel, the true good news, need to go to the world? How would you describe it?

So, what do we say to a person in the Middle East about the gospel? How do you tell them about it?

So, let's say you teach a person about the problem of sin, caused by Adam and Eve, and God's solution for it through Jesus and they accept Jesus and want to be baptized and join the church. But the person has four wives—what would you say about that?

- Would you require him to keep only his first wife?
- What if she was arranged by his parents when he was 4 years old and he never loved nor chose her?
- What if the second wife is the one who he gave his heart to?
- What if the wives he let go would be homeless?



- Would you let this person have membership in your church if he kept all four wives? How about hold church office? What does the New Testament say about church leaders? They must have only one spouse. But does it say church membership requires only one spouse?

What about a gay couple who are married, have lived together monogamously for years and have adopted children and then convert to Christ and want to be baptized and join the church—what would you tell them?

What does this mean:

“Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” 1Sam 16:7

Does it **only** mean physical attributes like skin color, height, weight, grooming, clothing, jewelry or does it mean behavior—how we act, speak, and live?

Is it about the behaviors or about the heart motive, the character? Can certain behaviors be sin in one situation and righteous in another—depending on the motive of heart?

- Can a person refusing to help someone be either selfishness or love, depending on the situation?
- Can we tell by the behavior alone?

So, if we bring the gospel to people is it about getting them to adhere to a certain list of rules or behaviors, or is it about getting people to know and love Christ, such that selfishness and fear are replaced with love, trust and Christlike character?

When we lead people to Christ are we primarily concerned with the eternal salvation, the heart of the sinner being restored to godliness, or are we primarily concerned that the convert behaves in a way that makes us comfortable?

Is it our job to tell people what sin in their lives needs to be resolved, or is it the job of the Holy Spirit to convict the heart?

Where do we draw the line? Do we then accept without confrontation active child molesters, rapists, murderers, thieves, adultery, addicts who refuse to get help? What about active gossips and slanderers?

Why would we confront such activity? Because it DESTROYS the sinner and we love them and don't want them to destroy themselves, and we don't want them to lead others into destruction with them.

So, do we draw the line?



Read second paragraph, “Christ’s death was for the sins of...” What does this mean? What did His death do to, for, or about our sins?

Is it about our acts, deeds, that He did something or about our sinful condition that He did something?

When we sin does sin do something to us? What does sin do to us? Then what does Christ need to do about our sins?

Why does God show no partiality? Because of His character which is the foundation of His law. His laws are design laws, they never change, and they show no partiality. Pick any division you like—black, white, Hispanic; Christian, Jew, Muslim—it doesn’t matter, pick any division and have them jump off a tall building—will gravity treat them differently? Have them all tie a plastic bag over their head, will the law of respiration treat them differently? Have them commit sin, will God’s law of love treat them differently?

No, God treats everyone the same.

Some miss this because of what appears to be differences in outcome.

If a Norwegian and Nigerian both stand in the summer sun for many hours in Miami, will the sun treat them differently? No, the sun treats them exactly the same, the difference in their response is the difference in them, not the sun. God treats everyone the same—in that He loves all infinitely and provides all truth and love to heal them, but we all respond differently and need different truths and interventions from God depending on our situation.

Read last paragraph, “At the same time...” what is God’s truth?

What is pseudo-Christianity? How would you describe it?

How is pseudo-Christianity still active today? Are there any elements of it alive in your church? What elements?

What is the primary idea that makes Christianity a blend with paganism?

How about an imperial law—rules imposed, requiring externally inflicted punishment for rule breaking, requiring the god be propitiated by the blood of a human sacrifice? Does this idea exist in any of our churches today? Is it Christian or pseudo-Christian? Doesn’t this make God appear to be like any other human government?

What is the real-world impact of believing this view? What happens to us, to our hearts, minds characters? Does it affect how we treat each other and our families?

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to evaluate how culture can impact family life and what lessons we can learn from the Bible examples below:

- Genesis 16:1-3—Abraham takes Hagar to have a child
 - This wasn't merely about culture, for Abraham could have had other wives prior to this if he wanted. This was about Abraham seeking to fulfill God's promise of a child and using his ability to achieve it. Thus, within that culture he used Hagar. How would Abraham do it today in our culture?
 - Either obtain a surrogate to be impregnated by him, or divorce Sarah and marry another wife to give him children
 - So what is the lesson we learn from this?
 - Can't fulfill God's plan by doing it our way
 - Doing it our way can make it worse
- Genesis 35:1-4—Jacob instructs all in his family to give up their idols of foreign gods—what lesson do we learn?
 - A time come in our lives when we have to make a choice; a time comes where wavering between two views is harmful and obstructive to healing and we must choose.
 - Elijah—if God is like Baal worship him, if Yahweh worship Him
 - This is what we are doing in this class and in the New Paradigm pamphlet, calling the question, saying to people: Stop wavering between two opinions that God is love but also the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death. Choose to reject the Baal view of God and worship the Creator whose laws are design laws
- Ezra 10 they sent away all their foreign wives AND their children—what lesson is taught?
 - Rid from our lives the ties to selfishness and this world—cutting away our loyalties to anything that is opposed to God's kingdom
 - Would this mean ridding from our lives our loyalties to human governments?
 - Would it mean ridding from our lives working to accomplish God's purposes through passing human laws and electing certain leaders?
- 1Kings 11—Solomon marries many wives from other nations—what lesson do we learn?
 - Bringing worldly influences into our lives corrupts good character

The bottom pink sections asks, “What things in your particular culture are helpful to family and in harmony with the Bible?”

- freedom of religion
- education



- moral equality of people regardless of race, gender, religion, ethnic background
- principles of autonomy
- programs that help the poor, infirmed and elderly
- health care, firemen, police, and governmental order
- caring for the earth—promoting a clean and healthy environment
- national parks
- food inspection and safety standards, clean water and sanitation
- Regulations against child labor and exploitation of children

“What things are not?”

- competitiveness
- getting rich as the primary goal for life
- the false idea that because people are equal in moral worth that they are equal in abilities
- the false idea that because we have freedom of conscience that all beliefs are equally valid or healthy
- the intolerance of any opinion or view not your own
- star-worship
- instant gratification
- fast food/junkfood
- GMO foods
- TV/Gaming
- evolutionism and godless philosophies
- God presented as the source of inflicted punishment—sends disasters to punish people etc.
- That we are owed something from others or our governments

TUESDAY

The last paragraph states, “With change comes the experience of loss and the anxiety of uncertainty as to one’s immediate future.”

What helps you cope with change?

- God—how does God help you cope?
- mindset about change—view it as opportunity or as loss of opportunity, view it as protective and helpful or as destructive and harmful?
 - Lost a job when I was 22....
 - Do we trust God with the changes in our lives?
- Family and friends

What helps you cope with loss?

- If we trust God does that mean we don't have pain with loss?
- How does trusting God help us deal with loss?
- What else helps?
- Family and friends—knowing you are not alone
- Purpose—if we know our loss serves a purpose we value does that help?

What helps you cope with uncertainty?

- What can you be certain about in the face of uncertainty? This is what helps me cope, to step back to the absolutes, the things I can be certain of:
 - God loves me
 - God wants my best interest
 - God's design laws, how reality works
 - What is the truth
 - This too will pass

“God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him.” {MH 479.2}

WEDNESDAY

Read bottom paragraph, “A common approach...” How do we help our children come to know Christ?

What is the difference between believing in Christ and believing in the church?

Can one belong to the church and not know Christ?

Can one know Christ and not belong to an organized church?

Why does Christ want us to belong to a church group of some kind?

THURSDAY

The lesson states that the Spirit longs to fill believers with excitement about the gospel—why do you think there is such little excitement?

Will the Spirit empower us to take a false gospel to the world?

What is the message that God would have us take to the world?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “The religion of Christ uplifts...”

Why does the religion of Christ uplift the receiver to a higher plane of thought and action?

Because the religion of Christ is harmony with life itself, it is living in harmony with the principles upon which life is built to operate.

What does “being purchased by the sacrifice of His Son” and “blood-bought” mean?

Purchased from whom?

How did Christ purchase us?

Is the blood referring to red-corpuscles or is it a metaphor for the life of Christ?

What holds us in bondage? Lies about God we believe and our own carnal, selfish nature.

Then what is the price to set us free? Truth and a new nature.

What was necessary for Jesus to provide these to us?

God had to become human and reveal, by action, the truth of His character and methods, and develop for us a new human nature, a human character in perfect harmony with God’s design law for life.

Who receives the truth and the new nature? Then to whom is the price paid?

Why is this price necessary?

If Christ didn’t pay it would God be unwilling to forgive? Would we be saved if Christ didn’t pay this price? Why not?

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Thus far we have received much positive feedback regarding the New Paradigm pamphlet and have not received any negative feedback about the substance of the pamphlet. But we have received some feedback regarding the style of presenting it, and a reaction some have had that I thought I would share and address:

First again let me re-emphasize the goal and purpose of the document—it is to help people experience God’s healing in their lives—to remove fear, misunderstanding and open hearts to God’s transforming presence. To that end it directly confronts the imperial/imposed law lie by focusing on a specific doctrine within the SDA church demonstrating that it is always about healing and never about legal accounting.

The feedback:

- Concern that the opening with the statement that there has been a delay in the second coming and that there is an infection of thought in Christianity and the SDA church is too controversial and would be off-putting to some. This point was not disputed, it was only the concern starting out with this statement.
 - This concern is not without merit—and it is neither right nor wrong, just is. But I wanted to be very direct and get to the issue up front, so I stated it up front.
- Concern with the Call to Action Section—that it was too aggressive or could sound attacking, or contribute to conflict.
 - I think this was the most threatening to some people and thus would most likely cause a reaction—and that was the reason it was put there—to cause people to react, to stop and think, to trigger people to not merely say “this is another interesting theory” and then ignore it, but to realize it is actionable and applicable to our decision making.
 - To call the question—to cause people to stop and really consider the way we understand God’s law and thus God. In order to call people to worship the true God and experience transformation. I believe the HS is waiting for a people to tell the truth about God so the final message can go forward. This is the motive.
 - Regarding leadership and fitness for leadership, consider this example: Hospitals have policies and procedures (rules) requiring surgeons to scrub their hands before surgery. Now, we understand why this is so (bacterial pathogens etc.) but what if a surgeon didn’t understand why. They just obeyed the rules. So, they scrubbed comprehensively and thoroughly and as a result had low rates of infections. But whenever they are asked why they scrub, the surgeon says, “Because it is hospital policy.” If a resident asks, but what happens if we don’t scrub, the surgeon answers “The hospital will revoke your privileges,” While his statements are both true, would you want this surgeon to be the head of your surgery department or the head of residency training? Why not, he has low infection rates and always washes his hands? Now, he certainly deserves to keep his



- surgical privileges, but I don't think anyone would seriously consider him for leadership of the department. We want leaders who not only follow the rules, but understand why, which requires we understand God's design law.
- The Bible teaches that if we don't understand the truth about God's design law then we are not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness (Heb 5:11-6:1) and the final message of mercy is the message about God's character which wins us to trust to experience righteousness, i.e. righteousness by faith message.
 - In our example of the surgeon above—the rules approach would teach that righteousness comes from keeping the rules, but design law, reality, knows righteousness comes from cleansing from pathogens. Likewise, rule keeping in Christianity is not acquainted with righteousness, because righteousness is about cleansing hearts from fear and selfishness—sin.
 - So we love our church and want our church to be the most beautiful and Christlike with a message that reveals God in all His glory because the people look like Christ in character. This is why we call for people to move beyond rules-thinking to God's design and methods.
 - But because of this section and the phrase “an increasingly authoritarian church leadership” the GC has cancelled my invitation to speak at the World Health Conference at LLU in July. I was scheduled to do one lecture, which has now been cancelled. I am bringing this up because our calendar has had it on our schedule for several months and I wouldn't want people to go thinking they were going to attend one of my lectures and me not be there without informing them of this fact.
 - Let us treat the GC decision with kindness, understanding, and respect. They have every right to cancel my speaking and I am not hurt and respect their choice to do so. So please let no one launch any type of complaint or campaign of protest against this decision. Yet, we also have the responsibility to evaluate what that cancelation reveals. If someone wanted to reveal they were **not** authoritarian, when the suggestion that authoritarianism was on the rise, how might a person respond? Perhaps by restraining one's use of power? This is the beauty of the Sabbath—when Satan alleged God was authoritarian, made up rules, enforced those rules, God responded not by force or authoritarianism, but by giving evidence during creation week, and then creating a time for freedom—a time when He stopped using His power and rested leaving all free to think for themselves.
 - Then some have reacted to the article by making allegations in various places (Australia, here in the US) that Come and Reason Ministries is an “offshoot” movement, or I have been disfellowshipped or I have started my own church.
 - All of these allegations and rumors are false. We are a 501(c)3 not for profit organization, not a church, just like many other not for profit organizations like Light Bearer's Ministry for example. Allegations like this occurs when people don't want to



accept truth and because it is true they can't refute it so they try to divert attention away from the actual message to another issue by attacking the messenger or in this case alleging we are an offshoot, which if accepted then cause people to devalue and not consider the message being presented. So if someone makes such an allegation, simply say those allegations are false and are designed to prevent people from considering what is being presented, how about evaluating the substance of the article and speaking to it.

Thank you to all of our supporters!!! We appreciate your prayers and financial support, which allows us to do and provide all that this ministry does... audio, video, print, conventions, events, etc.

New Paradigm about the Investigative Judgment and Sanctuary is now available in print form in Canada, South Africa and Australia. If you would like print copies please contact our hub in your country.

Audio version of the Remedy is Now available for Streaming: Download the free app SoundCloud and **you do NOT have to purchase** a subscription to SoundCloud. Just search for Remedy Bible or use this link https://soundcloud.com/the_remedy_nt/albums and you should find it and you can stream it at no cost. Just click "follow" on the album and you will go to it easily in the future.

- Come and Reason with Dr. Tim Jennings weekly Podcast is now broadcasting, please follow us.
- **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!** January 17-19, 2020, in Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport) we will have a Come and Reason Ministries: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly.

Check our website for new chapters of *The Remedy* the Psalms will be going up slowly as they are completed and edited. When an entire book of the Old Testament is complete then it will be added to the app and when you update the app you will get the new book. Thank you for your prayers and support as I work on this project.

References Requested:

I would like to compile a reference source for God's design laws, a list of Bible verses and other writers' quotations that describe God's various design laws.

Therefore, I am asking our listeners, whenever you come across a quotation from anyone, or a Bible verse, that describes or demonstrates a design law in action, please send it to us at: topics@comeandreason.com and put "**DL Reference**" in the subject line. Once we compile a sufficient list we will post it online for everyone to have.

June 8, 2019: Dr. Jennings will present The Aging Brain Seminar at Mid Columbia Medical Center, in The Dalles, OR.

June 28, 29, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Windsor SDA church in Windsor, Ontario Canada

July 19,20, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Living Truth SDA Church in London, Ontario Canada.

September 13,14, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Gentlebrook Intermediary Care Facility, Hartville, OH.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

October 25,26, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Family Life Ministry Bronte SDA Church, Oakville, Ontario.

November 15-17, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Norwegian SDA Health Worker's Retreat in Oslo, Norway.



2019 Q2 Family Seasons - Lesson 12

What Have They Seen *in* Your House?

by Linda Ojala

SABBATH

Memory Text – “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” 1 Peter 2:9

Paragraph 2 and 3: What have people seen in your house?

- What have heavenly angels seen? What kind of spirit permeates our residences? Can one “smell” the scent of prayer? Is there kindness, generosity, love, or tension, anger, resentfulness, bitterness, and discord? Will someone who's there walk away thinking Jesus is in this home?
- These are important questions for all of us to ask ourselves regarding the kind of home that we have created. This week we will look at some of the issues that can make for a wonderful home life, despite the inevitable tensions and struggles that homes today face.

We should ask ourselves, why we are often kinder to strangers and save our worst behaviours for those we “love” in our own home?

- We let down our guard at home – is that where we let out the “real” us?
- I am well acquainted with people who have left the church, at least partially because they were children of church leaders, friends of children of church leaders, or neighbors of church leaders, who could readily see or hear what was being said and done in the homes of some of our highly respected leaders.

So, if we have time, I would also like to delve a bit into some other houses that pertain to us....ourselves - our internal, personal temple of the Holy Spirit, and our Church house.

SUNDAY

Learning From a King's Mistake

To paraphrase 2 Chronicles 32; Isaiah 38, 39, After serving God faithfully,

- King Hezekiah had very great riches and honor, and he made treasuries and buildings to store all of this. He became proud and he did not respond to the kindness shown him.
- He was told by God that he would die, but Hezekiah begged and prayed for more time, and when God granted his request (15 more years of life and delivery from the hand of the king of Assyria), Hezekiah asked for a sign, so God caused the sun going backward 1 step, as Hezekiah requested.

What did Hezekiah do with that extra time?



- The son of the king of Babylon brought a letter from the king as he had heard about Hezekiah's illness and recovery, and some gifts.
- Instead of giving God the credit/glory and teaching him about God, or apparently asking God for guidance in this matter, Hezekiah showed him ALL of his treasure
- God sent Isaiah to Hezekiah with the message that because Hezekiah showed them all his treasure, Babylon would come back and take it all, including his descendants, and make some of the eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.
- He sired Manasseh, the worst king Israel had ever had
- The Babylonians ultimately invaded, destroyed the temple and removed the Israelites from their nation, just as God had said.

In what ways are you able to use your home to witness to others?

- Every visit to the homes of Christians is an opportunity for people to meet followers of Christ.
- Christians may find ways that are sensitive and appropriate to the occasion to share the good news.
- Christians are not called to show off their material prosperity or accomplishments, though they may recognize these as blessings from God.
- Cleanliness, order, simplicity, hospitality, courtesy, respect, happiness, joy, love, all of these provide examples of how God works in the hearts of the family and home..

MONDAY

Family First

Sharing faith at home –

- **Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist** and heard what John said about Jesus. The first thing he did was to enthusiastically tell his brother, Simon (we know him as Peter), “We have found the Messiah,” and brought him to Christ, and that simple act started the wonderful, saving relationship between Peter and Jesus.
- **Naomi – Her Moabite daughter-in-law Ruth was converted**, even though Naomi was discouraged and tried to send her back to her family of origin. Because Ruth refused to leave Naomi and embraced Naomi's God, she was grafted into the Israelite nation and became a fore bearer of Jesus. This story shows that even imperfect parents can introduce a child to God and foster the child's relationship with God.
- **The greatest of all miracles, and something I believe we ought to pray for is insight like Jesus had into other people, their needs and the best way to minister to them.**
- **In our homes, regular spiritual habits of personal and family worship are to be encouraged.** But make these short for children, understandable at their level, and very interesting. Don't make it something the child or youth dreads.



TUESDAY

Peace That Wins

Marriages divided by religion – stay if you can.

- **1 Corinthians 7:12-15** “To the rest I say this (**I, not the Lord**); **If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him.** For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances. God has called us to live in peace. How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?”
- **1 Peter 3:1,2** “Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, **they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.**”

What might be the limitations of a spouse's responsibility toward an unbelieving partner?

- You are not responsible for their salvation, but may be the guide toward it, with warm friendliness, loving-kindness, unwavering fidelity, and humble service toward them. Love them as you love yourself. You are one in God's sight.
- When a spouse relates with Christian submission to an unbelieving partner, the first allegiance is always to Christ.
- Faithfulness to the claims of God on one's life does not require a spouse to suffer abuse at the hands of a violent partner.

Question at the bottom of the page:

- If someone in your church is struggling with an unbelieving spouse, what practical ways could you possibly help?

WEDNESDAY

Family Life Is for Sharing

Relationship between modeling and witnessing?

- **Modeling** is what you show and do. How you act and how you live.
- **Witnessing** is more related to what you believe and say. The explanation of the meaning behind how you act and how you live.
- But obviously, modeling and witnessing have some cross-over.
- **We witness from our homes when we provide opportunities for others to observe us and to share in our home experience in some way.** In our homes, others may see how the spirit of Jesus makes a difference.



- The display of mutuality, affirmation, communication, conflict resolution, and accommodation of differences testifies of family life in Christ.
- But all human examples are flawed; however, the witness of the Christian home is not about modeling absolute perfection. The idea is that individuals will grasp Christian faith as they see it demonstrated in the lives of others who are as human and fallible as they are.
- **I've found that people hate perfect people**, and feel awkward or jealous around them.

People tend to become like whom or what they watch.

- **Chose close friends carefully.** It is tempting to think you can be a good influence on those who are making terrible choices, but it is far more likely they will be a bad influence on you.
- **Girl visited her pastor and said she wanted to marry her non-christian boyfriend.** She thought she would be a good influence on her. He responded by having her get up on his desk and try to elevate him onto the desk. When she couldn't do that, he said it was his turn. He showed her how easy it was for him to pull her down to the floor from his desk.
- Since you usually can't choose your family, you often find that **you have a choice between following the bad or destructive behavior you see, or learning from it** and deciding to make healthy choices instead.
- **Some of my friends growing up said that they wished my parents were their parents.** My parents had some detrimental habits, behaviors and baggage like we all have, but they expressed love, and fun, and rarely lost their tempers. They encouraged creativity and teamwork. They believed in us and in our God-given abilities. They forgave us when we made mistakes.

THURSDAY

Centers of Contagious Friendliness

Hospitality – meets another person's basic needs for rest, food, and fellowship. It is a tangible expression of self-giving love. True hospitality springs from the hearts of those who have been touched by God's love and want to express their love in words and actions.

Many contemporary families confuse hospitality and entertaining. Some Biblical examples of hospitality:

- Genesis 18:1-8 Abraham and Sarah
- Genesis 24:15-20, 31-33 Rebekah and her family
- Luke 19:1-9 Zacchaeus
- Matthew 25:34-40 Jesus attached theological significance to hospitality when He taught that feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty were acts of service done to Him.

I once heard a well known speaker and writer say that people are afraid to invite her to dine with them in their home, for fear she will judge them for anything not done perfectly. She said she'd be happy to be invited to be the recipient of hospitality that only included peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. She just wanted the friendship.

FRIDAY



Further Thought

The power of the home in evangelism.

“Far more powerful than any sermon that can be preached is the influence of a true home upon human hearts and lives..... **Our sphere of influence may seem narrow, our ability small, our opportunities few, our acquirements limited; yet wonderful possibilities are our through faithful use of the opportunities of our own homes.**” Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, pp 352, 355

- **My grandmother raised 9 children by herself through the Great Depression.** And somehow, she managed to hold a “Branch Sabbath School” in her home, which resulted in hearts converted to God. She never had much money, but she managed to get her children educated, made quilts for all of her huge family and gave them freely to others. She was a great vegetarian cook, and made sure no one left the table hungry. God was her “True Husband” and a “Father to the fatherless”. She had an unshakable faith in a God that was as real to her as you are to me sitting right here, and she passed that legacy on to her family. What excuse do I have, do we have?

You can be an example of recovery.

- If you have lived your life in such a way that when you see your children copying from you, rather than learning from your mistakes, it can feel like a knife stabbing into your heart.
- But, you can also be an example of recovery. **God uses the most wounded, the least, the poorest, the most humble of people to do some of his very best work. Allowing Him inside your mind to mend your broken parts is the way you give glory to Him, and the changes that follow WILL be noticed by those in your life and home.**

What will they see in your church's house?

- Have you ever cringed at the idea of bringing someone new to faith in God to your church? Or recommending that they go to your church in their area?
- Maybe their habits aren't right up there to par with the “believers.”
- It can feel almost like sending your child off to school where you hope they will find friends and mentors, not be ignored or disdained or bullied, etc.
- You can't imagine how many people I have talked with that left the church because of how they were treated at church.
- Many people will go to a church with beliefs that they don't agree with simply because the people there are so warm, caring and friendly.
- Do we expect people to become perfect before they come to church or to God?
- How does that attitude fit with our imperfect, unwelcoming behaviors?
- I read of a man that came to the church of he was to become the new minister that day, but came incognito as a homeless, disheveled guy. When sermon time came and he got up out of the



audience to speak, you can believe that his first sermon there was both pointed and poignant.

Jesus said, “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. The the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.” Matthew 25:31-40

- And of course he said the opposite to the wicked on his left, who do not enter into eternal life, who's final death in the fire is their eternal end.
- John 15:17 Jesus gave this instruction to his disciples during one of his last conversations with them, “This is my command: Love each other.”
- John 17:1-3 Jesus was praying for his disciples the night he was betrayed, “...Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. **Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.**”
- Consider....this is how we are judged.

What did Jesus see in His Father's House?

Well worth reading, Desire of Ages, the whole Chapter 16, “In His Temple,” and Chapter 65, “The Temple Cleansed Again.”

Excerpts from Chapter 16:

The dealers demanded exorbitant prices for the animals sold, and they shared their profits with the priests and rulers, who thus enriched themselves at the expense of the people.

A great number of sacrifices were offered at the time of the Passover, and the sales at the temple were very large. The consequent confusion indicated a noisy cattle market rather than the sacred temple of God....so great was the confusion that the worshipers were disturbed, and the words addressed to the Most High were drowned in the uproar that invaded the temple. **The Jews.....were scarcely aware how far they had wandered from the original purpose of the service instituted by God Himself....**The priests and rulers were called to be the representatives of God to the nation; they should have corrected the abuses of the temple court. **They should have given to the people an example of integrity and compassion. Instead of studying their own**



profit, they should have considered the situation and needs of the worshipers, and should have been ready to assist those who were not able to buy the required sacrifices. But this they did not do.

As Jesus came into the temple, He took in the whole scene. He saw the unfair transactions. He saw the distress of the poor, who thought that without shedding of blood there would be no forgiveness for their sins. He saw the out court of His temple converted into a place of unholy traffic. The sacred enclosure had become one vast exchange.

Christ saw that something must be done. **Numerous ceremonies were enjoined upon the people without the proper instruction as to their import. The worshipers offered their sacrifices without understanding that they were typical of the only perfect Sacrifice....**with prophetic eye He looks into futurity, and sees not only years, but centuries and ages. **He see how priests and rulers will turn the needy from their right, and forbid that the gospel shall be preached to the poor. He sees how the love of God will be concealed from sinners, and men will make merchandise of His grace.** As He beholds the scene, indignation, authority, and power are expressed in His countenance.....They feel that this Man reads their inmost thoughts, and discovers their hidden motives.....it is as if they were arraigned before the tribunal of God to answer for their deeds. Looking upon Christ, they behold divinity flash through the garb of humanity. **The majesty of heaven stands as the Judge will stand at the last day...with the same power to read the soul...with a zeal and severity He has never before manifested, He overthrows the tables of the money-changers...Jesus does not smite them with the whip of cords, but in His hand that simple scourge seems terrible as a flaming sword...even the disciples trembled. They are awestruck by the words and manner of Jesus, so unlike His usual demeanor....**in the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work....from eternal ages it was God's purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator....by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple.

The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin – from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul.

Malachi 3:1-3 “The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver.”

Note: I came across an item on Face book that was about refining silver, that the silversmith must hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest as to burn away all the impurities. He has to



sit there in the presence of the silver being refined the whole time, to make sure that it did not go a moment too long, because that would damage the silver. He knows when the refining process is completed when he sees his image in it.

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.” 1 Corinthians 3:16,17

No man can of himself cast out the evil throng that have taken possession of the heart. Only Christ can cleanse the soul temple. But He will not force an entrance.....”Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him.” Revelation 3:20. He will come, not for one day merely; for He says, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them; ...and they shall be My people.” “He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” Corinthians 6:16. His presence will cleanse and sanctify the soul, so that it may be a holy temple unto the Lord, and 'an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:21,22

In putting Christ to death, they Jews virtually destroyed their temple. When Christ was crucified, the inner veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom, signifying that the great final sacrifice had been made, and that the system of sacrificial offerings was forever at an end.

“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Hebrews 7:25....While He delegates His power to inferior ministers, His energizing presence is still with His church.

Excerpts from Chapter 65:

At the close of His mission, He came again to the temple, and found it still desecrated as before. The condition of things was even worse than before. The outer court of the temple was like a vast cattle yard.....The dignitaries of the temple were themselves engaged in buying and selling and the exchange of money. So completely were they controlled by their greed of gain that in the sight of God they were no better than thieves.

Jesus looked upon the innocent victims of sacrifice, and saw how the Jews had made these great convocations scenes of bloodshed and cruelty. In the place of humble repentance of sin, they had multiplied the sacrifice of beasts, as if God could be honored by a heartless service...He knew that His blood so soon to be shed for the sins of the world, would be as little appreciated by the priests and elders, as was the blood of beasts which they kept incessantly flowing.

In fulfillment of prophecy the people had proclaimed Jesus king of Israel. He had received their homage, and accepted the office of king. In this character, He must act. **He knew that His efforts to reform a corrupt priesthood would be in vain; nevertheless His work must be done; to an unbelieving people the evidence of His divine mission must be given.** Again the piercing look of Jesus swept over the desecrated court of the temple. All eyes were turned toward Him. Priest and



ruler, Pharisee and Gentile, looked with astonishment and awe upon Him who stood before them with the majesty of heaven's King. Divinity flashed through humanity, investing Christ with a dignity and glory He had never manifested before. Those standing nearest Him drew as far away as the crowd would permit. Except for a few of His disciples, the Saviour stood alone. Every sound was hushed. The deep silence seemed unbearable. Christ spoke with a power that swayed the people like a mighty tempest: "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." His voice sounded like a trumpet throughout the temple. The displeasure of His countenance seemed like consuming fire. With authority He commanded, "Take these things hence." John 2:16

Three years before, the rulers of the temple had been ashamed of their flight before the command of Jesus. They had since wondered at their own fears, and their unquestioning obedience to a single humble Man. They had felt that it was impossible for their undignified surrender to be repeated. Yet they were now more terrified than before, and in greater haste to obey His command. There were none who dared question His authority. Priests and traders fled from His presence, driving their cattle before them.

On the way from the temple they were met by a throng who came with their sick inquiring for the Great Healer. **The report given by the fleeing people caused some to these to turn back. They feared to meet One so powerful, whose very look had driven the priests and rulers from His presence. But a large number pressed through the hurrying crowd, eager to reach Him who was their only hope.** When the multitude fled from the temple, many had remained behind. These were now joined by the newcomers. Again the temple court was filled by the sick and they dying, and once more Jesus ministered to them.

After a season the priests and rulers ventured back to the temple. When the panic had abated, they were seized with anxiety to know what would be the next movement of Jesus. They expected Him to take the throne of David. Quietly returning to the temple, they heard the voices of men, women, and children praising God. Upon entering, they stood transfixed before the wonderful scene. They saw the sick healed, the blind restored to sight, the deaf receive their hearing, and the crippled leap for joy. The children for foremost in the rejoicing....some of them had fallen asleep upon His breast as He was teaching the people.... The sound of these happy, unrestrained voices was an offense to the rulers of the temple. They set about putting a stop to such demonstrations.

The contrast between Jesus and the high priest as they talked together was marked. The proud dignitary of the temple was clothed in rich and costly garments. Upon his head was a glittering tiara. His bearing was majestic, his hair and his long flowing beard were silvered by age. His appearance awed the beholders. Before this august personage stood the Majesty of heaven, without adornment or display. His garments were travel stained; His face was pale, and expressed a patient sadness; yet written there were dignity and benevolence that contrasted strangely with the proud, self-confident, and angry air of the high priest. Many of those who witnessed the words and deeds of Jesus in the temple from that time enshrined Him in their hearts as a prophet of God.



In asking the questions, “When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?” Christ designed that the Pharisees should answer as they did. He designed that they should condemn themselves. His warnings, failing to arouse them to repentance, would seal their doom, and He wished them to see that they had brought ruin on themselves. He designed to show them the justice of God in the withdrawal of their national privileges, which had already begun, and which would end, not only in the destruction of their temple and their city, but in the dispersion of the nations. **The hearers recognized the warning. But notwithstanding the sentence they themselves had pronounced, the priests and rulers were ready to fill out the picture by saying, “This is the heir; come, let us kill him.”**

To fall upon the Rock and be broken is to give up our self-righteousness and to go to Christ with the humility of a child, repenting of our transgressions, and believing in His forgiving love. And so also it is by faith and obedience that we build on Christ as our foundation.....Many persons are by their own endeavors hewn, polished, and beautified; but they cannot become “living stones,” because they are not connected with Christ. **WITHOUT THIS CONNECTION, NO MAN CAN BE SAVED. WITHOUT THE LIFE OF CHRIST IN US, WE CANNOT WITHSTAND THE STORMS OF TEMPATIONS.....**The glory of His countenance, which to the righteous is life, will be to the wicked a consuming fire. Because of love rejected, grace despised, the sinner will be destroyed.....The desecrated temple, the disobedient son, the false husbandmen, the contemptuous builders, have their counterpart in the experience of every sinner. Unless he repent, the doom which they foreshadowed will be his.

What does He see in YOUR house – inside you?

“You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.” James 4:2, 3

“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” James 4:7-10

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. THEN I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.” Psalms 51:10-13

Final Prayer, joining Paul with his prayer/letter from prison, probably in Rome:

“When I think of the wisdom and scope of God's plan, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from His glorious, unlimited resources He will give you mighty inner strength through His Holy Spirit. And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in Him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of



God's marvelous love. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love really is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it. Then you will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Now glory be to God! By His mighty power at work within us, He is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope.”
Ephesians 3:14-20 NLT



2019 Q2 Family Seasons - Lesson 13

Turning Hearts in the End Time

by Dr. Wendell Moses

SABBATH

Memory Text: “Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” Malachi 4:5,6 NKJV

What do you hear when you read the Bible?

- What is the primary purpose of the Bible?
- What is included?
- What is excluded?
- For many:
- A code book of commands from God
- Indeed, it seems God does state he is commanding His people do so certain things.
- Stories of God’s people in failure and redemption
- God’s promises
- Earth’s history

Do you see the Bible as Declarative or Descriptive?

Many of the “commands of the Bible” are not described by the Bible as commands.

The Ten Commandments

The Ten Suggestions? - No!, but . . .

Do you realize they are not called commandments until the story of the Rich Young Ruler in the New Testament? (Matthew 19, Luke 18)

Even here, the word that is used could be translated commandment or precept or tradition or requirements.

The Golden Rule

The Study Guide divides up the week into lessons regarding our memory verse, but does not say anything about the last portion.

“I, the Lord, promise to send the prophet Elijah before that great and terrible day comes. He will lead children and parents to love each other more, so that when I come, I won’t bring doom to the land.” Malachi 4:5-6 (CEV)



“Elijah will help parents love their children and children love their parents. Otherwise, I will come and put a curse on the land.” Malachi 4:6 (NCV)

Can you think of other places the Bible talks about God cursing something?

Eden:

- Curse the serpent
- Cursed the ground
- Women would have pain in childbirth
- Women would be subjugated by men
- Cursed Cain

“The LORD will curse the evil person's house, but he will bless the home of those who do right.” Proverbs 3:33 (NCV)

How does that work?

Going back to the Memory Verse of this week. How or why would the coming of God bring doom to the land?

There are commands of God in His word. Although I am suspect of anything Elihu said, he may have been right in Job 36:10

“He makes them listen to his warning and orders them to turn away from wrong.” Job 36:10 (GW)

God commands when we are immature like children to keep up from suffering the consequences of our immature and poor choices.

Most of the Bible is descriptive - not declarative

Emphasis on promises of God: They are described as our only hope (2nd paragraph)

When are promises any good?

- Promises are only as good as the person giving them
- Promises are only good if conditions / people / circumstances do not change
- They are only good if you believe / trust the entity that is making the promise.

Teachers Comments: Overview

“God’s restoration of this sin-fallen planet is an irrevocable promise. We can’t apply that promise in a way that undermines free will. But if anyone can persuade a heart, the Spirit of God can. In this hope we place our confidence.”



Workers With Christ - Jesus, who has redeemed us from Satan's power, has exalted us to the high privilege of being co-laborers with himself. All who choose Christ as their leader, solemnly pledge themselves to his service. If they are true to this covenant, their feelings, their sympathies, their labors, are with Christ. Eternal things will be their highest consideration. They will search the Scriptures with earnest interest and with prayer that they may know the will of God and do it from the heart; that they may work for the best interests of all with whom they associate. {RH December 2, 1890, par. 1}

SUNDAY

The Prophecy of Turned Hearts

Re-Read the memory text: Malachi 4:5,6 What does this sound like?

If the hearts of the fathers are toward the children and the children are to the fathers, what would we call this?

- Reconciliation
- Atonement
- Unity

Makes you think of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane. "I would that they be as one. . ." John 17:21

Question and then 3rd paragraph: What do you think the phrase "turn the hearts" means?

"Several applications are possible for this phrase: It refers to the reconciliation of the people of Israel with the Lord. God as Father has turned from His wrath toward His children and calls them to return to Him."

Has God's wrath ever been against His children?

God's wrath is against sin. God does not like sin because it results in the destruction of His children. He is never angry at His children

Farther in the paragraph: "Parent-Child relationships are a practical expression of covenant faithfulness with God."

I should never describe God by my failings. We are God's children. God does not have the defects in insight, character or attitudes that we as fallen human beings possess against our children.

Read the memory text again: the final part: How is this different from the 5th commandment?
Exodus 20:12

"Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the Lord your God gives you." Deuteronomy 5:16 (NASB)



MONDAY

Family Reunion

The story of the widow and her son, the meal and oil, the son's death and resurrection.

Second question: What effect did the reunion with her son have upon the Phoenician widow's spiritual experience? 1 Kings 17:24. What can we learn from her comments?

She answered, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the Lord really speaks through you!" 1 Kings 17:24 (GNT with Deuterocanon)

She believed more after the miracle than before.

Miracles are most commonly seen in the Bible for those who have little faith (trust), not much.

Miracles are given to help us encourage to have more trust / belief, not because we already do so.

TUESDAY

Turning Hearts at the Altar

The story of Mt Carmel, Elijah, and the Fiery Altar

Read 1st Paragraph: How does "turning back to faith of their fathers" "bring healing to their lives, their homes, and their land"?

Does that work for you?

What does bring healing to our lives, homes and land?

Read the second paragraph

Read the 3rd paragraph

Family worship: Reading together God's word

Evening worship should be short, interesting, God centered.

The father, who is the priest of his household, should conduct the morning and evening worship. There is no reason why this should not be the most interesting and enjoyable exercise of the home life, and God is dishonored when it is made dry and irksome. Let the seasons of family worship be short and spirited. Do not let your children or any member of your family dread them because of their tediousness or lack of interest. When a long chapter is read and explained and a long prayer offered, this precious service becomes wearisome, and it is a relief



when it is over. {CG 521.3}

Read 4th paragraph: Did God “take them back to himself”? Is that what the text says? Who is reconciled to whom?

Where in the Bible do we have God being reconciled to sinners?

Is it not the other way around?

Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that You, O Lord, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again.” 1 Kings 18:37 (NASB Strong's)

God is always our advocate, always our friend, always with us (“He says He will never leave us.”). Always our healer.

“In the same way the Spirit also comes to help us, weak as we are. For we do not know how we ought to pray; the Spirit himself pleads with God for us in groans that words cannot express.” Romans 8:26 (GNT)

What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.

Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, “For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.”) No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:31-39 (NLT)

The Spirit of God not only maintains this hope within us, but helps us in our present limitations. For example, we do not know how to pray worthily as sons of God, but his Spirit within us is actually praying for us in those agonizing longings which never find words. And God who knows the heart's secrets understands, of course, the Spirit's intention as he prays for those who love God.



Moreover we know that to those who love God, who are called according to his plan, everything that happens fits into a pattern for good. God, in his foreknowledge, chose them to bear the family likeness of his Son, that he might be the eldest of a family of many brothers. He chose them long ago; when the time came he called them, he made them righteous in his sight, and then lifted them to the splendour of life as his own sons.

We hold, in Christ, an impregnable position In face of all this, what is there left to say? If God is for us, who can be against us? He that did not hesitate to spare his own Son but gave him up for us all—can we not trust such a God to give us, with him, everything else that we can need? Who would dare to accuse us, whom God has chosen? The judge himself has declared us free from sin. Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ, and Christ died for us, Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays for us!

Can anything separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble, pain or persecution? Can lack of clothes and food, danger to life and limb, the threat of force of arms? Indeed some of us know the truth of the ancient text: 'For your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter'.

No, in all these things we win an overwhelming victory through him who has proved his love for us.

I have become absolutely convinced that neither death nor life, neither messenger of Heaven nor monarch of earth, neither what happens today nor what may happen tomorrow, neither a power from on high nor a power from below, nor anything else in God's whole world has any power to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord! Romans 8:26-38 (PHILLIPS)

Elijah

"Answer me, Lord, answer me, so that this people will know that you, the Lord, are God and that you are bringing them back to yourself." 1 Kings 18:37 (GNT)

5th Paragraph: "The all consuming fire fell . . ." When does God's fire ever fall on the wicked and destroy them?

When they cannot be separated from their sin.

"The people of Israel are as stubborn as mules. How can I feed them like lambs in a meadow? The people of Israel are under the spell of idols. Let them go their own way." Hosea 4:16-17 (GNT)

Since Israel is stubborn Like a stubborn heifer, Can the Lord now pasture them Like a lamb in a large field? Ephraim is joined to idols; Let him alone." Hosea 4:16-17 (NASB Strong's)

WEDNESDAY

Turning Hearts at the Jordan

John the Baptist's Ministry

What was John's message? Matthew 3:1 – 12

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 3:2 (NASB Strong's)

What was Jesus' message?

From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 4:17 (NASB Strong's)

And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Matthew 10:7 (NASB Strong's)

Read the second (middle page) paragraph on Wednesday's lesson.

John: Prepared the people for repentance and reformation; Directed his disciples specifically to Jesus

THURSDAY

Turning Hearts in the Last Days

Read 1st paragraph

What is the “Gospel” that we as SDA's / modern Christians give as the message?
Is it different from what John & Jesus gave?

Why / Why not?

Read 3rd paragraph

How is the Elijah message different from the Jonah message?

- Jonah was a very successful evangelist
- Jonah changed history
- Who had more converts?
- Who was the greatest?
- Why?

Read the second paragraph on Thursday's lesson

“In The Spirit and Power of Elias



The closing words of Malachi are a prophecy regarding the work that should be done preparatory to the first and the second advent of Christ. This prophecy is introduced with the admonition, “Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.” {SW March 21, 1905, par. 1}

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” {SW March 21, 1905, par. 2}

This prophecy was fulfilled by John the Baptist; for the Saviour himself declared to his disciples, “Elias is come already.” Upon hearing this, the disciples “understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.” {SW March 21, 1905, par. 3}

In every stage of this earth’s history God has had his agencies to carry forward his work, which must be done in his appointed way. John the Baptist had a special work, for which he was born and to which he was appointed,—the work of preparing the way of the Lord. {SW March 21, 1905, par. 4}

The mission and the work of John the Baptist were specified by the angel of the Lord, as recorded by Luke: “And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” The Holy Ghost was to be upon him. {SW March 21, 1905, par. 5}

The wilderness-ministry of John the Baptist was a most striking, literal fulfilment of prophecy. Isaiah had foretold his work as “the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” {SW March 21, 1905, par. 6}

John, as a prophet, stood forth as God’s representative, to show the connection between the law and the prophets and the Christian dispensation. Like Malachi, he pleaded with the Jews: “Remember ye the law of Moses, ... with all the statutes and judgments.” His work and ministry pointed back to the law and the prophets, while he, at the same time, pointed the people forward to Christ as the Saviour of the world. He called upon them to “behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” {SW March 21, 1905, par. 7}

The forerunner of Christ lifted up his voice in the wilderness of Judea, crying, “Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he which was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord.” “Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.... O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be



not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! behold, the Lord will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom.” {SW March 21, 1905, par. 8}

In the spirit, and with the power, of Elijah, John the Baptist denounced the corruptions of the Jews, and reprov'd their prevailing sins. His discourses were plain, pointed, and convincing. Many were brought to repentance, and, as evidence of their repentance, were baptized by him in Jordan. This was the work necessary in order to prepare the way for the earthly ministry of Christ. {SW March 21, 1905, par. 9}

The work of John the Baptist, and the work of those who in the last days go forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to arouse the people from their apathy, are in many respects the same. His work is a type of the work that must be done in this age. Christ is to come the second time to judge the world in righteousness. The messengers of God who bear the last message of warning to be given to the world, are to prepare the way for Christ's second advent, as John prepared the way for his first advent. In this preparatory work, “every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain;” for history is to be repeated, and once again “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” {SW March 21, 1905, par. 10}

In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord. Just such a work as that which John did, is to be carried on in these last days. The Lord is giving messages to his people, through the instruments he has chosen, and he would have all heed the admonitions and warnings he sends. The message preceding the public ministry of Christ was, Repent, publicans and sinners; repent, Pharisees and Sadducees; “for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Our message is not to be one of peace and safety. As a people who believe in Christ's soon appearing, we have a definite message to bear,—“Prepare to meet thy God.” {SW March 21, 1905, par. 11}

Our message must be as direct as was that of John. He rebuked kings for their iniquity. Notwithstanding the peril his life was in, he never allowed truth to languish on his lips. Our work in this age must be as faithfully done. {SW March 21, 1905, par. 12}

Look at the picture that the world presents today. Dishonesty and fraud, violence and bloodshed, are seen on every hand. The widows and the fatherless are often robbed of their all. The theater, the race-track, and questionable amusements of every kind engage the attention of multitudes. In many churches sins have become fashionable. They are glossed over and excused. The right hand of fellowship is given to the very men who bring in false theories and sentiments. Right principles are no longer cherished. The conscience has become insensible to the counsel and reproofs that have been given. Messages calling for repentance are unheeded. {SW March 21, 1905, par. 13}



In this time of well-nigh universal apostasy, God calls upon his messengers to proclaim his law in the spirit and power of Elias. As John the Baptist, in preparing a people for Christ's first advent, called their attention to the ten commandments, so we are to give, with no uncertain sound, the message: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come." With the earnestness that characterized Elijah the prophet and John the Baptist, we are to strive to prepare the way for Christ's second advent. Resolution, self-denial, and consecrated effort are required of every laborer. Alertness and consecrated zeal must take the place of listless indifference. The prayerful, earnest appeals that come from a heart imbued with the spirit that actuated Elijah, will bring conviction to the honest in heart. {SW March 21, 1905, par. 14}

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." {SW March 21, 1905, par. 15}

"Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus." {Southern Watchman, March 21, 1905, par. 16} Mrs. E. G. White

The Least of These Lesson 1 3Q 2019

God Created

by Tim Jennings

Read first paragraph, “Seventh-day Adventists...”

- Aren’t all Christians called to proclaim the everlasting gospel?
 - Is the message we are teaching today the same message that Jesus taught?
 - Is there a difference between the gospels presented by different Christian groups?
 - Paul warned that some would come with a different gospel, what is the true gospel?
- What did Jesus teach? What is the message that Jesus would have us take to the world?
- Why are we to minister to the hurting and downtrodden?
 - How is ministering to the hurting, poor, hungry connected with the gospel?
- What law does ministering to people who are downtrodden require one to operate within? Is this connected to the gospel?
 - In other words, if you go to a starving person and say: “Your sins are legally forgiven because of Jesus payment for your debt” does that minister to the starving person? Does it present the gospel to them? What would? What law?
 - If you went to a person left beaten and robbed in an alley and said. “Jesus is in heaven erasing your sins out of the record books” but did nothing more, does that minister to the injured person? Does it present the gospel to them? What would? What law?

What was Jesus trying to communicate when He read these verses from Isaiah:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind; to set free the oppressed and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people.” Luke 4:18-19, GNT

Is there something in this which is the gospel? What?

In the next paragraph of the introduction the lesson cites the parable of the Good Samaritan:

- Who are the actors in the parable?
- Who is the one right with God?
- How many Sabbaths did he keep; how many sacrifices did he make at temple; how many feast days did he observe; was he circumcised?
- How could he be right without keeping the written code?
- What does this tell us about what God wants for us?
- Do you see why they hated Jesus?



- What about churches today—do they present a gospel that focuses on changing the heart to love and truth like God is love and truth, or on rituals, rules, conformity and some legal aspects that fail to heal the heart?

In the third paragraph it states, “In other words, along with proclaiming the great truths about salvation, the sanctuary, the state of the dead, and the perpetuity of the law, we are to minister to the needs of others.”

Is there some separation between the great truths of salvation and, the sanctuary, the state of the dead, the law of God and ministering to others?

It sounds like these are different things, are they? Or, are they all connected in some way? Are they all part of the same fabric of reality in which God is working to save His children?

- Is the sanctuary message anything other than God’s plan of salvation?
- Is the current state of the dead a therapeutic and merciful intervention by God to limit the pain and suffering of sin while the plan of salvation is being carried out to restore us to unity with God and eternal life?
- Is the perpetuity of the law simply the fact that the protocols upon which life is built and God cannot change and God is working to restore us to harmony with it—which is the plan of salvation?
- Is ministering to others the outworking of the gospel, the way the law of love actually functions—in other words we can’t help but minister to others when God’s love is operating in our hearts?

Why are such things so often separated? Because people view reality through imperial law and create standalone doctrines disconnected from the fabric of reality. They think salvation is about a mental construct, knowing the right facts, saying the right prayer, checking the right box on the fundamental beliefs, doing the right behavior, rather than knowing God and receiving a new heart.

Read second to last paragraph, “No question...” What is justice? Doing what is right or just.

What determines what is right or just? The law—so what is God’s law, how do we define it?

When we define God’s law to function like human law, how is justice then defined? The infliction, by God, of just punishments. In such a world view, from whom do we need to be protected or delivered? Do you see how the penal/legal view obstructs reconciliation with God?

But when we define God's law as design law, then how is justice defined? By doing what is right—healing and restoring all who will allow Him. In this world, from what do we need delivery? Do you see how the Design healing view leads people to run to God?

The last sentence of the introduction quotes Matthew 10:8 NKJV, “Freely you have received, freely give”

What law is being described? The law of love, the principle of giving, upon which life is created to operate.

SABBATH

Read third paragraph, “Remarkably, our world...” Why is it remarkable that God loves this sinful world?

Because we think like selfish humans and think love is something we must earn or be worthy of. But, when we focus instead on God and His character, recognizing how awesome His love is; that His character of love is beautiful, it is amazing, it is beyond our ability to achieve on our own, but isn't His character of love also exactly the way we should expect Him to be, if we know Him, if we believe Scripture, if we view God as Jesus revealed?

If a child was dying of cancer and was sick, deformed, vomiting, and we saw a parent willing to die to save their child, would we say, “Remarkably, that child continues to be something that parent loves?” And we are sinful beings who realize it is right to love your child like this. Do you see how distorted our view of God is that we would think it is remarkable that He still loves us?

Jesus said, “For God so loved the world...”

E. G. White, one of the founders of the SDA church wrote:

The atonement of Christ was **not made in order to induce God to love those whom He otherwise hated; and it was not made to produce a love that was not in existence; but it was made as a manifestation of the love that was already in God's heart**, an exponent of the divine favor in the sight of heavenly intelligences, in the sight of worlds unfallen, and in the sight of a fallen race. . . . **We are not to entertain the idea that God loves us because Christ has died for us, but that He so loved us that He gave His only-begotten Son to die for us.--**
The Signs of the Times, May 30, 1895. {7ABC 472.3}

How does God view us—as criminals who deserve just punishment, or as people with a terminal sin condition in need of healing?

Do you see how these two views (we are criminals or we are terminal) are directly connected to the type of law one believes God's law to be?

What is our role in fulfilling God's larger plan?

Why do we have a role to play in the plan of salvation at all?

Why do you give your children chores to do when you could do it faster and better?

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, "Here's where the Bible's story begins..." Well in one sense yes, but in another sense, not quite, is there another beginning to the Bible story?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. John 1:1-3 NIV84

Is this a different beginning than Genesis 1:1? Yes, it takes us back before Genesis 1:1 to a time before earth was created, to a time before anything was created, to a point in the past when only God existed.

Why is this beginning important? What is the central issue in the war between Christ and Satan? 2Cor 10:3-5—the knowledge of God.

Satan wants to obstruct, pervert, distort the truth about God into a lie—to get us to believe that God is something other than love. Many lies are told to do this. We have focused extensively on the false imperial law lie that makes God look like a dictator.

But, there is another lie that attacks God's character to distort it into something other than love. Over the past few years there has been a movement to advance the idea that there is no Trinity—there are not three individualities, persons in the Godhead.

Why is this idea destructive to the plan of salvation and the message for this time in history—in other words the everlasting gospel?

Who is the everlasting gospel about? It is the good news about God—that God is not the kind of being Satan alleges, that God is love and is completely trustworthy.

Now, love is functional—how does it function? It is other-centered, outward moving, giving, beneficent.

If God is love then God is other-centered—what does this mean in real world application—how reality works? Love does not exist in a singularity. If there was a time in the past when God was alone, then at that point God was not love. This is Satan's goal to get us to conceive of God as a self-focused, self-centered being.

The minimum number to be truly be other-centered love is three, two can be narcissistically reinforcing, but three requires putting self aside for the benefit of the others.

And look at how Jesus functioned; He never sought attention for self but pointed to the Father and the Holy Spirit points to Christ and the Father sends the Spirit. Perfect other-centered love in action.

Further, the allegations Satan made were about God's trustworthiness, if Jesus is anything less than fully God, then the lesson of the Cross supports Satan—that God is willing to sacrifice others in order to protect Himself. Thus, the attacks on the Trinity are attacks on God's character of love.

So, in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God!

When God, who is love, created, how did God create reality to operate, in harmony with Himself or out of harmony? So, what kind of law would God create reality to operate upon?

God's laws are the protocols of life and were created by God for the health and welfare of His creatures. We only have freedom in harmony with God's law.

Have you ever found it hard to think how law gives freedom? When I thought of God's law as rules this never made sense, because I always thought of how I was under threat of punishment, how I couldn't do this or couldn't do that, how restrictive the law was. But that is all a lie based on human law.

When we understand design law we realize harmony with it frees us—harmony with the laws of health frees us from sickness.

A person who smokes, or eats fast food every day will lose freedom, lose the ability to climb stairs, run, play with their children.

A person who lies and cheats loses freedom and are chained by their fear, selfishness and guilt.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "It is easy..." What about Eden do you long for?

If you could visit Eden, besides eating from the Tree of Life, what would you like most to do?

What did Adam do in Eden?

Why did Adam have work to do in Eden in a perfect world?

The Creator knew that **Adam could not be happy without employment**. The beauty of the Garden delighted him, **but this was not enough. He must have labor to call into exercise** the wonderful organs of the body. Had happiness consisted in doing nothing, man, in his state of holy innocence, would have been left unemployed. **But He who created man knew what would be for his happiness; and no sooner had He created him, than He gave him his appointed work**. The promise of future glory, and the decree that man must toil for his daily bread, came from the same throne. . . . {OHC 223.2}

If Adam needed work in a sinless world, is work important for us today (not focused on making money, but constructive activity)?

What does it do to a human being to not have any industry, any productivity, nothing in which to invest their abilities?

Does it uplift or degrade a person to have nothing constructive to do?

Industry is a blessing to youth. A life of idleness is to be shunned by a young man as a vice. However humble the occupation may be, if only honorable, if the humble duties are done faithfully, he will not lose his reward. **Industry is essential to health**. If habits of industry were encouraged, a door would be closed against a thousand temptations. Those who lounge away their days, having no aim or object in life, **are troubled with dejection** and tempted to seek amusement in **forbidden indulgences which enervate the system and tax the physical powers tenfold more than the most taxing labor**. **Indolence destroys more than hard labor**. Many die because they have not the ability or inclination to set themselves to work. **"Nothing to do" has killed its thousands**. {OHC 222.2}

If youth will preserve habits of virtue and strict purity, and **observe the laws God has established in the being**, [what laws? what kind of laws?] they may preserve their lives although required to perform severe labor during their lifetime. Long life is the heritage of diligence. {OHC 222.3}

Some young men think if they could spend a life in doing nothing they would be supremely happy. They cultivate a hatred for useful labor. They envy the sons of pleasure who devote their lives to amusement and gaiety. . . . **Unhappiness and heartaches are the result of such thoughts and conduct.** Nothing to do has sunk many a young man in perdition. **Well-regulated labor is essential for the success of every youth. God could not have inflicted a greater curse upon men and women than to doom them to live a life of inaction. Idleness will destroy soul and body. The heart, the moral character, and physical energies are enfeebled. The intellect suffers,** and the heart is open to temptation as an open avenue to sink into every vice. The indolent man tempts the devil to tempt him. . . . {OHC 222.4}

Do you agree or disagree?

So, if you wanted to demoralize a person, destroy their dignity, and undermine their God-given individuality what might you do?

Might you seek policies that seek to take useful labor away from capable people? Perhaps telling society that every person deserves the government to provide their sustenance, to give them money, phones, houses, food but require no work, no investment from them (we are talking about people capable of useful labor)?

And what if this was framed as an act of righteousness, an act of selflessness, and it was suggested that to not give people, who are capable of useful work, free things you are cruel, selfish, unloving or racist?

When the Bible speaks of taking care of the less fortunate, the widow, the orphan, is it speaking of making them helpless dependents of the state, or of giving them opportunity for growth, for development of character, for the growth of their individuality and dignity as a child of God?

When the widows Naomi and Ruth needed food, how did they get their food needs met? They gleaned for it—it was free food, yet they had to go out and work the field in order to get it. Does that have a different impact on their state of mind than mere handouts?

Do you see the love in Paul's injunction, "If a man will not work, he shall not eat"? (2Thes 3:10 NIV84)

TUESDAY

What does it mean to be a steward of the earth?

Why does it seem those who reject God are more interested in a clean environment and not exploiting animals, than those who believe in God?

Do we believe that we can save this planet by wise stewardship of its resources?

Does the fact we believe we can't save the planet no matter what we do, contribute to a cavalier attitude toward the earth?

Do those who believe that this current sinful earth is the only future for humanity have more fear for the future and thus take more seriously the need to protect the earth?

Over what do we have stewardship today?

The lesson points out that when dominion of the earth was given to Adam and Eve so was reproductive ability—are we to have stewardship over our reproductive ability?

Who should have stewardship over your reproductive ability?

What if a religious group came along and told people that women are required by God to bear their husbands as many children as they can—they don't have a choice, it is the husband's choice?

What if a religious institution came along and told people they had no stewardship over their reproductive ability, that it is a divine prerogative and that the individual should not interfere with it by using any birth control?

What if a state institution came along and told people what they could do with their reproductive ability?

Has Satan worked to corrupt the reproductive gift God has given us?

Should we as Christians identify destructive uses of this gift and teach people the beauty and health benefits of living in harmony with God's design? Should we pass laws to force everyone to use their reproductive abilities the way we determine is correct?

Would it be a Godlike act or an ungodlike act to eliminate disease, deformity, and sickness?

How about doing so by genetically engineering our offspring to eliminate genes known to cause cancer or muscular dystrophy or Tay Sachs disease etc.? Would using our ability to eliminate such diseases genetically from embryos before they are born be a Godlike act or an ungodlike act?

What about not merely removing diseases genetically from our children, how about genetically engineering in advantages, increasing IQ, physical strength, longevity, resistance to infections, rapid wound healing, choosing eye color, height, hair color? Would doing such things, if we had the ability, be a Godlike act or an ungodlike act?

Do you think God made purposeful choices in all of these things and more when He made Adam and Eve?

Did God give us stewardship over our reproductive abilities and if we have the ability to have children with less sickness and disease, with greater intelligence and health should we exercise that ability or not?

Do you think if Adam and Eve would have had children before they fall they would have had such governance over their own being that they could have, through a thought, epigenetically determined how they wanted their genes expressed in each offspring?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “One thing...” How do we tell what is morally right or wrong?

Does everyone in the world agree on what is morally right or wrong?

Would you like a devoted, conscientious and conservative Muslim to institute Sharia Law in your city? Why not?

What about a devoted, conscientious and conservative Christian to institute laws based on their interpretation of Scripture? Why or why not?

Where do we draw the line on respecting the moral freedom of others?

Read third paragraph, “In that choice...” What do you think of the phrase, “These two human beings suddenly realized they were naked and ashamed...”

I just don’t like the word choice here. I would state it differently, which to me has a slightly different meaning, I would state it as, “These two human beings suddenly *became* naked and ashamed...”

Read fourth paragraph, “Because of the reality...” This is well said—why did life get harder for Adam? What kind of law is this?

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, “Throughout the Bible...” What is the prime difference between the true God and false gods? Creatorship! And what kind of law does a Creator utilize for reality (His kingdom) to operate upon and what kind of laws do non-creators make for their kingdom to operate upon?

So, when it comes to worshipping the Creator, the Sabbath is a sign, a flag, a marker, an evidence, a pendant, a pennant, of design law, how God built reality to work, truth presented in love, leaving His creatures free. But the Sabbath is not the government of God, it is merely an evidence of that government. The moment you suggest the Sabbath is a rule, like human laws, that God monitor and enforces with infliction of punishment for disobeying, you have just made the Sabbath into a vehicle to teach Satan’s lies about God.

It would be like having a US Flag and getting paint and painting over the US flag a swastika. If you did that you have taken the US Flag and just used it to represent something else entirely.

Read last paragraph, “God as our Creator...”

What does this mean? If we see an adult smoking should we go up and yank the cigarette out of their mouth and say, “God has made me your keeper. I cannot stand by and watch you kill yourself with tobacco!”?

Or does it mean that we don’t act in ways to cause injury, harm, evil to another?

What was Cain held responsible for? Was Cain held responsible for Abel’s health, Abel’s choices, Abel’s conduct, or was Cain held responsible for his own conduct toward Abel for not acting in ways to protect Abel and promote the best for Abel?

We are not responsible for keeping other people from their own injurious decisions, but for the decisions we make in how we treat other people.

FRIDAY

Read third paragraph, “If men would do...” Does this refer only to the rich, or could this refer to people in dire straits having made choices that caused them to be in those difficult circumstances?

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Audio version of the Remedy is Now Available for Streaming: Download the free SoundCloud app Do **NOT** purchase a subscription to SoundCloud. Just search for Remedy Bible or use this link https://soundcloud.com/the_remedy_nt/albums to find it and stream it at no cost. Just click “follow” on the album and you will go to it easily in the future.

PODCAST: Come and Reason with Dr. Tim Jennings weekly Podcast is now broadcasting, please follow us.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!! January 17-19, 2020, in Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport) we will have a Come and Reason Ministries: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly.

Check our website for new chapters of *The Remedy* the Psalms will be going up slowly as they are completed and edited. When an entire book of the Old Testament is complete then it will be added to the app and when you update the app you will get the new book. Thank you for your prayers and support as I work on this project.

June 28, 29, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Windsor SDA church in Windsor, Ontario Canada

July 19,20, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Living Truth SDA Church in London, Ontario Canada.

September 13,14, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Gentlebrook Intermediary Care Facility, Hartville, OH.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

November 15-17, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Norwegian SDA Health Worker’s Retreat in Oslo, Norway.

January 17-19, 2020: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly. Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport). See events.comeandreason.com for more details and to sign up.



2019 Q3 The Least of These - Lesson 2: Blueprint for a Better World

by Lori Atkins

INTRODUCTION

This quarter's theme is obviously based on Christ's words recorded in Matt 25:31-45.

Memory Text: "You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against anyone among your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord" {Leviticus 19:18, NKJV}.

Just fair warning...we're going to park here for a bit and really unpack this "love your neighbor as yourself" concept further.

Does our memory text passage remind you of or make you think of any other texts?

- Instructions to the rich young ruler in Matt 19:17-19 If you want to enter life, keep the commandments." "Which ones?" he inquired. Jesus replied, "'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'" "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?"
- Matt 22: 37-39 One of the Pharisees, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." This story is repeated in Mark and Luke
- Mark 12:33 "To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."
- Romans 13:9 "The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."
- Galatians 5:14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."
- James 2:8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right."



Wow... Why would this same concept be so consistently repeated throughout the whole of scripture? Do you get the feeling this message is somehow important and deserves our attention?

Mrs. White says in several places, “The **divine law requires** that you love your neighbor as yourself...Without the exercise of this love, the highest profession of faith is mere hypocrisy...That is, we are to deal with our neighbors in everything just as we would wish them to deal with us. If we wish them to act fairly and justly toward us, then we should act fairly and justly toward them. We are simply to do as we would be done by.” {RH, March 11, 1884 par. 10}/{A New Life NL 32.1} Why does the divine law require this?

What is the “divine law”? The Law of Love requires that we love our neighbor for the same reason that the Law of Respiration requires that we breathe...but also the Law of Worship—by beholding we become changed. Love your neighbor, means don’t steal, murder, betray, bear false witness or covet – why? What happens to the one who breaks that law? They are damaged, they sear their consciences, warp their characters, harden their hearts, and thus are deviant from design protocol for life - life is absolutely created to operate upon this principal.

And who are we talking about here...the people who live next door? Just the folks who live on my street or in my neighborhood? Who is my neighbor?

I have some quotes from one of the founders of our church that might help us figure it out.

"God's law requires that justice and right be exercised between man and his fellow man; it requires that we shall not injure our neighbor in his property, his feelings, his health, or his good name. It requires compassion for the afflicted, *even if he be our enemy*, that in all our associations with our fellow beings we shall show the same love and care that we would wish to have exercised toward ourselves." {ST, January 7, 1897 par. 3}

"Jesus related the parable of the Good Samaritan, and clearly showed that he is our neighbor who most needs our charity and help. We are to practice the commandments of God, and stand true to the relation which God has designed shall exist between man and his fellow man. It was never God's purpose that society should be separated into classes, that there should be an alienation between the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the learned and the unlearned. But the practice of separating society into distinct circles is becoming more and more decided. God designed that those to whom He entrusted talents of means, ability, and gifts of grace, should be good stewards of His beneficence, and not seek to reap all the advantages for themselves. God does not estimate man by the amount of wealth, talent, or education that he



may have. He values man in proportion as he becomes a good steward of His mercy and love." {SW 37.1}

"In His teaching He ever presented the law as a divine unity, showing that it is impossible to keep one precept and break another; for the same principle runs through all. Man's destiny will be determined by his obedience to the whole law. It is not possible for the heart in which Christ abides to be destitute of love. If we love God because He first loved us, we shall love all for whom Christ died. We cannot come in touch with divinity without coming in touch with humanity; for in Him who sits upon the throne of the universe, divinity and humanity are combined. Connected with Christ, we are connected with our fellow men by the golden links of the chain of love. Then the pity and compassion of Christ will be manifest in our life. We shall not wait to have the needy and unfortunate brought to us. We shall not need to be entreated to feel for the woes of others. It will be as natural for us to minister to the needy and suffering as it was for Christ to go about doing good...Wherever there is an impulse of love and sympathy, wherever the heart reaches out to bless and uplift others, there is revealed the working of God's Holy Spirit. In the depths of heathenism, men who have had no knowledge of the written law of God, who have never even heard the name of Christ, have been kind to His servants, protecting them at the risk of their own lives. Their acts show the working of a divine power. The Holy Spirit has implanted the grace of Christ in the heart of the savage, quickening his sympathies contrary to his nature, contrary to his education. The "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9), is shining in his soul; and this light, if heeded, will guide his feet to the kingdom of God." – {COL 385.1}

So in this parable of the Good Samaritan, in answer to the question who is my neighbor, perhaps we could say, who is a Christian?

Imagine that a ship was sailing from the US to England and hit an iceberg. The ship is sinking and people are frantic for seats on the lifeboats. The last lifeboat is about to be lowered over the side, completely full, when a child is discovered still on the sinking ship. A priest refuses to give up his seat, a pastor and a theology professor also refuse, but a homosexual man, who lived an active homosexual life, gets off the lifeboat and gives his seat to the boy. Who, in the parable is the Christian—who is like Christ?

- By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Jn 13:35
- Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. Jn 15:13
- This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. 1Jn 3:16



Do you feel like you have a better idea and a clearer picture of who your neighbor is now? OK, so what does it look like to “love your neighbor as yourself”? And doesn’t that smack of selfishness?

I thought we were supposed to be transformed to selflessness! Well, can people who don’t love themselves actually love others—why or why not?

If a person doesn’t have a healthy self-love, valuing themselves for who they are as a child of God - at peace with themselves and God, then they are not whole on the inside; they are insecure, fearful of rejection, and don’t possess healthy love to give to others. Instead, such people generally seek to *get* from others to fill what is missing in them.

They seek to get: love, reassurance, acceptance, validation, praise, security...those who don’t have healthy love seek to get from others rather than seek to give to others, thus we are unable to love others well until we are first healed in heart and mind by the indwelling Holy Spirit—we must come to peace with ourselves and love ourselves as children of God - does that make sense?

So what does it mean to “love your neighbor as yourself”?

Is love only an emotion or a feeling or does love cause action?

And what type of action? Beneficent, other-centered, outward-moving, unselfish actions.

Can you love others in this way if you are incapacitated? No!

In order to love others well, you have to maintain self-care, your own wellness and health...and thus, before one can love others you must first possess something worth sharing or giving to others. For example,:

- You cannot teach people to read if you yourself cannot read
- You cannot teach people the truth about God if you don’t know God
- You cannot genuinely love others if you don’t have love in your heart
- So, we must first be converted in our hearts to a genuine love/trust relationship with Jesus

Christ - and really *know* him before we can be most effective in God’s cause (notice I said *most* effective - God in His infinite wisdom can use many things to advance His cause, including speaking through a donkey)...and we must be in a state of health in order to be capable of providing to others.

So let’s get more specific and more practical...in this class, we have learned that love always does what’s in the best interest of the other person - but what does this look like in reality, and what are the obstacles to loving others in this way?

Do you ever wrestle with how to love others like this?



Remember what we just read in the quote from COL, “It will be as natural for us to minister to the needy and suffering as it was for Christ to go about doing good” Have mercy, I’m not there yet...sometimes loving others like this is a real struggle for me! Why? Well, there are several types of obstacles in the way that prevent or impede us from fully loving our neighbors:

- Obstacles in our *OWN* hearts and minds:
 - Fear
 - Selfishness
 - Distrust
 - Prejudice
 - Fatigue
 - Apathy
 - Ignorance (being unaware of the need)
 - Lies - Beliefs that the other person deserves something other than love
 - Lies - Beliefs/suspicion that you are being duped or swindled
- Obstacles in *other person’s* heart and mind:
 - Fear
 - Selfishness
 - Distrust - Sees acts of love as manipulation
 - Prejudice
 - Lies - Love looks like being abused / love is having sex / love is being liked or popular
 - False Beliefs - I don’t deserve your love / I’m too sinful to ever be loved / I’m too dirty, too ugly, too worthless
- Situational Obstacles:
 - Proximity - separated by time and space
 - Inability to help...whether it be lack of knowledge - helping a child with their calculus homework or repairing a car...or physical ability - unable to help move furniture because of a bad back or unable to provide financial help because you have no money.
 - Being obstructed by some other force - whether physically restrained, or by illness, or by other obligations.
 - But keep in mind that we can still provide our understanding, encouragement, and love for them despite these challenging situations.

Can you see how between our own obstacles, the other person’s obstacles, and maybe some tough situations (and we didn’t even mention social media comments and political differences)...why connecting with and really loving our neighbors as ourselves can be so difficult?! Lord help us!



OK, we want to truly love our neighbors - we want to help and always do what's in their best interest...so what does it mean to help someone - does that mean giving them what they want? What are some reasons *not* to help someone in need?

Were there people in need who Jesus did not help? But they were in need, why didn't Jesus help them? (Mark 6:1-6, Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor." He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith.)

Are there people in need that we are unable to help?

Should we force our help onto such people?

So whom should we seek to help...simply those in need, or those in need, who recognize their need and who will permit us to help them?

Let's go through a few "should I help" scenarios and see what you think:

- If you were here last week or have listened to last week's lesson (and if you weren't or haven't...trust me, you really should), but you will remember we talked about the apparent homeless person on the exit ramp with the "will work for food sign", and wondering should I help? Do you remember what we came up with?
 - That our "help" may actually do more harm than good
 - That since we may not really know if the need is genuine, it may make more sense to focus on helping folks who we *know* are really in need - our own family/friends, church members, Samaritan Center, etc. Ask the Holy Spirit to send people who are in need across your path and He will arrange those divine appointments.
 - That we can't make a cookie-cutter rule that I will always help or I will never help, or what that help looks like...we have to use our wisdom, judgment, and be open to the influence of the Holy Spirit.
- If you are in a restaurant and see a couple arguing, should you offer to help - but they clearly need help, should you offer?
- If you see a parent in the grocery store having problems with their child who wants candy and is throwing a fit in the candy aisle...should you step up and offer to help?
- What about a family member with sickness or injury who needs help - what then? How do you define "help" and where do you draw the line in helping? When dealing with someone recovering from injury, what is more helpful: to do as much as you can for them, or as little? Why? In this situation, the goal is to help the person recover as much of their autonomy and independence and strength as possible. Therefore, you give as little help as possible...or to put it another way, you require the person to do as much for themselves as they are reasonably able to do, lest you delay their recovery and even worse, foster their decline! This scenario brings to



mind the Helen Keller story - how many have seen the movie or read the book *The Miracle Worker*? Do you remember what state Helen Keller was in when Annie Sullivan showed up? How did Ms. Sullivan treat Helen? Was she helping? Also remember that Ms. Sullivan insisted on Helen being removed from her family in order to prevent them from “helping” her.

- Helping does not mean doing what the other wants, but what is **actually** helpful, within the boundaries or lines of authority and our mutual responsibility to each other. [Optional/Related: last week’s discussion on the importance of having constructive work/industry/purpose, and how damaging/destructive/demoralizing it is to take that away from people who are capable.]

Maybe the most important thing to remember from this discussion of loving our neighbors as ourselves...is that this “command” or the even the parable of the Good Samaritan do not say anything about **what we can do** works or efforts-wise to be saved...the emphasis is rather on how a converted person on the path to healing (or a “saved” person) **ought** to live. There is an inextricable link between these two most important commandments – “Love the Lord your God and your neighbor as yourself.” We cannot love God and treat other people (our neighbors) poorly.

So that does it for the introduction...now let’s take a look at Saturday’s Lesson. The lesson’s intro lists some Old Testament folks who maintained very close, special relationships with God - specifically Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - and in these relationships, we see God’s yearning to heal our brokenness and put us back in harmony with his design...but not just for the benefit of these few individuals and their families. Of course, this is and always has been part of his larger plan to heal mankind - but knowing that if each of these individuals trusted Him, were “at-oned” with Him, and were thereby transformed to be like Him...they would share that blessing and spread the message to others. God said to Abraham, “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing...and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” {Gen 12:2-3} Have you ever been a blessing...have other peoples on the earth ever been blessed through you? How was that...how did that feel?

So Abraham’s descendants - the nation of Israel - were to be the avenue through which all the peoples of the earth would be blessed...ultimately, obviously, by being the avenue through which the Messiah would come, but in many other maybe not-so-obvious ways. They were called and instructed to be unique in their society - in the world, even - in almost every way possible. We have discussed extensively in this class - we even have a whole DVD seminar on the subject - that these folks were an acting troupe, they were on a giant world-stage, acting out a script (that we call scripture), with some awesome costumes, and a whole bunch of cool props...but for what purpose?

Acting out the plan of salvation using the object lessons and symbols of the sanctuary services, rituals, and sacrifices - showing the destructive and deadly effects of sin as well as God’s plan to heal,



transform, and restore us back to “at-one-ness” with Him - with every single detail and symbol and metaphor always, always pointing forward to the reality of the coming Savior...this was their ultimate purpose - to fully understand, assimilate, and internalize these truths into their hearts and minds, and then share this picture of a loving God with the surrounding nations - in direct contrast to their pagan, angry, appeasement-hungry Ba'al gods and idols.

What other purposes or assignments were the Israelites tasked with?

- They were living examples of God's many names and qualities - deliverer, provider, protector, shelter (pillar of cloud by day), defender, light of the world (pillar of fire by night), bread of heaven (manna), living water (from the rock), etc.
- They were to be unique...in almost every way - the way they dress, the way they grow food/treat the soil, the way they prepare food, what they eat, their hygiene practices, how they treat each other, how they treat their slaves / animals / enemies / baby boys, how they governed and resolved differences, the way they worship, and most importantly the kind of God they worship. And all these unique elements, all these differentiating characteristics were for their good and for their growth - all designed to move them forward out of their darkened minds and slave mentality - always maturing them toward restoration back to His original design, and enabling them to be a powerful example and witness and blessing to the surrounding nations.

Ellen White, in Chapter 21 of Christ Object Lessons, describes the rich man in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man this way:

“There are today close beside us many who are hungry, naked, and homeless. A neglect to impart of our means to these needy, suffering ones places upon us a burden of guilt which we shall one day fear to meet. All covetousness is condemned as idolatry. All selfish indulgence is an offense in God's sight. God had made the rich man a steward of His means, and it was his duty to attend to just such cases as that of the beggar. The command had been given, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Deuteronomy 6:5); and “thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Leviticus 19:18). The rich man was a Jew, and he was acquainted with the command of God. But he forgot that he was accountable for the use of his entrusted means and capabilities. The Lord's blessings rested upon him abundantly, but he employed them selfishly, to honor himself, not his Maker. In proportion to his abundance was his obligation to use his gifts for the uplifting of humanity. This was the Lord's command, but the rich man had no thought of his obligation to God. He lent money, and took interest for what he loaned; but he returned no interest for what God had lent him. He had knowledge and talents, but did not improve them. Forgetful of his accountability to God, he devoted all his powers to pleasure. Everything with which he was surrounded, his round of amusements, the praise and flattery of his friends, ministered to his selfish enjoyment. So engrossed was he in the society of his friends that he lost all sense of his responsibility to co-operate with God in His ministry of mercy. He had



opportunity to understand the word of God, and to practice its teachings; but the pleasure-loving society he chose so occupied his time that he forgot the God of eternity...”

The rich man was favored with every temporal and spiritual blessing, but he refused to cooperate with God in the use of these blessings. Thus it was with the Jewish nation. The Lord had made the Jews the depositaries of sacred truth. He had appointed them stewards of His grace. He had given them every spiritual and temporal advantage, and He called upon them to impart these blessings.

Special instruction had been given them in regard to their treatment of their brethren who had fallen into decay, of the stranger within their gates, and of the poor among them. They were not to seek to gain everything for their own advantage, but were to remember those in need and share with them. And God promised to bless them in accordance with their deeds of love and mercy. But like the rich man, they put forth no helping hand to relieve the temporal or spiritual necessities of suffering humanity. Filled with pride, they regarded themselves as the chosen and favored people of God; yet they did not serve or worship God. If he had appreciated his exalted privileges and had allowed God’s Spirit to mold his mind and heart, he would have had an altogether different position.

So with the nation he represented. If they had responded to the divine call, their future would have been wholly different. They would have shown true spiritual discernment. They had means which God would have increased, making it sufficient to bless and enlighten the whole world. But they had so far separated from the Lord’s arrangement that their whole life was perverted. They failed to use their gifts as God’s stewards in accordance with truth and righteousness. Eternity was not brought into their reckoning, and the result of their unfaithfulness was ruin to the whole nation...



SUNDAY

The God Who Hears

400+ years of slavery - that's a really long time to wait for deliverance or pray for a promise to be fulfilled. Through multiple generations they waited...and waited. Finally, God shows up - at the burning bush - and commissions a reluctant Moses to deliver His people out of Egypt and out of the bondage of slavery. Is there any symbolism or a perhaps a greater object lesson from God allowing His people to suffer and languish in slavery, only to be delivered and set free and led into the promised land?

- Romans 6:6 "For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin"
- Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Not only that, he promised not to lead them out of Egypt empty-handed - that they would get a hearty send-off from the Egyptians and basically clean them out.

End of lesson notes

The Least of These Lesson 3 3Q 2019

Sabbath: A Day of Freedom

by Tim Jennings (announcements on last page)

SABBATH

What do you think of the title of the lesson? Throughout your life have you always thought—“Sabbath: A Day of Freedom!”

Why or why not?

If the Sabbath is a rule imposed by God that we are required to keep on threat of punishment—how is it a day of freedom?

Can you get more freedom by imposing more rules?

Was the Sabbath in existence before the earth was made?

If not, then did the angels have freedom without this day of freedom?

If it was not needed for the angels in heaven prior to the creation of earth, why is the Sabbath needed now and for eternity future?

The memory verse is Jesus words, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” Mark 2:27

What does this mean?

If I said, the YMCA was made for people, people were not made for the YMCA—what would you understand that to mean?

- What happens if people utilize the YMCA?
- What happens if people do not use the YMCA?

Is this what Jesus meant about the Sabbath?

Is the Sabbath for us to use in some way—some type of resource that is built by God for impact us for good in some way if we utilize it?

What is the purpose of the Sabbath? Why was it given? It was made for man for what reason?

The Commandment says, “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” (Ex 20:8)

If we were to build a golden calf and have an orgy of pagan worship during the Sabbath hours, have we made the Sabbath less holy? If we spent the Sabbath hours in total righteous living, would we make the Sabbath more holy? We cannot keep the Sabbath holy, for we didn’t make it holy and we can’t make it unholy—we can only keep ourselves holy. And can a person keep themselves holy only one day in seven?

The Sabbath was made for man—for what reason?

To aide humankind in holiness—in keeping ourselves holy! And what is holiness? Holiness is the state of being holy, which is being in harmony with God in all aspects of our being. Thus, being holy is living in harmony with God’s character, protocols, methods—His design-laws! And how is the Sabbath related to this?

Consider this quotation from EG White, founder of the SDA church:

The Sabbath was given to all humankind to commemorate the work of creation. . . God sanctified and blessed the day in which He had rested from all His wondrous work. And this Sabbath, sanctified of God, was to be kept for a perpetual covenant. It was a memorial that was to stand from age to age, till the close of earth’s history. . . . {CTr 355.2}

Every person has been placed on trial, as were Adam and Eve in Eden. As the tree of knowledge was placed in the midst of the Garden of Eden, so the Sabbath command is placed in the midst of the Decalogue. In regard to the fruit of the tree of knowledge, the restriction was made, Ye shall not eat of it . . . lest ye die. Of the Sabbath, God said, Ye shall not defile it, but keep it holy. . . . **As the tree of knowledge was the test of Adam’s obedience, so the fourth command is the test that God has given to prove the loyalty of all His people...**—Review and Herald, Aug. 30, 1898. {CTr 355.5}

What do you hear? What law lens to you understand these words through?

First—do you see Sabbath had a beginning—there was a time when it did not exist—but God’s eternal law of love did existed before the Sabbath. The Sabbath was created, made for man as the memory verse says—made, why? What was its purpose?

To aide us in holiness, in keeping ourselves holy—how? Do you hear this idea of aiding us in holiness in the quote above about the Sabbath being like the Tree of Knowledge both being a test? Or do you hear rules, legal requirements, fear?

Consider this quote

God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been, **not a free moral agent, but a mere automaton. Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary,** but forced. **There could have been no development of character...** It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule. E.G. White, Conflict and Courage 33

Is this describing a test, a trial, what kind of test, what kind of trial? Is it a legal issue, or is it an issue of exercise, the law of exertion, the actual development of one's abilities? God giving Adam and Eve something to choose, to make a choice, to exercise their individuality over—which would develop them.

Did Adam and Eve have the ability—in their own God given strength, to resist Satan's temptation and develop a perfect sinless and loyal character? Yes!

Do we? No—so what are we being tested on if we can't make a choice to develop perfect character?

We are being tested to exercise our choice to TRUST Jesus, to “come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give your *rest!*” We are to rest from trying to save ourselves, from living in fear, including fear of eternal loss because we trust Jesus and the Sabbath is a day where we can each week, rest—not just from employment but from the fears of life. We can exercise our ability to think, reflect, celebrate and spend time with God—realizing the true meaning—the evidence of what the Sabbath reveals.

We are changed by our choices—not just behavioral choices but what we choose to believe—believe a lie and it changes you, neurobiologically and characterologically. But the truth sets free, when we choose to believe and live the truth we are changed. God cannot choose the truth for us, we must choose it and in this choice we participate with God—the Spirit of truth for our healing and restoration. Thus, the Sabbath is a resource, a bastion of heavenly truth we can ingest and experience God's healing power to make us holy. So what is the special evidence or truth contained in the Sabbath?

What does it say about God? This is the key!

The Sabbath was given in a time of war—what kind of war?

And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. (Rev 12:7-9, emphasis supplied)

The Greek word translated war is πόλεμος [polemos/pol·em·os], from which we get polemic—it is a war of words, a war of ideas. And Satan is the father of lies (see Jn 8:44). What has been the focus or target of Satan's lies and where is this war fought?

“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”(2Cor 10:3-5, emphasis supplied)

The war is over the truth about God—whether we can trust God and whether He is worthy of our love, devotion, loyalty. God wants our love, trust, loyalty and devotion, but can any being get this from another by threat, coercion, or infliction of punishment?

In fact, what happens to love, trust, loyalty and devotion when one threatens and coerces another? Love and trust are broken and rebellion ensues.

So, if Satan could get intelligent beings to believe that God is coercive, threatening, the source of inflicted pain, suffering, torture and death, then love and trust would break down and rebellion against God ensue.

How could Satan get intelligent beings to conclude this about God?

By alleging that God's laws are not the design-protocols the Creator built life to operate upon, but instead function no differently than the rules enacted by human beings—imperial-laws that require the ruling authority to inflict punishment for disobedience. Then how does the Sabbath fit in?

What does it say about God, that in the context of an assault on His right to rule, rather than using His power to force all beings to bow to Him, He creates a day of freedom to think?

On days one-through-six of creation week we learn that God has incredible power, but God doesn't want His intelligent creatures to be intimidated, to be afraid, to follow Him because of power. God wants His creatures to love Him, trust Him, and be devoted to Him in loyal admiration.

Thus, after six days of creation, God created a day of freedom, a day where God stopped using power and stepped back, giving His creatures space and time to consider and think. Day seven reveals the character of the One who wields the power: God presented evidence (truth) in love, while leaving His creatures free to decide for themselves. No coercion, no intimidation, no pressure—freedom!

Then what is the purpose of the Sabbath commandment? It is a reminder of the gift (the Sabbath) God has given us to aide humanity in keeping ourselves holy—how one lives their life—in harmony with God and His design for life. Do we present truth in love and leave others free, or do we use imperial rules and coerce others with threats of punishment? Do we live in trust to God, trusting Him with our lives so much that we do not shrink from death (Rev 12:11)?

All week long we are to Remember the Sabbath to keep ourselves holy. We are to be beings who present truth in love while leaving others free. Only those who practice these principles of God in their lives are true Sabbath-keepers. Those who crucified Christ had the right day of the week but did not have God's principles written into their characters. They were not Sabbath-keepers. And Christians who would use the government to coerce others consciences are also not Sabbath-keepers regardless of the religious morals they are legislating.

With this in mind, we realize that God is Creator and His laws are the protocols upon which all life is built to operate. As the Creator of time, God built into time a day for human health, holiness, growth, development; a day of evidence to reveal truth about how God governs. Every seven days, every human being passes through this day—this reminder, this piece of evidence, this opportunity for healing, growth, renewal, transformation, contemplation, and freedom from the lies about God.

We can only experience these blessings if we throw off the lies about God and His law and accept His design protocols for life. But if we insist on viewing the Sabbath as an “arbitrary test of obedience”—a rule enacted by a powerful potentate who is watching to see if we break his rule—then the Sabbath becomes, not a sign of godliness, but a mark of beastliness.

The historic two days of worship within Christianity—Sabbath and Sunday—stand as two banners, signs, flags, marks, pennants that represent two divergent systems of governing.

Just as the US flag—the grand old Stars and Stripes—is a symbol or sign of the United States of America, so these two days of worship are signs of two different systems of governing. However, the flag is not the reality for which it stands. The US flag is only a symbol of the USA. And a person can wave the flag of America while being an enemy of the US. During WWII, German soldiers donned

American uniforms with the US flag and infiltrated American lines to sow discord and disrupt the US war effort. And there were people in Germany wearing the Nazi uniform who were working for the allies to undermine the German war effort.

Just because someone waves the flag doesn't mean that they support what the flag actually stands for.

Likewise, Sabbath and Sunday are signs of two different systems of governing. **The Sabbath is a day of rest by its creation:** it was **made** by God for this purpose at the end of creation week. The Sabbath is an evidence of design-law—truth, presented in love while leaving others free—and is a sign of God's method of governing. **Sunday, however, became a day of rest by legislative action,** by human authorities making rules. Therefore, Sunday is a mark of imperialism—of law and government that functions like sinful humans who impose rules that require infliction of punishment for disobedience.

These two days of worship, whose significance was established by their origins, are just like the US flag—symbols, signs, marks—but they are not the governments they represent. So, a person could be a Sabbath-keeper but practice the imposed-law model and teach that Sabbath-breaking requires God to inflict punishment on the violator of the law. That person would be like the German soldiers wearing the US flag, infiltrating God's church to sow discord and confusion. They would not be on God's team, and would actually be promoting the methods of the beast. These religious traitors to God's kingdom would be most powerfully exemplified by the Sabbath-keepers who crucified the Lord of the Sabbath. Conversely, a person who worships on Sunday but promotes truth in love while leaving others free is promoting the principles of the Sabbath and is on God's team.

The real question is, Who do we understand God to be:

- Creator/Designer whose laws are the protocols upon which life is built and who created the Sabbath for our spiritual health, or
- an imperial dictator who makes up rules and then enforces those rules with threats of punishment—just like the church of the Dark Ages did for those who violated her Sunday?

SUNDAY

The lesson takes us to Exodus 16 in which the children of Israel having come out of Egypt are given manna, which had to be collected every day, but on Friday a double portion came and they collected the amount for Sabbath also.

The lesson wants us to know that by doing this God was demonstrating the importance of Sabbath and establishing which day of the 7 days is the Sabbath and the Jewish people have been observing that same weekly Sabbath generation after generation since that time.



This is an important point for anyone who questions whether we can know which day of the week is the Bible Sabbath—some will argue, we don't know because of changes in calendar etc. However, the fact the Jewish people have been keeping it perpetually since God had them rest from collecting manna every Sabbath for forty years, lets us know which day of the week it is. Further, Jesus kept this day, and all Christians understand it when asked, upon which day of the week did Jesus rise from the dead? All know it was a Sunday, the first day of the week, and the Bible says He rested in the tomb over the Sabbath. So what day of the week is the Bible Sabbath is not in question—the question is about whether it matters or not and what is the significance of changing it.

What is the significance of changing the day Christians believe to be God's holy day?

And the fact it was changed is also not up for debate, Adventists and non-Adventists alike all acknowledge the New Testament and early church observed the Bible Sabbath from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset and it wasn't changed to Sunday until several hundred years after Christ. So the fact it was changed is not up for debate, the question is what does it signify, what is it evidence of?

Why do church committees not vote that on bad smog days their members are not required to breathe? Because they cannot change design laws and they know it—so what is evidenced by changing the Sabbath? That Christians do not view God's law as design law, but merely as a system of imposed rules like we humans make that are subject to change.

So, the real change in the law was first the idea that God governs like humans govern, with imposed law, and then **the evidence** of that change in thinking was the change in the day of worship. Christians shifted from worshipping the Creator to worshipping the dictator—and looked what happened in history.

- How did the New Testament Christians live and treat others?
- How did the first and second century Christians treat others and live?
- After Constantine and the change in the way Christians viewed law, from design law which leads them to a God who heals and transforms their hearts, to imperial law which leads them to a punishing god from whom they need to propitiate with a sacrifice in order to be legally pardoned—how did Christians live and treat others?
 - The Dark Ages
 - Crusades
 - Inquisitions
 - Coercion—burning people at the stake, torture
 - Enforced religious observance
 - Indulgences—payment to expiate sin
 - Various works—penances and pilgrimages to earn merit with their god

So, the Jews in Christ's day who kept the Sabbath as a legal requirement, and would not help sick people upon it, were not Sabbath keepers, they were Sabbath breakers because they represented the day to be an imposed rule, and thus God to be an imperial dictator. They had the right day, but they accepted the wrong law and thus the wrong god and crucified the Creator to keep their holy day.

Adventists who present the Sabbath as an arbitrary test of obedience, a day in which God has set up a rule and we must keep it or He will be required to punish us, are like the Jews 2000 years ago—they have the right day, but have the wrong law and the wrong god—and are not spreading the 3 Angels Message, but perpetuating the system of the beast.

The message of the 3 Angels of Revelation 14 is to call people to worship “him who made the heavens, earth, sea and fountains of water...” meaning Creator worship, which requires we return to seeing and understanding reality through design law.

But, I want to ask what is the deeper meaning of the symbolism of the manna?

What does the manna represent?

Jesus said that He was the bread that came down out of heaven—referring specifically to the manna.

So they asked him, “What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

“Sir,” they said, “from now on give us this bread.”

Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. John 6:30-35 NIV84

God created six days and rested, God gave manna six days and rested—why? What is God wanting people to experience and understand?

What does God want from us? Love, trust, loyalty, devotion—how is this achieved?



Not by might nor by power but by the Spirit says the Lord, Zech 4:6, and how does the Spirit work? Truth and Love while leaving each person free—so how does this apply to Sabbath?

God works to give evidence, blessings, which are manifestations of power—creation and manna—but does God want us to worship Him simply because He is powerful? So, what does God do—He gives us freedom to think, to reflect, to comprehend, to reason.

Jesus came and lived a sinless life, and then during crucifixion week gave perfect evidence of His character of love, and then rested on the Sabbath giving all beings who watched time to reflect and think for themselves over the Sabbath. Truth, presented in love, leaving people free to think.

This is the beauty of the Sabbath, God stepping back and restraining His use of power, ceasing His use of power to give us the space and freedom to think for ourselves without intimidation, pressure etc. but to appreciate the blessings God has given.

MONDAY

The lesson points out that the 10 Commandments were given twice and that the Sabbath Commandment was slightly different with two reasons for it:

- The first set because God is Creator
- The second because God delivered them from slavery.

The lesson points out that God did it this way to emphasize that God is our Creator and Redeemer.

No, doubt that God is our Creator and Redeemer, but why do you think God didn't have both reasons written into the first set if that was His purpose?

Couldn't God have written the first set to say, "for in six days the Lord created the heaven...and brought you out of Egypt..."

If the primary intention was to have the Sabbath associated with both Creation and Redemption, why not put both reasons in the first set and just duplicate it like the other 9 in the second set? Was God depending on Israel to worship a golden calf and Moses to destroy the first set in order for God to be enabled to give His two reasons for the Sabbath? In other words, if Israel would not have worshipped the golden calf would God have said, "Oh my, I wanted them to know another reason and I missed my chance?"

Could the fact that there is a difference indicate something else, could the two be different for a different reason—not because God was primarily trying to teach them He was Creator and Redeemer?



Could it be something about the state of the people to comprehend what God was trying to teach them and God having to step down to a more childlike level to teach them?

What law is creation built to operate upon? Design law and reminding them that God is the Creator reminds them of God's original purpose for humankind—thus the original set of 10 Commandments were to be understood through level 7 lenses—God's law as design law with this creation was to serve a larger purpose in the context of the GC—to be living repositories of God's living design law for life, as Adam and Eve had children and governed this planet in perfect harmony with God's design laws.

However, the people couldn't understand, they preferred a golden calf—so God met them at level one, which is reward and punishment and establishes Himself as powerful—I am powerful and can punish the gods you prefer—remember I brought you out of Egypt and punished their gods, so don't look to those false gods.

I think the second set, was written because the people refused to be enlightened and preferred earthly gods.

The same thing has happened since Sinai and since Christ—people prefer the gods of this world which operate upon imperial imposed law and teach in Christianity that God functions like we do, imposing rules and inflicting punishments. This lie is an obstruction to the 3 angel's messages, it is an obstruction to the final message to lighten the world, and it is to be opposed by those who worship the Creator God.

TUESDAY

The lesson points out that the Sabbath is a day when all were equal, in that no person in power could mandate that a subordinate work, not even the animals.

Hmmm.... does that mean the animals are equal to humans? So, animal sacrifices, really were human sacrifices?

If the Sabbath was a day teaching equality—why did they have slaves?

If we believe all people are equal will we “own” other people as property?

The lesson points out that the Sabbath law would prohibit an employer from forcing an employee to work on Sabbath—what about an employee who wants to work on Sabbath is that okay?

What about fireman, EMTs, ER Docs and nurses, the people who keep the electricity operating?



If you were in charge of society would you pass laws that on Sabbath everyone is required to stay at home and no employment is practiced by anyone?

Friday's lesson quotes *The Desire of Ages* p 206,207:

And man also has a **work** to perform on this day. The necessities of life must be attended to, the sick must be cared for, the wants of the needy must be supplied. He will not be held guiltless who neglects to relieve suffering on the Sabbath. God's holy rest day was made for man, and acts of mercy are in perfect harmony with its intent. God does not desire His creatures to suffer an hour's pain that may be relieved upon the Sabbath or any other day. {DA 207.1}

What kind of law is in operation here? The law of love—design law, not rules!

What about the other injunction of the Sabbath commandment—not the negative of what you shall not do, but what you shall do:

“Six days you **shall labor** and do all your work...” (Ex 20:8 NIV84)

If it is sin to labor on the Sabbath, is it sin to NOT to labor six other days of the week?

Is idleness a sin—failure to engage in meaningful, useful, industrious activity?

Did God design us for activity, for work, to use our energies to build, organize, plant, harvest, create, help, to do meaningful work? It doesn't mean make money, but invest oneself in something of value—it might be writing music, drawing, painting, sculpting, gardening, researching, homemaking, cooking, but something that requires the investment of one's energy and ability.

What happens to people who don't do anything meaningful? Will they grow, mature, develop, or will they lose abilities and maturity and become less capable?

Why? What law is it at work?

Is it a sin to live a life of lethargy, idleness, laziness, and slothfulness?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “While the original...” Do we ever fall into this? Why do you love the God who gave us the Sabbath? How is the Sabbath a blessing to you?

The Blue Zones book noted that one of the five places in the world that has the highest concentration of people living to be over 100 years old is Loma Linda CA, and one of the reasons they cited was the weekly Sabbath practiced by SDAs.

A weekly day of mental rest, to decompress, to get off the rat wheel of life and to unwind with God and family is healthy to brain, body and relationships—IF done out of freedom and love. However, if done out of fear of punishment, resentment, and anger it is not a blessing.

That is why the Bible says we must call the Sabbath and delight.

The lesson points out that Jesus chose the Sabbath to perform many miracles, of chronic health problems rather than the other days of the week—why?

What law does healing operate upon? What Jesus trying to enlighten to how God's law function on the day they that was the most filled with arbitrary rules? Have we learned the lesson?

THURSDAY

What is the significance of the Sabbath rest for the land? Is it related to the weekly Sabbath?

Did the land before sin need a rest every 7 years? Will the land in the new earth need a rest?

Is this God instituting within their culture a principle of conservation necessary given the nutrient cycle in the soil?

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Check our website for new chapters of *The Remedy* the Psalms will be going up slowly as they are completed and edited. When an entire book of the Old Testament is complete then it will be added to the app and when you update the app you will get the new book. Thank you for your prayers and support as I work on this project.

July 19,20, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Living Truth SDA Church in London, Ontario Canada.

September 13,14, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Gentlebrook Intermediary Care Facility, Hartville, OH.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

November 15-17, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Norwegian SDA Health Worker's Retreat in Oslo, Norway.

January 17-19, 2020: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly. Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport). See events.comeandreason.com for more details and to sign up.

The Least of These Lesson 4 3Q 2019

Mercy and Justice in Psalms and Proverbs

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

What is mercy and justice in God's kingdom?

Justice is doing what is right or just—which is defined by what? The law, and how do you understand God's law? Imposed or design law?

When law is imposed what does justice require of the ruling authority?

- Infliction of punishment

When law is design law what does justice require of the ruling authority?

- Healing of the problem, fixing what is wrong, restoring to the harmony with the law

And what is mercy under imposed/imperial law?

- waiving the punishment

What is mercy under design law?

- ending the suffering their condition causes by healing those who allow and
- no longer preventing those who refuse healing from dying

Read Memory Verse: "Defend the poor and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy; Free them from the hand of the wicked." (Ps 82:3–4 NKJV).

How is justice described here? Yes, this is Biblical justice, delivering the oppressed NOT punishing the oppressor—why? Because you don't have to inflict punishment upon:

- a person who jabs a pencil in their eye
- ties a plastic bag over their head
- smokes, drinks, does drugs
- lies, cheats, or worships a false god
- What about murder or theft? Does justice in God's kingdom require that we inflict punishment upon murderers, rapists, thieves, terrorists etc.? Why or why not?
- What happens to the heart/mind/character of the murderer/rapist/thief if they don't give their hearts to God? Is this an inflicted punishment by God or a natural result of embracing and

choosing sin? And what is the eternal result for them? So, do we have to inflict punishment upon them?

Does this mean it is unjust to have criminal courts and put rapists, molesters, murderers and others in prison—why or why not?

What would be God's purpose in having human governments inflict punishment upon law breakers?

- to arrest (bring to a stop) the destructive behaviors and cause negative experience for the criminal to give them an opportunity to reevaluate their life and hopefully repent
- to protect innocent people from harm
- to create a stable society where the gospel can go forward
- to prevent feuds and recurring cycles of violence in society

So, is there a difference between human justice and God's justice?

Why does any person, commit a crime—what is the reason at its ultimate root? Because of sin in their hearts/minds/characters—and how did each of us become sinful?

So, from God's perspective, what is it God would want for each murderer or rapist or pedophile? Isn't it to heal them from sin so that they would rather die than ever harm someone again?

I read another sci-fi series called *Star Force* which takes humanity into the future and interacts with many alien species. What is interesting in the book is that they encounter many other species that are immoral, corrupt, evil in which they kill others, exploit other cultures, enslave less advanced species etc. Interestingly, *Star Force* sees all living creatures as individuals and that those with the greatest ability have the greatest responsibility to protect all other living creatures. So, they are all vegetarians and oppose all cultures that eat animals. Further, when they war on a corrupt species they seek to destroy the culture—not the people, so they stun them and then put them in prisons that requires the individuals to grow and develop into trustworthy citizens—for all who do they become part of *Star Force* and *Star Force* just keeps getting stronger. For those who refuse to become trustworthy they eventually die of old age.

What is interesting is that some of the worst enemies of *Star Force*, after being conquered like this, become their strongest friends and members of *Star Force*.

Do you think it is just or right for *Star Force* to refuse to kill those who are killing them and instead to seek to make them friends? What about in God's government? Isn't this what God wants to do, to destroy our culture of fear and selfishness, to destroy sinfulness in us and turn us from enemies into His friends?



Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come. All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also. Our message is that God was making the whole human race his friends through Christ. God did not keep an account of their sins, and he has given us the message which tells how he makes them his friends. Here we are, then, speaking for Christ, as though God himself were making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf: let God change you from enemies into his friends! 2Cor 5:17-20 GNT

Does this describe justice?

Do you see how the penal substitutionary lie, built on human imposed law lie instead teaches justice is God using His power to torture and kill those who refuse His love? Do you see how this false gospel has corrupted Christianity and that we will never complete our mission of preparing the world to meet Jesus until we eliminate this lie about God's law and justice from our teachings, schools, fundamental beliefs, doctrines and messages?

The first paragraph says, "It is easy to see that our faith should make a difference in every aspect and experience of our lives, because God cares about every aspect of our lives."

What do you think of this statement?

Which is more accurate, "our faith should make a difference in every aspect of our lives" or "our faith *does* make a difference in every aspect of our lives"?

I guess it depends on what do we mean by faith, which is connected to what law lens you are thinking through?

- If we mean faith is a creed or list of fundamental beliefs to which we claim to believe (which is the imposed law view)—then *should* is the right word—for people can claim to believe many things which they truly don't value or internalize
- But, if by faith, we mean that to which we truly hold, internalize, value, and build our characters upon, upon which we stake our existence, (which is design law view) then our faith *does* impact every aspect of our lives

The point, is that many believe *faith* is a list of stuff you conclude is true, a legal proclamation when one joins a church, rather than that which becomes part of one's identity, heart, values, and character.

- "For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he." Prov 23:7 NKJV

What kind of law is this Bible verse based upon? Design law, the law of worship and exertion.

But those who accept imposed law think it is about the legal declaration that one makes—if I declare a belief in the right doctrine, become a member of the right church, participate in the right rituals, then I have the right faith—and my faith *should* impact my life. This is the lie, the distortion of legalism and penal substitution theology.

The truth is that by beholding we are changed, when we participate in the truth about God that wins us to trust and open the heart to God we cannot help but be changed and from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, so we do bring our faith into every aspect of our lives.

Read second paragraph, “Meanwhile, any reflection...” Again, how do we human beings measure justice?

Do you remember the parable of the landowner who hires worker in the morning, midday and an hour before the end of the workday and promised to pay them all a fair wage—and then gives them all the same wage.

Why did those who worked all day believe the landowner was being unjust?

Because they viewed reality through imposed law. They thought the payment was an arbitrary amount set by the landowner. Thus, when the landowner paid each the same monetary amount they thought it was unfair.

How does design law reveal the truth of God’s kingdom in this parable?

- Who was able to exercise their muscles more and thus experience greater physical development and strength? –those who worked longer!
- Who was able to exercise their skills more and thus become more efficient and skillful? –those who worked longer!
- Who was able to achieve more by their own effort and thereby experience greater sense of confidence, achievement, well-being? –those who worked longer!
- Who had greater time helping the Master fulfill His purposes and thereby share in the mission and joy of the Master? –those who worked longer!
- Who was able to spend more time with the Master working with Him and thus getting to know Him better? –those who worked longer!
- Who had greater opportunity to reflect on the Master’s fields, business, methods, purposes and thus grown in their knowledge of the Master and how He does things? –those who worked longer!
- And, in the parable, what does the coin/the payment/reward given to each represent in reality? Healing from sin and eternal life—so do we see why all get the same reward at the end of the day?



- But do all get the same experience? Who got the better deal?
- Why didn't those who worked all day realize they got the better deal?
 - Because they were under the influence of a lie—that God's law works like human law and the rewards are arbitrarily handed out by the Master.
 - This is Satan's lie from the beginning when he alleged God arbitrarily gave Jesus privileges He refused to share with Lucifer—which was a manifestation of imperialism or imposed law. This is the root to the entire controversy and it will be settled upon this issue—how do we understand God's law and therefore, how do we understand God's character and methods.

Read last paragraph, "Though we can only touch..."

- How do we determine what the poor and downtrodden actually need?
- Do we determine the needs of the poor by what they say they need?
- What about a hungry person who is otherwise healthy—what do they need?
 - Remember the old Indian proverb—give a man a fish feed him for a day; teach a man to fish feed him for a lifetime
 - Which action above meets the true need of the hungry man?
 - What does a hungry man need who is otherwise healthy and refuses to work? "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." (2Thes 3:10 NIV84)
 - Does our understanding of law make a difference?
 - How does imperial law interpret what people need?
 - How does design law interpret what people need?

When we love others like our own children, how do we treat them?

- What is the primary goal of a loving parent for their children?
- If we love our children do we give them everything they want? Why or why not?
- If we love our children do we always give each child the exact same treatment?
- What is the problem in giving every child the exact same treatment?
- What if one child has leukemia and the others don't do you give each child the exact same treatment?
- What if one child has a temper problem but the others don't, do you treat them differently?
- What if one child is gifted in art or music but another child is gifted in athletics or math—do you send them all to the same coaches or schools?

In government is there a danger in making too many rules that are rigid and applied without consideration of situation?

How can the desire for *fairness* in our human justice system actually cause harm? How about when it is applied through a rigid code that focuses on enforcing the rules rather than the situation of the people involved?

What is the role of government in society and how do we apply God's principles? Do we focus primarily on promoting the health and welfare of all people in our society, or on punishing people who break our rules?

- In the Founding Documents of the USA there are principles laid out: All human beings have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. If we understand these through rules what happens and how is it different than understanding these ideals through design law?
 - **Design law:** Fairness or justice is implemented in forming a government that has the responsibility to create **equal opportunity** for all people to realize their dreams, develop their abilities, and maximize their level of function and happiness. So the government would seek to eliminate exploitation, discrimination, and create a healthy environment where individuals are free to exercise their abilities without systemic or institutionalized arbitrary obstructions. Such a government could also implement agencies to assist those with genuine disability and protect the weak and vulnerable—again creating opportunity for individual growth—such as free education for people. The government making education available creates the opportunity to learn, but the opportunity to learn doesn't mean individuals actually apply themselves and learn.
 - **Imposed law (rules):** Fairness and justice in the rules model means the government has the responsibility to ensure all people experience *equal outcomes*. So the government seeks to impose rules, policies, regulations and taxes to ensure everyone has the same outcome, regardless of ability or effort.

Could we do harm while trying to help if we don't understand the actual need?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "As we have already..." What do you say to people who feel like God doesn't hear them? What would you tell such a person?

Do we believe God hears our prayers? I found a couple of quotes from EGW I wanted to share with you:

Heavenly beings are appointed to answer the prayers of those who are working unselfishly for the interests of the cause of God. The very highest angels in the heavenly courts are appointed to work out the prayers which ascend to God for the advancement of the cause of God. Each angel has his particular post of duty, which he is not permitted to leave for

any other place. If he should leave, the powers of darkness would gain an advantage. . . . {Pr 254.2}

Day by day the conflict between good and evil is going on. Why is it that those who have had many opportunities and advantages do not realize the intensity of this work? **They should be intelligent in regard to this.** God is the **Ruler. By His supreme power He holds in check and controls earthly potentates.** [How does He rule? By what law does He hold things in check?] Through His agencies He does the work which was ordained before the foundation of the world. [What work?] {Pr 254.3}

As a people we do not understand as we should the great conflict going on between invisible agencies, the controversy between loyal and disloyal angels. [What don't we understand? Could it be the battle for hearts and minds?] Evil angels are constantly at work, planning their line of attack, controlling as commanders, kings, and rulers, the disloyal human forces. . . . **I call upon the ministers of Christ to press home upon the understanding** of all who come within the reach of their voice, the truth of the ministration of angels. Do not indulge in fanciful speculations. The written Word is our only safety. We must pray as did Daniel, that we may be guarded by heavenly intelligences. As ministering spirits angels are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. **Pray, my brethren, pray as you have never prayed before.** We are not prepared for the Lord's coming. We need to make thorough work for eternity.—(SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, 1173.) {Pr 254.4}

I would ask for your prayers for this ministry and that God will open avenues to spread this message and hold back the forces that would keep people in darkness.

And, when you think of the heavenly sanctuary and what Jesus is doing there, what comes to mind? I have the vision of a great Commander at the helm of the universal government directing the agencies of God for the saving of souls and then I found this quote:

Oh, that all could behold our precious Saviour as He is, a Saviour. Let His hand draw aside the veil which conceals His glory from our eyes. It **shows Him in His high and holy place. What do we see?** Our Saviour, not in a position of silence and inactivity. He is surrounded with heavenly intelligences, cherubim, and seraphim, ten thousand times ten thousand of angels. All these heavenly beings have one object above all others, in which they are intensely interested—His church in a world of corruption. . . . They are working for Christ under His commission, **to save to the uttermost all who look to Him and believe in Him.** {Pr 255.4}

The lesson asks us to read Psalms 9:7-9, 13-20 lets read verses 7-20 from the NIV84 and the Remedy and notice the difference between imposed law view and design law:

From the NIV84:

⁷ The Lord reigns forever;
he has established his throne for judgment.
⁸ He will judge the world in righteousness;
he will govern the peoples with justice.
⁹ The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble.
¹⁰ Those who know your name will trust in you,
for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.
¹¹ Sing praises to the Lord, enthroned in Zion;
proclaim among the nations what he has done.
¹² For he who avenges blood remembers;
he does not ignore the cry of the afflicted.
¹³ O Lord, see how my enemies persecute me!
Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of death,
¹⁴ that I may declare your praises
in the gates of the Daughter of Zion
and there rejoice in your salvation.
¹⁵ The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug;
their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.
¹⁶ The Lord is known by his justice;
the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands.
¹⁷ The wicked return to the grave,
all the nations that forget God.
¹⁸ But the needy will not always be forgotten,
nor the hope of the afflicted ever perish.
¹⁹ Arise, O Lord, let not man triumph;
let the nations be judged in your presence.
²⁰ Strike them with terror, O Lord;
let the nations know they are but men.

From *The Remedy*:

⁷ Understand this: The Creator reigns forever;
from his throne he governs the universe, sustaining the laws upon which life is built.
⁸ He rules the universe in harmony with his character and design of love;
he will govern with honor and integrity—in harmony with his principles of love.
⁹ The Lord is a sanctuary of healing and safety for the battered and abused,
a fortress of freedom when trapped by life's problems.



- ¹⁰ Those who have personal experience with your character of love will trust you,
for you, O Lord, never abandon those who seek friendship with you.
- ¹¹ Let your life be a song of love to the Lord who governs in Perfection;
tell the entire world the truth about him and his methods of love.
- ¹² When he carefully procures the remedy, he thinks of the sin-sick;¹
he does not ignore their cry for help.
- ¹³ O Lord, intervene in my behalf!
See the pain and suffering that selfishness causes me.
Heal me—save me from my terminal condition—
- ¹⁴ that my life might reveal that your methods work;
before the entire world
I will celebrate your healing power.
- ¹⁵ The selfish dig themselves into pits of despair;
their minds are trapped in their own web of deceit.
- ¹⁶ The Lord has revealed that he governs in love and always does what is right;
the selfish reap what they sow—doomed by their own choices.
- ¹⁷ The selfish disintegrate into the soil of the earth—
all those who reject God and his healing remedy.
- ¹⁸ But those who acknowledge their need of healing will not be abandoned;
the long-expected restoration of the humble will not fail.
- ¹⁹ Act now, O Lord, don't let selfishness win;
establish your government of truth and love upon the earth.
- ²⁰ Humble their hearts, O Lord;
let the selfish world realize they are just mortal beings.

Do you hear a difference in the NIV and the Remedy—what is the difference?

The NIV and all other translations have been done by sincere people who have grown up in a world where it is assumed and accepted that God's law functions like human law. Thus, they translate through imperialism and weave in legal sounding ideas. *The Remedy* views reality through design law and sees the larger reality of what God is working to accomplish.

¹ The KJV renders this: "When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them" The Hebrew for *maketh inquisition* is דָּרַשׁ, דְּרִישׁ [darash/daw·rash], means to carefully investigate or seek. The Hebrew for *blood* is דָּם [dam/dawm] and has been debated by scholars as to whether this refers to the "life" which is in the blood, or the "shed blood" resulting in death. Both interpretations are permissible. Taking the perspective that the blood refers to the life—and in this case, the life of Jesus, which is the remedy to our sin condition—I have rendered the phrase as God carefully seeking the remedy while thinking about the sin-sick, those he loves and whom he seeks to save.



Read the third paragraph, “Throughout the Psalms...” What do you hear? What law lens do you hear being described?

If we return to design law does that mean there is no punishment for sin? What is the punishment for sin under design law? From where does that punishment come? Is the punishment for sin because God holds a tribunal and pronounces a judgment that determines the punishment—why or why not?

What would it mean about God if that is the way it happens?

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read Psalms 82, from let’s compare the two versions again, first from the NIV84:

- ¹ God presides in the great assembly;
he gives judgment among the “gods”:
- ² “How long will you defend the unjust
and show partiality to the wicked? *Selah*
- ³ Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless;
maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.
- ⁴ Rescue the weak and needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.
- ⁵ “They know nothing, they understand nothing.
They walk about in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.
- ⁶ “I said, ‘You are “gods”;
you are all sons of the Most High.’
- ⁷ But you will die like mere men;
you will fall like every other ruler.”
- ⁸ Rise up, O God, judge the earth,
for all the nations are your inheritance.

From *The Remedy*:

- ¹ God takes a stand against the assembly of false gods;
he presents his diagnosis regarding all pagan gods.
- ² He says, “When will you stop using a list of rules to govern?
When will you stop protecting selfishness with your legal system?”
- ³ Do what is actually right, healthy, and loving for all people;
protect the poor and the fatherless;
do what is right to the poor and oppressed—what heals and restores.



- ⁴ Rescue the weak and needy;
deliver them from the power of selfishness.
- ⁵ These false gods don't understand reality;
they don't understand my design-laws—how I built life to function;
they operate in the darkness of a rule-enforcement system
and the world is crumbling all around them.
- ⁶ I say to you, fallen angels pretending to be gods,
“Even though you are all children of the Most High,
- ⁷ you will die like mortals;
your life will end like that of any ordinary ruler.”
- ⁸ Rise up, O God, and diagnose the earth,
for the entire world belongs to you.

Do you hear a difference in the two versions? What difference? Which do you think is more consistent with our Creator God?

Second paragraph states, “In the psalmist’s view, the justice of God is a model for how earthly justice should function, and it also provides the measure against which such justice or injustice—and those who dispense it—will be judged.”

What does this mean? If you were a ruler of a society, how would you implement justice?

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read Psalms 101, again, let's compare the two versions, first from NIV84:

- ¹ I will sing of your love and justice;
to you, O Lord, I will sing praise.
- ² I will be careful to lead a blameless life—
when will you come to me?
I will walk in my house
with blameless heart.
- ³ I will set before my eyes
no vile thing.
The deeds of faithless men I hate;
they will not cling to me.
- ⁴ Men of perverse heart shall be far from me;
I will have nothing to do with evil.
- ⁵ Whoever slanders his neighbor in secret,



him will I put to silence;
whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart,
him will I not endure.
⁶ My eyes will be on the faithful in the land,
that they may dwell with me;
he whose walk is blameless
will minister to me.
⁷ No one who practices deceit
will dwell in my house;
no one who speaks falsely
will stand in my presence.
⁸ Every morning I will put to silence
all the wicked in the land;
I will cut off every evildoer
from the city of the Lord.

From *The Remedy*:

¹ I will sing of your kingdom of love;
my life will be a song praising your character of love, O Lord.
² Understanding your design-laws, I will live in harmony with them—
how long until you restore me to perfect unity with you?
In my house, I will live out your law of love
with a pure heart.
³ I will not cherish selfishness—
anything vile or wicked;
I hate all actions which deviate from your design,
and such corruption will not be part of my character.
⁴ Selfish temptations shall be purged completely from my heart;
no evil will be permitted to attach to me.
⁵ I will terminate my relationship
with anyone who slanders others;
I will cut out of my life
those who cling to pride and arrogance.
⁶ I will seek out those in the world who love you and are loyal to you,
and I will make them my friends;
those who are pure in heart
will carry out my purposes.
⁷ Deceivers will not live in my house;
the dishonest will not remain in my presence.



⁸ Every day I work to eliminate wickedness,
to purify and cleanse the world,
that I may cut out all deviations from God's design
and restore the city of the Lord to perfection.

What difference do you hear from these two versions—which do you believe is more consistent with our Creator God?

Did you hear Messianic themes in *The Remedy*?

Read third paragraph, “As we have...” How would these principles be practiced by leaders? How should church leaders apply these principles?

What would it look like when disputes arise over different theological interpretations? (Romans 14:5)

Do we apply different principles when running human governments?

What happens in the church when we bring in the governments of the earth—i.e. when church and state unite?

Can we have the same problem by using the methods of the state without uniting with the state? And what would that look like?

The fourth paragraph states, David sought to learn and practice God's characteristics in his life and work.

Would it matter how David understood God's character and methods to be? Why would this matter? Because of design law, law of worship, we become like the God we worship.

WEDNESDAY

Read Psalms 146:7-9 from the NIV84:

⁷ He upholds the cause of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.
The Lord sets prisoners free,
⁸ the Lord gives sight to the blind,
the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down,
the Lord loves the righteous.
⁹ The Lord watches over the alien

and sustains the fatherless and the widow,
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

What do you hear when you read these verses?

Read fourth paragraph, “But there also are...” Do you agree? Certainly, Christ alleviated the immediate suffering of people and performed many miracles of healing—but what happened to all of those people?

Did they avoid aging? Do you think the people who were healed, the paralytic, the lepers, or the blind man, didn’t age, they didn’t get arthritis, didn’t get weak, didn’t have any more suffering and didn’t die?

Is that God’s goal, to relieve immediate suffering but allow people to continue to suffer with aging for years and then die?

What is God’s goal for people? He wants all to come to salvation—what does this mean?

Do you hear anything about salvation in Psalms 146:7-9?

Does it have a dual application with relieving immediate needs, but the more important application is the eternal realities?

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “Proverbs emphasizes...” Do we agree we are not to oppress or take advantage of people?

Does this mean we should seek to deliver every person who is in poverty or homeless?

What would you say about the story of the prodigal son? Did the father in that story sin because he didn’t follow his son and provide for his homeless and penniless son?

Why not?

Why did his father not send aid to his son?

Where is the balance between providing for people and letting people suffer in their situation?

What does love do? What does love seek for others? Can we create a rule that love will use in all situations, or will love have to evaluate the situation and act accordingly, which may be quite different depending on the situation?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, "The psalms of David pass..." What is the justice of God? What do we see of God's justice in the life of David? What did God's law require of David? What did David seek after his great sin?

Did God do justice by forgiving and transforming David?

Did Jesus have to die in order for God to forgive David?

Did Jesus have to die in order for God to heal and transform David? Why or why not?

What did David need in order be healed and transformed? Could David provide this for himself—then where could David receive it?

Is healing and transforming David a just thing for God to do?

Consider this EGW quote:

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. **He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law.** But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and **developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have **remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.** More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. **Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."** Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

What is justice in this quotation? Healing and restoring God's character into human beings. This is only possible because of Christ developing a perfect sinless human character, which becomes the template of our new character that we receive by trust.

Read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Multi-Languages: We are creating resources in diverse languages. We currently have *Could It Be This Simple?* available in Polish and Bulgarian as well as some blogs translated into Bulgarian. The New Paradigm is now available on our website in Spanish and Portuguese. We are working on getting other material in various languages.

New Paradigm about the Investigative Judgment and Sanctuary is now available in print form in Canada, South Africa and Australia. If you would like print copies please contact our hub in your country. A Portuguese and Spanish version are currently available on the website and other languages will be available soon.

Audio version of the Remedy is available for Streaming: Download the free SoundCloud app. No subscription required. Search for “Remedy Bible” or use this link https://soundcloud.com/the_remedy_nt/albums to find it and stream it at no cost. Click “follow” on the album and you will go to it easily in the future.

PODCAST: Come and Reason with Dr. Tim Jennings weekly Podcast is now broadcasting, please follow us.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!! January 17-19, 2020, in Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport) we will have a Come and Reason Ministries: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly.

Check our website for new chapters of *The Remedy* the Psalms will be going up slowly as they are completed and edited. When an entire book of the Old Testament is complete then it will be added to the app and when you update the app you will get the new book. Thank you for your prayers and support as I work on this project.

July 19,20, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Living Truth SDA Church in London, Ontario Canada.

September 13,14, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Gentlebrook Intermediary Care Facility, Hartville, OH.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

November 15-17, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Norwegian SDA Health Worker’s Retreat in Oslo, Norway.

January 17-19, 2020: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly. Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport). See events.comeandreason.com for more details and to sign up.



2017 Q3 The The Least of These - Lesson 5

The Cry of the Prophets

by Russel Atkins

SABBATH

“He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” Micah 6:8 [NKJV]

- What is a prophet?
- Is there any difference between OT prophets and any in the present day?
- What did they “cry”? Is a contemporary prophet “crying” anything different?
- What is justice??
- What does it mean to “love mercy”?
- How does one walk “humbly” with God?
- Why does the Lord “require” these things of mankind?
- What is the solid thread running throughout all of the OT prophets’ books, and all of Scripture, for that matter??

From the lesson:

“As we will see, too, that among the sins and evils that they warned the leaders and people against, one of the biggest was the oppression of the poor, the needy, the helpless among them. Yes, worshiping idols was bad; yes, following false religious practices was bad; but, yes, taking advantage of the weak and poor was worthy of condemnation, as well.”

Was oppression of the poor the disease or a symptom of a disease?

What was the real problem??

Was it “worthy of condemnation”? Did God condemn the children of Israel for this, or did He go to great lengths to heal them?

SUNDAY

The Recurring Call to Justice.

The lesson references Israel’s demand for a king in 1 Samuel 8. Consider the broader context first.

Samuel had appointed his sons to function as priests [read – church leadership] in his stead but they “did not follow his ways” and they accepted bribes [read – used tithe dollars for personal gain] and perverted justice [read – compliance committees]. The citizens of Israel then demanded a king.



Is it too much of a stretch to wonder that if Samuel's sons had been true to their father's [literal and figurative] character, then Israel would have been less likely to demand a king "such as the other nations have"??

God correctly diagnoses their condition and makes it clear that Israel is rejecting Him and not Samuel.

MONDAY

Amos

From the lesson:

"He [Amos] begins on a popular note, listing off the surrounding nations— Syria, Philistia, Phoenicia, Edom, Ammon, and Moab—and detailing their crimes, outrages, and atrocities for which God will punish them [Ed: Really??] (see Amos 1:3–2:3). It is easy to imagine the Israelites applauding these indictments of their enemies, particularly as many of the crimes of these nations had been directed against the Israelites themselves."

And again:

"Then Amos moves a little closer to home, declaring God's judgment against the people of Judah, Israel's southern neighbors in the now-separated kingdoms. Speaking on behalf of God, Amos cites their rejection of God, their disobedience to His commands, and the punishments that would come to them [Ed: Really??] (see Amos 2:4, 5)."

Anyone see a pattern here??

TUESDAY

Micah

The lesson recommends we read Micah 2 & 3 to gain some context for the state of Israel and Judah. Here are some tidbits.

Woe to those who plan iniquity, to those who plot evil on their beds! At morning's light they carry it out because it is in their power to do it.

They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them. They defraud people of their homes, they rob them of their inheritance. Micah 2: 2.

Then I said, "Listen, you LEADERS of Jacob, you RULERS of Israel. Should you not embrace justice, you who hate good and love evil . . . Micah 3: 1. [emphasis mine]

Hear this, you LEADERS of Jacob, you RULERS of Israel, who despise justice and distort all that is right; who build Zion with bloodshed, and Jerusalem with wickedness . . . Micah 3: 9. [emphasis mine]



Consider the verses preceding our memory text:

“With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God??
Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased
with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil?

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”
Micah 6: 6, 7 NKJV.

God is calling out LEADERSHIP. NATIONAL and CHURCH leadership. They are the ones misrepresenting His character to their populace. The rank and file citizens take their cues from leadership. This is why our leaders need to adhere, and be held to a higher standard.

In the bottom section the lesson asks a great question.

“What is the link between doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly before God?”

Any thoughts??

WEDNESDAY

Ezekiel

Check out Ezekiel 4 and wonder at the lengths God and Ezekiel went to in order to capture the attention and arrest the course of the children of Israel.

- Build a copy of the city of Jerusalem and lay siege to it.
- Lie on left side for 390 days. Let that breathe.
- Lie on right side for 40 days.
- Cook food with human dung. Animal dung when Ezekiel protested.

Marvel at the patience and commitment.

From the lesson:

“Interestingly enough, though, the answer is more complicated than just that. Consider Ezekiel’s description: “ ‘ “Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy” ’ ” (Ezek. 16:49, NIV). Though clearly the Lord was not going to overlook the other forms of depravity found in the city, Ezekiel’s focus here was on economic injustice and a lack of care for those in need. Could it be that, in the eyes of God, these economic sins were just as bad as the sexual ones?”

Could it be that the economic and sexual depravity are related? Linked? Connected? Symptomatic?
Could it be that they hold hands and skip across meadows together?



Why do you think the lesson chose to focus on Ezekiel's lack of focus on Sodom's "sexual" sins??
We may need a compliance committee to look in to this . . .

See where this idiocy [the focus on behaviors, i.e. symptoms, instead of the heart condition, i.e. the disease] leads??

THURSDAY

Isaiah

"Come now, and let us reason together", says the Lord, "though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa. 1:18.

Is this, and texts like it, what you think of when you remember the prophet Isaiah?

Do you think of the countless messianic passages, or do you think of God's "anger" and the impending doom on Israel and Judah? What about the preceding texts?

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" Says the Lord. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, Or of lambs or goats.

"When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, To trample My courts?

Bring no more futile sacrifices Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them.

When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.

"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil,

Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow. Isa. 1: 11-17 NKJV.



2019 Q3 The Least of These: Lesson 6 Worship the Creator

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

What does the title of the lesson bring to mind?

What does it mean to worship the Creator?

What would you say is the core, absolute, definable difference between the Creator and all false gods?

Is it the Sabbath? Did the Jews who crucified Christ worship the true God? Did they have the Sabbath? So, Sabbath observance doesn't differentiate those who worship the Creator from those who worship a false god—what does?

What can the Creator do that no other being can do? Create reality—space, time, matter, energy, life—and what does creation operate upon? Design laws, the laws of physics, health, the moral laws.

Created beings cannot do this, thus they always impose rules and call them laws and use coercion to inflict punishment for disobedience.

So, if you want to see the difference between Creator worship and false-god worship look to the laws of God versus the laws of the false gods and what methods are employed in how they govern.

When one breaks a design law what does justice require God to do? Provide remedy to heal and save, lest if God does nothing the law-breaker dies from breaking the law upon which life is constructed.

When one breaks an imposed law what does justice require the false god to do? To inflict punishment—so we can determine whether someone is worshipping the Creator or has a false god concept infecting their view of God by whether they teach that God, in order to be just, must inflict punishment.

While God has desired to teach men that from His own love comes the Gift which reconciles them to Himself, the archenemy of mankind has endeavored to represent God as one who delights in their destruction. Thus the sacrifices and the ordinances designed of Heaven to reveal divine love have been perverted to serve as means whereby sinners have vainly hoped to propitiate, with gifts and good works, the wrath of an offended God. {PK 685.2}

How many religions of the world teach that their god requires some offering or sacrifice be brought to the god?



In Christianity is it ever taught that God requires an offering of a sinless human sacrifice to propitiate His wrath? Yes, but the big distinction that the legal theologians make is they claim that what makes this blood payment of Jesus “Christian” and not pagan is that God Himself provides the sacrifice to propitiate Himself, whereas the pagan gods require the worshipper to bring the sacrifice.

This is a distinction without merit as both gods are gods that function on imposed law and inflict pain, suffering and death upon the sinner if not acted upon by an intermediary to offer something to the god to assuage wrath and anger.

So, the SDA church began as a group of Christians from a variety of different denominational backgrounds which came together to move people away from worshipping pagan gods and imperial/imposed god-concepts to worship the Creator—Him who made the heavens, earth, sea and fountains of water.

EGW wrote:

Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshipping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshipping the true God. {FLB 59.8}

And what did Baal require? Appeasement, offering brought to assuage wrath, because offense to the god required the god inflict punishment. This is Satan’s lie from the beginning.

Let’s examine a long quote and as we go through we will think about each section and ask what it means and whether you agree or disagree:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice.** [What kind of law is Satan describing? A law which created beings can make, a system of rules that require oversight and coercive enforcement. This is Satan’s lie about God’s law and as we look through history we see this repeats itself over and over again.] **...God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner.** [What is the basis of this allegation? What kind of justice is this? What level of thinking? What law is this based upon? Again this is imposed law, and thus the allegation is that to not impose punishment is to not uphold the law. However, when we understand Design law, we realize that justice is not about punishment, but restoring or healing people back to harmony with the design-law.] {DA 761.4}



But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. [Different position how? Different legal position? Or different position in objective reality? Note how] Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. **There was no more that God could do to save him.** [Why? Was Jesus unwilling to give His life for Lucifer? Was Jesus unwilling to pay a "legal penalty"? Did God love Lucifer less than humans? Was God playing favorites? No! No! It was because Lucifer had destroyed in himself the capacity to respond to truth and love. He had seen, understood, and participated in God's love and rejected it. Thus he changed himself, hardened his own heart and corrupted his character. This again, is design law. Just the same way Pharaoh hardened his heart—when truth is presented a person must decide to accept or reject it, when we reject truth we harden, when more truth comes we have an opportunity to repent and be healed, but it requires humbling oneself and acknowledging where the lie was believed. If we refuse and instead reject the additional truth than we harden ourselves more until at some point we destroy the ability to respond to love and truth. This is what Lucifer did. Adam and Eve, while deceived, while infected with fear and selfishness, had not rejected truth that would win them to repentance and had not destroyed within them the faculties capable of responding to truth.] But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. **The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.** [What is it man needs? Is it a legal penalty paid? No, that is what is needed if one is operating under Satan's false view of God's law. But when we understand the truth we need to be set right in heart and mind with God, meaning we need the lies removed and truth to win us to trust and love restored within the heart by the indwelling Spirit of God!] {DA 761.5}

Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; **but mercy does not set aside justice.** [What does this mean? Do we view justice through imposed law or design law? What difference does it make?] **The law reveals the attributes of God's character, [which is what?]** and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. [Why? For the same reason the law of respiration cannot be changed to meet a person drowning. God's law is the protocol upon which life is actually constructed to operate.] God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption. **"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."** 2 Corinthians 5:19. {DA 762.1} [Which means that Christ was carrying out God's purpose to fix what sin did to humanity, set humanity back into harmony with God's law—design! Notice the next description about justice.]

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. **But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. [Notice this is Christ, as a human, using human



abilities, developing a perfect human character and then healing humans back to this perfect state. This is literal not metaphorical.] **Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ.** God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2} [If you see someone drowning, is it right and just to pull them from the water and administer CPR to revive them? What law are you operating under? Why, if you want them to live, must you do this? This is God's justice and what He accomplished for us through Christ.]

God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan's purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God's law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Psalm 85:10. {DA 762.3} [How does Satan attempt to divorce mercy from justice? By an imposed law construct, which results in a split Godhead in which Christ in mercy dies to pay a legal penalty for our sins to a wrathful father who is the administrator of just punishments. Thus, justice is separated from mercy in the way we perceive and describe God—leading to theologies in which Jesus must protect us from the Father. 1. Jesus pleads His blood to the Father. 2. Jesus covers us with His blood so the Father can't see us. 3. Jesus applies His blood to our record books so the Father can't punish us for our bad deeds. 4. Jesus is our heavenly attorney to argue our case before the Father to protect us from His judgment and punishment. 5 Jesus took our place and was executed by His Father on the cross to pay for our sins. All of this is the divorcing of mercy from truth and justice by created a false caricature of the Godhead.]

By His life and His death, Christ proved that God's justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed. Satan's charges were refuted. [How? What was the just or right thing for God to do? Fix the problem, which was accomplished through Christ developing a perfect character. What charges of Satan were refuted? That every sin must meet its punishment, that God's transgressing God's law requires punishment. No, these lies were refuted at the Cross. But Satan still gets legal theologians to teach the lie when they teach that all sins, past, present, future were put on Christ and punished by God at the Cross.] God had given man unmistakable evidence of His love. {DA 762.4}

Another deception was now to be brought forward. [History now repeats itself] Satan declared that mercy destroyed justice, **that the death of Christ abrogated the Father's law.** [What kind of law can be rescinded, changed, or abrogated? Imposed law, the kind of laws created beings make. Design law cannot be changed or abrogated. Thus Satan's allegations that began in heaven that God's law requires punishment, i.e. imposed law, now repeats itself and is accepted by the vast majority of humans, including Christians.] Had it been possible for the law to be changed or abrogated, then Christ need not have died... **It was because the law was changeless, because man could be saved only through obedience to its precepts, that Jesus was lifted up on the cross.** [Why? Because the law is the protocol of life, and only in harmony



with it is there salvation, or healing!] Yet the very means by which Christ established the law Satan represented as destroying it.[How? Twofold, one by declaring the law is no longer binding, which is only possible if the law were imposed rules. But, also, amongst those who claim the law is still binding, by tricking them into accepting the imposed construct, thus they claim loyalty to God's law and all the commandments, while they present it as imposed rules requiring God to inflict punishment. They, thereby misrepresent God, the Cross and God's law and ultimately practice Satan's methods of coercion as they will one day force other to worship as they do.] Here will come the last conflict of the great controversy between Christ and Satan... [This is where we are today in Christianity, fighting a battle over God's law, not which day of worship, but which law—imposed or Design law. We are to call people back to worship Him who made the heavens... to Designer worship.] {DA 762.5}

By substituting human law for God's law, Satan will seek to control the world... [How? Not simply by a change in rules, but a change in the entire idea of law from the law the Creator builds life upon, to imposed rules so that Christians will seek to take control of governments and enforce their beliefs upon others. Notice the next paragraph...] {DA 763.1}

Men will surely set up their laws to counterwork the laws of God. They will seek to compel the consciences of others, and in their zeal to enforce these laws they will oppress their fellow men. [Here we have it—the use of compelling power, which is always used in imposed law systems. This is how Christianity presents God today. That God, in order to be just, must punish sin, just as Satan declared in heaven, thus history repeats itself.] {DA 763.2}

The warfare against God's law, which was begun in heaven, will be continued until the end of time. Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world. All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men. Here the dividing line will be drawn. There will be but two classes. Every character will be fully developed; and all will show whether they have chosen the side of loyalty or that of rebellion. {DA 763.3} [Notice the paragraph, it is about developing character, character of love like Jesus, in which we sacrifice ourselves for others, present truth in love and leave others free. Or, character like the beast, where we use compelling power to coerce conformity! This is the test we all must face.]

Then the end will come. God will vindicate His law and deliver His people. Satan and all who have joined him in rebellion will be cut off. Sin and sinners will perish, root and branch... [Why? Mercy—God would not use His power to keep people in a place of torment, but grant them their choice to be separate from Him, the only source of life.] {DA 763.4}

This is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. The rejecters of His mercy reap that which they have sown. God is the fountain of life; and when one chooses the service of sin, he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life. [This is design law, not imposed penalties!] He is "alienated from the life of God." Christ says, "All they that hate Me love death." Ephesians 4:18; Proverbs 8:36. God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles. This accomplished, they receive



the results of their own choice. By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that **His very presence is to them a consuming fire.** The glory of Him who is love will destroy them. {DA 764.1}

At the beginning of the great controversy, the angels did not understand this. [What did angels not understand? God's law as design law, as an outworking of His character of love. They were confused by Satan's lies that God's law functions like human law. Thus history repeats itself as humans suffer the same confusion.] Had Satan and his host then been left to reap the full result of their sin, they would have perished; **but it would not have been apparent to heavenly beings that this was the inevitable result of sin. A doubt of God's goodness would have remained in their minds as evil seed,** to produce its deadly fruit of sin and woe. [This is how many Christians today, including in our own church, view things; they fail to understand the truth of God's law and instead teach the same distortion that God must kill the wicked, rather than the truth that unremedied sin itself results in death!] {DA 764.2}

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

And how will organizations, including churches, function if they embrace the imperial/imposed law method? They will use compelling power to coerce others. We can see these principles in the governments of the world, we see them in the church of the Dark Ages, and we must be on guard to prevent them from taking root in our church today. Consider this quote:

I was shown God's people waiting for some change to take place,--a compelling power to take hold of them. But they will be disappointed, for they are wrong. They must act; they must take hold of the work themselves, and earnestly cry to God for a true knowledge of themselves. The scenes which are passing before us are of sufficient magnitude to cause us to arouse, and urge the truth home to the hearts of all who will listen. The harvest of the earth is nearly ripe.--Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 261. {ChS 43.3}

Men are educated to look to men, and to depend on men. One man, by virtue of his position, exercises authority over others as if they were to be led by lines, this way and that, as dumb animals. God has not directed in this way. God is our chief, God is our instructor, and to him we must look. We must ask the Holy Spirit's guidance, and expect to be led and controlled by it. **The church organization is to be respected, but it is not to be made in any way a galling yoke. Men are not to assume the prerogative of God, and think to rule and coerce and oppress the souls of God's purchased possessions.** All heaven is indignant at what men, with complacency, will do to their fellow men, claiming at the same time to be representatives of Jesus Christ. They too often represent the spirit and character of Satan. {The Paulson Collection 399.4}



Do we have clarity on what it means to worship the Creator verses all false gods?

This battle between the two views of God's law has been going on since Satan started his war in heaven, all through human history. And in the SDA church in 1888 when the Holy Spirit brought the righteousness by faith message—the message that when we trust God we become the righteousness of God, just as Scripture says in 2Cor 5:21. This message was the advancing of design law, the worship of the Creator God, but it was rejected by the legal/penal theologians who have since that day taught that we do not become the righteousness of God, but are declared to be righteous even though we are not.

But, there are many voices throughout Christianity and within the SDA church who are carrying forward the truth about God. Pastor Alex Goloventko sent me this quote out of the SDA Elder's Handbook, published in 2013:

“The good news of the Gospel is that God is love. This news was in stark contrast to the pagan appeasement religions of Jesus’ time, as well as to legalistic misrepresentations of God. Even today, while many know the good news of Christ’s abundant grace, there remains a distorted image of God as a demanding tyrant and judge. The message of Jesus is—and was—that God is love, His law is love, and His grace is love. In recognition of this attribute of God’s character, the church experiences a revival of godliness. We do what we do not to earn God’s favor by merit, but because He has bestowed it upon us already.”¹

SUNDAY

The first paragraph references the Commandment, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” Why? Why did God give them this law? Because of a design law, the law of worship—we become like what we admire and worship—by beholding we are changed.

We are the highest created beings on planet earth and there is nothing on earth we can worship that will advance or develop us, anything we worship on earth degrades us. So God says to worship Him because He wants us to grow to the highest pinnacles of development possible.

Romans 1 Paul describes this when he writes that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and preferred images made with their own hands and their minds became darkened depraved and futile.

We see the same thing in the OT:

But their idols are silver and gold,
made by the hands of men.

⁵ They have mouths, but cannot speak,
eyes, but they cannot see;

¹ Elders Handbook. (2013) p.117.



⁶ they have ears, but cannot hear,
noses, but they cannot smell;
⁷ they have hands, but cannot feel,
feet, but they cannot walk;
nor can they utter a sound with their throats.
⁸ **Those who make them will be like them,
and so will all who trust in them.** Ps 115:4-8 NIV84

The lesson talks about how Israel fell into idolatry over and over again—what about when Jesus came upon the earth? Have you ever wondered why Jesus waited so long into human history to come the first time? What was finally achieved by the time Jesus came? That the people given the script, the blueprint, were finally *appearing* to keep it. From an external behavioral perspective they were following the blueprint from God, no longer worshipping idols.

And how did they treat Jesus? And what would the angels and onlooking universe and us learn by seeing this? It isn't about following a script of religious rules, but about healing the heart.

Man looks on the outward appearance but the Lord looks on the heart! 1Sam 16:7

How is this truth another evidence of the tension between imposed law versus design law?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Throughout the Bible..." Why? Why does God give us reasons to worship Him?

What does God want from us? Our love, trust, loyalty, devotion—how can these be obtained? Can you get this with threats of punishment?

So what are the reasons we have to worship God?

Read fourth paragraph, "God's justice is..." How do you describe God's justice? How do we define it? What is the measure of it? How is God's justice different than human justice?

What law lens do you see justice through?

What questions come to mind that seem to make God's justice hard to understand?

Read last paragraph, "Second, God's justice..." Is being just or dispensing justice or acting justly different in any measurable way from doing right, dispensing righteousness or acting rightly?

What do you think the lesson is trying to say by separating justice and righteousness?



Hebrews 5 says that infant milk is repentance from acts that lead to death, in other words focusing on the dos and don'ts and those at such a state are not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness—why not?

What is the teaching about righteousness that the penal legal camp is not acquainted with? Righteousness by faith, 2Cor 5:21, we become the righteousness of God. But the penal legal camp teaches we don't become righteous, we are declared to be righteous even though we are not!

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "During the better times..." Is there a relationship with working hard to be religious and not actually being on God's team?

What of this quote:

The effort to earn salvation by one's own works inevitably leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey. All this turns the mind away from God to self. His love dies out of the heart, and with it perishes love for his fellow men. A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard. **The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, and causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies.** {MB 123.1}

The Pharisees were of this class. They came forth from their religious services, not humbled with a sense of their own weakness, not grateful for the great privileges that God had given them. They came forth filled with spiritual pride, and their theme was, "Myself, my feelings, my knowledge, my ways." Their own attainments became the standard by which they judged others. Putting on the robes of self-dignity, they mounted the judgment seat to criticize and condemn. {MB 123.2}

What is the underlying problem here? It is substituting design law with imperial law which leads to rule oriented thinking—let's examine this further in Wednesday lesson.

WEDNESDAY

The titled for the day's lesson is The Way to Worship.

What is the result of worship? We become like the God we worship and thus the result of true worship is we become like the true God in how we live, how we relate toward others, which results in the methods we practice in society.



So, we do justice to the poor and the needy—which is what? It seeks to restore them to autonomy, to people of self-sufficiency, to give them opportunity for growth, development, advancement as human beings and in particular into godliness of character.

What do we not do? We do not add burdens or obstacles to people's lives that make it harder for them, Jesus said:

“And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them. Luke 11:46 NIV84

What is Jesus criticizing? He is NOT criticizing living in harmony with design law. He is criticizing covering over design law with imperialism and lists of rules, even if intended to help live in harmony with design law, because once this focus occurs it obscures the truth about God and obstructs trust in God.

From the book *Halakhah: The Rabbinical Idea of Law*:

Throughout Deuteronomy the people are implored “to follow the mitzvah which God has commanded”—that is, the whole of God's instructions. In the hands of the rabbis, however, the term gains a more **concrete** meaning: mitzvah is a particular instance of halakhic-legal obligation. The rabbis held that the Torah is comprised of 613 individual *mitzvah*, each a foundational source of the law. p. 18

We can see the rabbis' halakhic consciousness at work in their analysis of the Torah's first mitzvah. The opening chapter in Genesis records, “God blessed [Adam and Eve] and said to them ‘Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it.’” (1:28) ON its face, this instruction does not explain what (if any) specific action is called for. Indeed, it has been reasonably interpreted as a poetic description of things to come, or a charge or blessing to humankind generally. The rabbis, however, understand it as a specific mitzvah that generates a legal duty incumbent [upon] ever individual (male) Jew. To satisfy the legal requirement, the Mishnah rules that each male must sire at least two children. The Mishnah then presents a debate: in one view (held by students of the first-century mishnaic sage, Shammai), two male children are required; in the other (held by students of Shammai's frequent interlocutor, Hillel), the requirement is for one male and one female (m.Yevamot 6:6)... p. 19

Having assumed a legal framework, the Talmud—an elaborate commentary on the Mishnah compiled in the centuries following the Mishnah's dissemination—investigates numerous derivative questions. What happens if the children themselves cannot reproduce—do they “count” toward fulfilling the halakhic obligation? What if the children die—must the father have more? If the deceased children lived long enough to have children of their own, do these grandchildren count in lieu of the deceased parents (b.Yevamot 63a)? p. 19

What if the child is the product of an illicit relationship (e.g., incest or adultery)? What in if the children develop reproductive deficiencies? p. 20



Another example: though the biblical text prohibits *melakhah*—typically translated as “work” or “labor”—on Shabbat, it provides limited guidance as to what exactly this phrase means. The Mishnah, for its part, presents thirty-nine base categories of prohibited activities, one of which is writing (m.Shabbat 12:1-6). Here we learn that while a person who writes only one letter is exempt, one who writes two letters is liable for violating Shabbat. Use of ink, dye, or permanent liquids generates liability; while colored water or etching in the dirt do not. Writing with the hand is a problem; writing with the foot, mouth, or elbow is not. Cases even more unusual than these are also taken under consideration, for example writing one letter on the ceiling and another on the floor, or two single letters on separate pieces of paper that are later put together. In the modern era, halakhists discussed whether it is permitted to piece together a puzzle on Shabbat (potentially problematic since it creates an intelligible picture) or to play Scrabble (generally okay, but in the Deluxe Edition the board’s grooves hold the letters in place more permanently and may thereby produce a “writing”).

Do you see, regardless of the sincerity of the people involved, such a focus on legalism, on the right rules, on imperial law, results in obstructing God’s plan, it turns the mind to self and away from God and His design law for life?

How do church leaders do this?

Do we do this with behaviorally focused religion rather than heart transforming truth?

What about Sabbath keeping rules, do we add burdens to people’s lives increasing guilt and making it harder for people to experience God’s healing in their lives?

Why is the Sabbath to be called a delight? Can you force people to enjoy things? So what kind of law is being described?

It is all about heart attitude and heart change, which is design law, healing!

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “As we will see...” Was it only Jesus that faced criticism from religious leaders, or has that been true throughout human history?

- Who opposed Moses? Aaron and Miriam
- Who opposed Elijah?
- Who opposed the Apostles?
- Who opposed the Reformers?
- What about today?

Why do religious leaders so often find themselves working against God and God’s people?



Is the type of law they operate upon involved?

When you believe God's law is imposed/imperial then what must one do with law-breakers? Inflict punishment, set rules, enforce compliance...but when God's law is design law, we educate and set healthy boundaries, but we leave people free and reap the results.

The lesson points us to Matthew 23, let's read it from *The Remedy*:

This is the chapter in which Jesus gives a long list of woes—how is this often heard? Have you ever heard it as a long list of threats from God—woe to you because one day God will make you pay for the wrongs you have done? That way of hearing the passage comes from the imperial law lens. *The Remedy* is through design law, see if you notice the difference:

Then Jesus said to the people and to his disciples: ² "The theology professors, church lawyers and pastors sit in the instructor's seat, like Moses, and know the history,³ so listen carefully to all they teach. But think for yourselves and don't follow their example, for they don't understand the true meaning of what they teach, as evidenced by their failure to live in harmony with it.⁴ They create man-made rules that discourage, exhaust and weigh people down with religious ritual, fear, and guilt. They control people this way and refuse to relieve these false burdens.

⁵ "All their actions are designed for effect—to be seen—and they yearn to create a sense of admiration and respect for themselves: They make prayer beads and carry them for display, and wear special clothing meant to mark them as distinct;⁶ they love to be recognized and honored wherever they go, and especially they seek the highest exaltation in church.⁷ They also love any attention they can get when people stop them in the shops or restaurants and call them Professor, Doctor, or Pastor.

⁸ "But don't let people idolize you, for you are all equals—learning the truth from the same Teacher.⁹ And be sure you don't surrender your thinking to religious leaders—like young children do to their fathers—for you have one Father in heaven and you must surrender yourselves only to him.¹⁰ Nor are you to claim to be the final authority on truth—determining what is right and wrong—like teachers are to their students, for you have the One true Teacher, the Messiah.¹¹ So those who are truly the greatest will give the most of themselves in helping others.¹² For whoever promotes self will destroy self, but whoever humbles self will experience healing and exaltation.

¹³ "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! Your false teachings obstruct people from being healed and entering God's kingdom of love. You certainly are not healed and do not enter into salvation, but worse still, you actively work to prevent others, who want to be saved, from being healed.¹⁴ Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You con widows from their homes, yet



you make public displays of praying long prayers. Unhealed you choose to remain! Your suffering will be most severe.

¹⁵ "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You go around the world trying to convert one person, and when you do, you indoctrinate them so deeply into your false penal system that they become twice as much the child of lies and selfishness as you are.

¹⁶ "Misery is yours, you irrational and unthinking teachers! Unbelievably, you say: 'If anyone swears by the temple, it doesn't count; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, then they are bound by the oath.'¹⁷ You make no sense at all! Think about it: Which is truly most important—the gold, or the temple that makes the gold holy?¹⁸ Another of your sayings is: 'If anyone swears by the altar, it doesn't count; but if anyone swears by the gift on the altar then they are bound by the oath.'¹⁹ You don't understand the simplest truths! Think about it: Which is truly most important—the gift, or the altar that makes the gift holy?²⁰ Don't you get it? The one who swears by the altar swears by it and everything on it.²¹ And whoever swears by the temple, swears by it and by the One whose dwelling place it is.²² And oaths sworn before heaven are promises made before God's throne; and the One who sits on it knows the true intent of the heart.

²³ "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You keep rules, such as proudly paying a pre-tax tithe and even giving a tenth of the herbs in your garden, but you fail to do what actually matters—to live in harmony with God's Law, which is his design for life. You fail to 'do what is right because it is right.' You are not merciful but judgmental and critical, and you cannot be trusted to protect those struggling with sin. You should have lived lives of love for others, without neglecting the simple instructions of God.²⁴ You are truly irrational and unthinking teachers! You are so focused on keeping the rules—such as dietary laws—that you fail to understand that their purpose is to promote health. You're so confused that you actually think it would be a virtue to die of starvation rather than eat something not on the 'approved' list.

²⁵ "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You work so hard to make yourselves look good on the outside, but the inside—the heart—is full of selfishness, arrogance, and greed.²⁶ You truly don't understand anything about God's kingdom! The mind, the character, the heart—they all must be cleansed first, and then the outside will also be clean.

²⁷ "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You are like highly polished burial vaults: they look beautiful on the outside, but inside are nothing but the bones of the dead, and everything that defiles.²⁸ You are just like that. On the outside you appear to people as good and righteous, but on the inside you are full of lies, selfishness, and evil. You are great counterfeits!



²⁹ "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You go to great lengths to give praise and honor to God's spokespersons and church leaders of the past.³⁰ You say, 'If we would have lived back then, we would never have rejected God's spokespersons or joined those who killed them.'³¹ By such claims you condemn yourselves, because you acknowledge such actions are wrong, yet by your actions today you reveal you are the true descendants of those who murdered God's spokespersons. You're just like them³² and your sins pile on top of the sins of your forefathers!

³³ "You slippery serpents! You brood of venomous vipers! You think you can cure yourselves with your own snake oil?³⁴ It's because of your false remedy—your penal legal trickery—that I am sending my spokespersons, instructors and Bible scholars, some of whom you will attack, kill, and crucify; others you will beat—some physically, some verbally—right in church, running them out of town with beatings and the most vicious gossip.³⁵ The pure and holy lives that have been sacrificed through history—from Abel, all the way through to Zechariah the son of Berekiah, who was murdered right in church, at the altar—testify the truth to you.³⁶ But the sad truth is that this generation will reject all this evidence.

³⁷ "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you sick and hard-hearted people who have rejected the Remedy, killed God's spokespersons, and stoned those sent to you with the cure! How my heart has longed to pull you to safety, like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not let me.³⁸ Look around: I leave your house to you abandoned without Remedy, and infected without cure.³⁹ For I tell you plainly, when you see me next, you will say: 'He is the One sent by God to reveal God's true character and provide the Remedy.'"

FRIDAY

Discuss questions 1 and 3

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!! January 17-19, 2020, in Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport) we will have a Come and Reason Ministries: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly.

Check our website for new chapters of *The Remedy* the Psalms will be going up slowly as they are completed and edited. When an entire book of the Old Testament is complete then it will be added to the app and when you update the app you will get the new book. Thank you for your prayers and support as I work on this project.

August 9, 10, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Akron, OH, SDA Church.

September 13,14, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Gentlebrook Intermediary Care Facility, Hartville, OH.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

November 15-17, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Norwegian SDA Health Worker's Retreat in Oslo, Norway.

January 17-19, 2020: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly. Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport). See events.comeandreason.com for more details and to sign up.



2019 Q3 The Least of These: Lesson 7

Jesus and Those in Need

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

This week I received a couple of emails, both expressing concerns about the same comment I made a few weeks ago about the sad case of a parent and child drowning at the border. Here is one of those emails:

In your 7/27/19 sabbath school lesson, you said parents who brought their children to the US border were ultimately responsible for putting them in such dangerous situations, situations so bad that some even drowned trying to cross the river with their little ones. Do you think they loved their children less than parents in the US do?

My reply:

Your question is not relevant to the point. The point is that all parents have the primary responsibility for the welfare of their children. It may very well be that this person loved their child very much and did what he did hoping to give his child a better life—but that parent still took the risk to put his child in danger, no human government did that, not the US government, not the Mexican government, it was the parent. There are legal ways to enter this country—my sister in law is from the Philippines and had to go through a lengthy process to enter this country. She made a choice to come in to the country through the methods established to allow for it. This parent chose another method—who is responsible for the choice of this parent? The problem in society today is that a corrosive idea is being promoted that if some other party does wrong (notice I am assuming the worst-case scenario that the other party is in the wrong), then we are no longer responsible for our decision-making, it is the other party's fault. This is the point of my comment.

SABBATH

“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.” (Luke 4:18,19 NKJV)

What do you understand this passage to reveal?

- What is the gospel?
 - The good news, about what?
 - About God, which has what purpose—what is the point of preaching the gospel?
 - To save—which means what?
 - To heal hearts and minds back to unity with God.
 - How is preaching the gospel related to saving people?
 - What is the problem that the preaching of the gospel addresses?



- Who are the poor?
 - Is this referring primarily to financial poverty or something else?
 - Why in the beatitudes did Jesus say “blessed are the poor in spirit” in Matthew 5:3 but Luke records Jesus’ words as “blessed are the poor” in Luke 6:20?
 - Why or how are the poor blessed?
- Who are the brokenhearted?
 - broken or injured or afflicted by what primarily?
 - It is primarily about physical injury or it is the damage from sin?
- Who are the captives and what liberty is Jesus bringing?
 - The Jews believed it the Messiah would deliver them from captivity to Rome—is that the gospel?
 - From what was Jesus bringing freedom?
 - How does Jesus bring us freedom?
- Who are the blind and what does it mean to give them sight?
 - Is it primarily referring to healing physical blindness?
 - What causes spiritual blindness, what heals it?
 - Is this related to the message to Laodicea that we need the eye salve so we can see (Rev 3:18)?
- Who did Jesus set free, who are the oppressed, and free from what?
 - Is Jesus teaching a penal legal theology which claims we are set free from the punishment from sin while we remain in sin?
 - Or is it that Jesus came to set us free from sin? What does this mean?
 - If Jesus sets us free from sin where is the activity of Jesus taking place? Is Jesus in heaven working upon the Father to propitiate His wrath or is Jesus, via the Holy Spirit, working in our hearts to restore in us His law and character?

From the Remedy:

"God's Spirit is on me because I am his anointed One to bring the Remedy to the afflicted. He has sent me to bring freedom to those held in the bondage of fear and selfishness, and a clear understanding to those blinded by Satan's lies, to exterminate oppression, to remove human brokenness,¹⁹ and to make God's pleasure known this year."

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “God has given in His word...” How do you hear this, through what law lens, design or imposed?

If we hear this through imposed law lens, then we conclude God inflicts punishment and is the source of pain, suffering and death.

But if we hear it through design law then we realize God doesn’t alter His design or change His laws to prevent sinners from reaping what they have sown.



Just as the quote says—look to the Cross of Calvary—and what did God do to Jesus there? Nothing! God didn't use any power to hurt Jesus or punish Jesus. God withdrew Himself and let Jesus experience what Jesus chose—to die in order to fix the sin problem.

So there is a punishment for sin, the question is whether it comes from sin or comes from God.

Executive justice—what does this mean? It means executing, or carrying out what the law requires—well, what law? So it is saying God will act in harmony with His law and not change His law to protect the unrepentant.

If you have human imposed law that means the ruling authority has to use its power to inflict the punishment. But if you have design law it means the ruling authority leaves the person free to reap what they have chosen.

One of the problems we all struggle with is the ability to assimilate and integrate multiple pieces of evidence rather than forming ideas and beliefs off of a few data points.

The quote above will be used by some as the final word to support an authoritarian and punishing god—however, the wise person will seek to harmonize that quote with others by the same author to come to a view consistent with reality.

Here is the first of two quotes to integrate into our understanding. We just read “God has given in His word decisive evidence that He will punish the transgressors of His law.” Now the same author writes:

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. **Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character,** and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. **By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.** {1SM 235.2}

What law is being described? Design law, the sin changes sinners and in the end, when God sets them free they reap eternal death. Is there a punishment for sin? From where does it come? The punishment is not because God kills those who would otherwise live, but God doesn't use His power to prevent what sin does to them.

In other words, He executes justice, i.e. does what is right and applies the design laws of His government, leaving them free to reap what they have chosen.

Consider this quote which puts it all together from the same book just one page later, *The Great Controversy*:



God has given to men a declaration of His character and of His method of dealing with sin. [which is what? In harmony with His character of love and methods as Creator, which means design law] "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Exodus 34:6, 7. "All the wicked will He destroy." "The transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off." Psalm 145:20; 37:38. **The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion; yet all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being.** {GC 541.2} [What do you hear? Is this an infliction of external punishment, or the application of design law? What power, it says the power and authority of the divine government—what power do you think power like human governments or like the Creator God of love? Does you keep in mind while reading things like this other quotes like this one from *The Desire of Ages*: "God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. **Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love;** and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. **God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.**" {DA 759.1} So what power? The power of love and truth! But how can love and truth punish? Keep reading...]

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. [Can God get this by threatening and then inflicting external punishment on people who would otherwise not reap it? No! Imperial/imposed law violates the law of liberty and coerces and forces and thus destroys love. He can only get this by leaving people free!] He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. **And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes.** [What does God want? Our love and trust—and how is that achieved? So, you see Satan's power of lies to get us to conceive of God as a being other than love, a dictator who inflicts pain and suffering, which undermines our ability to love and trust God. This is what penal substitution theology does.] {GC 541.3}

The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God. Christ declared that He taught nothing except that which He had received from His Father. **The principles of the divine government are in perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, "Love your enemies."** [Wait, love your enemies is the principles upon which God executes justice and punishes sin? How does that work? Only by design law!] **God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited.** [What does this mean? Executes justice—what is justice, doing what is right, and what is right? Is it right to give people the freedom to choose? Is it right to let people reap what they have chosen after repeated attempts to win them to love and trust? And when does God let them go to reap



what they have chosen, when they are still healable/savable or when they have destroyed within themselves the faculties that respond to truth and love? And how is it good for the wicked for God to do this? Because, if God did not let the wicked go, did not let the wicked who are hardened in sin die, then God would create, by His power, a place of torment and God would never do this. Thus, for mercy, for love, for the best for the wicked, He executes justice, the right thing for them and sets them free from Him the only source of life.] **He would make them happy if He could do so in accordance with the laws of His government and the justice of His character.** [What are the laws of His government? Design laws and you can't force people to love you, or enjoy goodness and purity] He surrounds them with the tokens of His love, He grants them a knowledge of His law, and follows them with the offers of His mercy; but they despise His love, make void His law, and reject His mercy. While constantly receiving His gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that He abhors their sins. The Lord bears long with their perversity; **but the decisive hour will come at last, when their destiny is to be decided.**[decided by who? a judge in heaven or each person decides their own destiny?] **Will He then chain these rebels to His side? Will He force them to do His will?** {GC 541.4}

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power are not prepared to enter the presence of God. [Why can't they enter God's presence? Is it because God doesn't want them there, God is angry and wrathful and hasn't had the price paid to Him for that unrepentant sinner? No, it is because of their condition!] Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become **fixed in their characters.** [Fixed by who? How did it become fixed? What law caused it to become fixed?] Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? **Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish.** What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? {GC 542.1}

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,-- every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless **streams of light flowing** upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,--[what does that light look like? From where does it come? Do you integrate texts like these: "the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." (Dan 7:9-10 NIV84) "for our 'God is a consuming fire.'" (Heb 12:29 NIV84)? Is this fire harmful? Do the righteous get injured by it? Why not? What about the wicked, why do they experience pain in this fire? From where does the pain come, from the fire or from unremedied sin?] could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? **Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no;** years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; but they have never trained the mind to love purity;



they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction,** that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. [What is being described? Do you integrate texts like “They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!” (Rev 6:16 NIV84)? What kind of law? What is the reason? Is God acting justly? He is executing justice?] **The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.** [Who decides the fate of the wicked? What does it mean voluntary with themselves? It is what they want, is it right and just on God’s part to grant them exclusion from heaven? What kind of law?] {GC 542.2}

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that the wicked are incurable. [Why are they lost? Who made them incurable? Is this just on God’s part? Is it an infliction that their condition does not bring upon them?]{GC 543.1}

Can you make sense of the quote in Friday’s lesson now?

SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, “But in Mary’s understanding...” Why? What is God’s goal for human beings? Salvation, delivery from sin, eternal life in sinless perfection in close relationship with God.

Is this God’s goal only for the humble, downtrodden and poor or is it God’s goal for all human beings?

Then, why does God seem to have a particular regard for the humble, downtrodden and poor?

What law lens do you see it through? If you see it through human law, which is Satan’s worldview—then the rich and powerful exploit the poor and their actions are abusive to the poor, so God is in the business paying people back, pain for pain, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. So people teach God is coming to inflict punishment on people. He is more concerned with righting the wrongs perpetrated upon the poor and downtrodden and therefore God spends more energy and time on the poor than on the rich, because the rich are not as deserving.

But, if you understand design law, how reality actually works, you realize God cannot heal any person’s heart/mind without the freewill consent and active participation of that person. Why? Because to do so would destroy the individuality of anyone who doesn’t choose to embrace truth for themselves.

Thus, the humble, downtrodden and poor are often more willing to reach out to God, to acknowledge their own helplessness, to open their hearts, to surrender self, to accept God’s methods and principles, whereas the rich and powerful are often deceived into thinking they are fine the way they are.



So God has particular regard for the downtrodden because they are open to being saved by Him, whereas many of the rich and powerful are not.

Read last paragraph, “Right at the beginning...” What makes Jesus’ kingdom different than the kingdoms of the world?

How would you describe the differences?

Jesus said to Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world, what kinds of kingdoms operate in this world?

Here is a comment from the book *Acts of the Apostles* what do you think?

"Whereunto," asked Christ, "shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?" Mark 4:30. He could not employ the kingdoms of the world as a similitude. **In society He found nothing with which to compare it. Earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power; but from Christ's kingdom every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion, is banished. This kingdom is to uplift and ennoble humanity.** {AA 12.2}

How do human governments function? What methods do they use? Why? What law are all human governments built upon?

But Jesus said His kingdom doesn’t operate upon the principles of this sinful world, what kind of law is Jesus’ kingdom built upon? Design law, the big ones are love, truth, freedom.

Jesus said to Pilate:

I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” (John 18:37 NIV84)

What kind of kingdom operates upon truth? Do any kingdoms of the world operate upon pure truth, never deceiving, never using falsehood?

So, what is upside down in God’s kingdom?

- It is not power over—it is power under—Jesus in John 13 states that all power was given to Him and He immediately gets up and serves others. In God’s kingdom those with the most abilities, power, resources are to serve those with the least.
- There is not dictatorial approach—rules imposed and enforced with threat of punishment, there is truth, presented in love, leaving others free—how should the church practice this method?
- The more you give, the more you receive, in the world it is thought the more you take the more you receive
- First will be last, but last will be first—what does this mean? How does this work in the church?



- other examples?

MONDAY

Read third paragraph, “Jesus adopted these verses...” So glad the lesson pointed out that it is both spiritual and practical—absolutely true—why? Why are spiritual truths always practical truths? Because of design law—how reality is built. But if you reject design law the so-called spiritual truths become impractical and often come to contradict reality and cause harm.

Examples of both:

- Indulgences—based on imposed law, sins are legal breaking of God’s rules, broken rules require some penalty be paid, so the idea of indulgences came forth to allow people to pay the church a monetary sum in order to cancel their legal sin-debt. This led to much abuse of people.
- Is the practice of indulgences the only problem with the imposed law view of sin or does it manifest in other ways? What about people seeking legal pardon, erasure of sins from record books, rather than transformation of character?
- Design law, sin is deviation from the laws God built reality to operate upon and thus damages the sinner. No salvation can occur for those who refuse to be restored to harmony with God’s law. But, surrendering to Christ and following Him leads one to live their life in harmony with God’s law and this is always practical:
 - The cruel becomes kind—and what happens? They have less conflict in their relationships. They have less fear, less anxiety, less stress, and thereby better physical and mental health.
 - The wronged forgive and see others truthfully—meaning accurately, and assess the trustworthiness of others so set healthy boundaries. Thus, they don’t harbor grudges, remain bitter or angry but also don’t continually expose themselves to mistreatment. This results in better physical, mental and relational health.
 - Those without self-control, when they come to trust God, develop self-control and they get sober, they stop cheating on their spouses, they stop stealing to support their gambling, they stop over-eating and they experience better physical, mental, and relational health.

The point is that pursuing spiritual development through design law understanding always leads to practical applications, not just eternal-life benefits by claiming some legal payment in a book in heaven, but immediate benefits in this temporal life.

But the imposed law lie, leads people to live lives of frustration, of religious rituals, works and various prayerful claims, without either eternal-life or practical benefits. They have a form of godliness but without the power. This is the problem with much of Christianity and why there is no difference in Christian homes and non-Christian homes in child abuse, spouse abuse or addictions.



Read last paragraph, “When Jesus sent out...” Why is healing so closely tied to the sharing of the gospel?

What kind of law does healing people operate upon? This is why, doctors can only get patients well in harmony with the laws of health—compassion, good intentions, love for them, will not heal them if they insist on violating the laws of health. Only in harmony with the laws of health is there health.

Likewise, only in harmony with God’s design laws for life is there eternal life. This is reality, all the arbitrary rules of human governments don’t make a difference. Governments can pass laws to make marijuana legal they cannot pass laws to make it healthy.

Thus, the healing arts demonstrates most powerfully the plan of salvation, which is God’s plan to heal the species back to perfection and this only occurs in harmony with God’s design laws for life.

It is in harmonizing the medical with the theological we get the most effective gospel message. The two chief contributors to New Testament was a physician and a theologian: Luke wrote 27% of the New Testament and Paul wrote 23% and John wrote 20%.

So, what method do we use to find truth? The integrative evidence based approach which requires the harmonization of three threads: Scripture, Science, and Real Life Experiences: So, the three big contributors where Paul—theologian—expert in Scripture; Luke—physician—expert in Science; and John—regular unspecialized person—expert in real life experiences.

Think about how much irrational ideas you can eliminate if you use the laws of health as a template and integrate Scripture with Science and Experience:

- A you have been infected with Ebola and are dying; you are taken to the hospital because all recognize something is wrong. And you are told you need to eat a piece of communion bread and drink a sip of communion wine in order to be well; or you need to go through a ritual of baptism; or you need to sacrifice an animal and present its blood before an altar; or you need to claim another human being died of Ebola, but was resurrected in perfect health and you want their health records put in your record at the hospital.
- Do you see how none of these ideas actually benefits the person dying of Ebola—likewise none of these ideas actually heals sinners.
- What we need is a real remedy—so when you go to the hospital with Ebola, you are told they have a remedy procured by a person who suffered with Ebola, but his immune system destroyed the infection and developed antibodies and they would like to give you a transfusion of his antibodies that will cure you.
- Jesus came and partook of our sin condition “he was made to be sin though he knew no sin” and “was tempted in every way just as we are without sin” so that “by his death he might destroy death and bring life and immortality to light” and thus we become “partakers of the divine nature” through him and “become the righteousness of God.”
- So the symbols are to teach reality:



- Bread symbol for Word made flesh—truth, which we ingest and it destroys lies and wins to trust and we open the heart to receive the blood (life is in the blood) of Jesus via the Holy Spirit and we become partakers of the divine nature.
- Baptism is symbolic of immersing heart and mind into the cleansing waters of the Holy Spirit to wash away fear and selfishness and rise in newness of life with new heart and right spirit.
- Sacrificial animal was to teach of a Savior who would die to create a remedy to cure our condition—the animal itself had no healing benefit. One needs the real remedy the symbol pointed to.

In the book *Evangelism* I read the following:

As the right arm is to the body, so is the medical missionary work to the third angel's message. But the right arm is not to become the whole body. The work of seeking the outcasts is important, but it is not to become the great burden of our mission.--Medical Ministry, pp. 311, 312. (1899) {Ev 549.3}

Why the right arm? Why not the whole body?

Because while physical healing operates upon design law and is powerful in demonstrating the plan of salvation—the plan of salvation is not ultimately about healing the body. It is about healing the heart/mind/soul/character and this healing also operates upon design law. Thus our primary concern is to heal the hearts and minds of people, which is only achieved in a trust relationship with our Creator God. Thus the third angels' message is to call people back to worship Him who made the heavens, earth, sea and fountains of water—Designer worship and reject the imposed, dictator views of God!

If it was merely about ridding people of poverty, why didn't Jesus, instead of multiplying the fishes and loaves, multiply the coins Peter found in the fishes mouth and give every person a million gold coins? Why didn't Jesus do this?

Consider what would happen if every person in the world woke up today and had unlimited money available to them. Would all evil, crime, neglect, abuse, homelessness, exploitation be eliminated?

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, "We might expect..." What happened, as far as we know, to all the people Jesus healed, the blind, lame, deaf, dumb, blind, lepers? They all died...

Why didn't Jesus translate the people directly to heaven, like Enoch or Elijah? Because they were not ready! He could heal their bodies, but their hearts and minds were not prepared to enter heaven. They still had to choose to reject fear and selfishness and trust God and be renewed in heart and mind to love God and others. This transformation of the heart and mind is required before we are prepared to live in God's unveiled, life-giving glory.



So, what was the primary purpose of Jesus doing miracles? To reveal truth about who He was, to reveal truth about the plan to heal and restore humans, to win people to trust, in order to heal hearts and minds.

Do we see why there were some places He could do very few miracles? If their hearts were closed to Him then miracles would not be helpful, example: putting Malchus' ear back on—and what did the people who saw this do? Arrest and crucify Christ anyway. Miracles have no benefit on the hard-hearted.

Do we see why there were times He stopped doing miracles? Because the hearts of people were selfish and saw Jesus as a commodity to be exploited for selfish gain, like the goose that laid the golden egg.

The last paragraph says, “Jesus’ healing miracles were acts of compassion and justice.” thoughts?

By what standard are they acts of justice? In the preceding paragraph it is mentioned that the Pharisees saw Jesus’ healing miracles as violating justice, because they viewed sickness and disease as punishment for God and thus removing the punishment was an injustice.

What is at the root of these two divergent views of understanding Jesus’ healing miracles as either just or unjust? Does the law one views things through matter?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about Jesus cleansing the Temple, what are the keys to understanding what is happening in this story?

First, after Jesus ran out the money changers and cattle, the children stayed by and were not afraid. Try running the elders out of your church in such a way that they are terrified and flee, but the children are not afraid and stay by—what does that look like?

Second, the whip Jesus made was not to whip people, it was to crack as a signal to the animals to drive them out of the sanctuary.

What was Jesus putting a stop to? The exploitation and cheating of people.

And what are we and people through history supposed to learn from Jesus’ actions? What is the lesson Jesus is revealing?

What was the purpose of the OT sanctuary/temple? It was theater—to teach what? To teach God’s plan to heal and save. So, what is Jesus revealing? His plan to drive out of our Spirit Temples all worldliness and defilement of sin.

From the book *The Desire of Ages*:



In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson [object lesson means what? theater, lesson book, teaching tool] for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was God's purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. [so what is the real temple to which the one built by Moses points?] Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple. [How does God come to dwell in the species human again? In the person of Jesus.] God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every soul. [What is God's design for the temple in Jerusalem—to teach people God's plan for them! Is that how you have always understood it?] But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,—from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul. [What is Jesus revealing by cleansing the Temple? His plan to cleanse human hearts from sin! But what has happened, religious teachers through history have rejected this truth, based on design law, and replaced it with a legal lie that obstructs Jesus' mission to cleanse us from sin!] "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." Malachi 3:1-3. {DA 161.1}

Notice the prophecy of Malachi teaches that Jesus comes to His temple to cleanse the Levites, the priesthood of believers, the people, not granite, marble, silver, gold, or written records—but hearts and minds!

Read bottom green section, “As church members, how can we do our part to make sure that our local churches never become places that need what the temple needed in Christ’s day?”

How would you answer this question?

By dealing with reality—which is design law—how God built reality to function and our actual condition and God’s real solution for it, and reject the imposed law lie with its fantasy of a legal problem needing a legal solution.

Also, by requiring all the metaphor and symbolism we use to be tied directly to reality and then understanding that reality. So when we partake of the communion symbols we recognize them for



what they actually represent and then partake of the reality and not just the symbols. And what do the communion symbols represent?

- Bread represents the bread of life, i.e. Jesus the Word made flesh, which is the truth “I am the way, the truth the life.” The truth, destroys lies and sets us free—free from fear and free to trust God. So partaking of the truth Jesus revealed wins us to trust in Jesus, so that we surrender ourselves to Him and open the heart. Then...
- Wine represent the blood, or the life—and Jesus developed a perfect human character. Thus in trust we receive the indwelling Spirit who takes the perfect character of Christ and reproduces it is us, writing the living law of love upon our hearts, and we become partakers of the divine nature.

But we must move past ritualistic application of magical thinking in which we take the symbols and think something magical happens by the ceremony.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “That God is a God...” What do you say to people who say, “Jesus wasn’t molested as a child; He wasn’t physically beaten almost every day by His own father; He was trafficked as a child sex-slave; He wasn’t given whisky in his infant formula to keep Him from crying; He wasn’t taken as a young boy and forced into a death squad etc.” What do you say to people who argue Jesus didn’t experience the worst of our world’s inhumanity?

The argument made by the quarterly is a false argument that sets up this counter argument, that if not addressed can undermine trust in God.

Jesus’ mission was not to experience every possible experience of every person throughout history. For instance, Jesus didn’t personally experience premenstrual mood problems, or childbirth, or postpartum depression; Jesus never was tempted with video games, or LSD; Jesus didn’t drive cars and thus wasn’t tempted with speeding.

So, we create false ideas when we suggest Jesus personally experienced every human experience—He did not. And why is it not necessary that He did?

Because it wasn’t His mission to experience every possible human experience; It was His mission to overcome sin and cure the sin condition. And thus He was tempted “in every way just as we are but without sin.” In every way, doesn’t mean every specific temptation, but every motive and method of temptation. And what are they:

- Fear and selfishness (Survival of fittest and self-gratification)
 - Jesus experienced this in Gethsemane and the Cross
- Sensualism
 - temptations of the human body, hunger, thirst, fatigue, cravings
- Materialism
 - The wealth of the world was offered Him



- Egotism
 - The power of the world was offered Him
- External and internal
 - tempted by Satan, by His brothers, by the church leaders, by the crowd at the cross, by the soldiers, by the hurt and rejection of His disciples, and by His own human emotions (Gethsemane)

Jesus experienced all of these, in order to destroy the infection of fear and selfishness and develop a sinless human character while revealing the truth to refute the lies of Satan.

The lesson asks us to read Isaiah 53:3-6:

He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.
Like one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
4 Surely he took up our infirmities
and carried our sorrows,
yet we considered him stricken by God,
smitten by him, and afflicted.
5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed.
6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all. (NIV84)

Do you hear design law and the plan to fix what sin did to humanity but that we would misunderstand all this through imposed law?

Surely he took up our infirmities
and carried our sorrows,
yet we considered him stricken by God,
smitten by him, and afflicted.

He took up our sin condition, so that by His wounds we could be healed, but we misunderstood and considered it was God who was punishing Him.

Read bottom green section, “In all that we do for the Lord, especially in reaching out to the needy, why must we always keep the death of Jesus, as our Substitute—not just for ourselves but for those whom we help—at the center of our mission and purpose?”



We believe in the substitutionary death of Jesus—but for what purpose? For our healing and restoration, just as Scripture says:

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2Cor 5:21 NIV84)

So that we might *become* righteous, not so that we might be declared righteous even though we are not. The penal legal view is a fraud, a lie, a deception based on Satan's original lie that God's law functions like the laws made by created beings, imposed rules requiring the infliction of punishment. This is Satan's goal to make God and himself no different, thus Satan has to attack God's law because to acknowledge design law means that God is supreme and Satan is not.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

August 9, 10, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Akron, OH, SDA Church.

September 13,14, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Gentlebrook Intermediary Care Facility, Hartville, OH.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

November 15-17, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Norwegian SDA Health Worker's Retreat in Oslo, Norway.

January 17-19, 2020: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly. Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport). See events.comeandreason.com for more details and to sign up.



2019 Q3 The Least of These: Lesson 8

The Least of These

by Lori Atkins

SABBATH

our memory verse is obviously this quarterly's namesake text from Matthew 25:40 –

“And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to me.’ ”

Jesus had a lot to say about how to treat and care for others - particularly those who were hurting and lost. In case you haven't noticed, there has been some overlap in some of this quarter's lessons...and this week is no exception. So even though we've already talked a bit about Christ's focus on the poor and the oppressed/marginalized, and the sermon on the mount...we'll dig into both a little more this week.

What is God's goal for human beings? salvation, complete healing from our sinsick condition, and eternal life in close intimate relationship with God.

Is this is God's goal for *ALL* humans? Or is this His goal only for the humble, downtrodden and poor?

Then, why does God seem to have a particular regard for the humble, downtrodden and poor?

What law lens do you see it through? If you see it through human law, which is Satan's worldview—then the rich and powerful exploit the poor and their actions are abusive to the poor, so God is in the business paying people back with retributive justice. So people teach God is coming to inflict punishment on people. He is more concerned with righting the wrongs perpetrated upon the poor and downtrodden and therefore God spends more energy and time on the poor than on the rich, because the rich are not as deserving.

But, if you understand design law, how reality actually works, you realize God cannot heal any person's heart/mind without the freewill consent and active participation of that person. Why? Because to do so would destroy the individuality of anyone who doesn't choose to embrace truth for themselves. Thus, the humble, poor, and marginalized are often more willing to reach out to God, to acknowledge their own helplessness, to open their hearts, to surrender self, to accept God's methods and principles, whereas the rich and powerful are often deceived into thinking they are fine the way



they are. So perhaps God has particular regard for the downtrodden because they are more open to being saved by Him, while the rich and powerful may not be as aware of their need of Him.

And how do you think this plays into His instructions to us - to take care of the poor, the needy, the widows, and the orphans?

Could it be because they are likely the most receptive?

Could it also be about the change and growth that happens in us when we care for others...that *needs* to happen in us?

Many times when we minister to “one of the least of these”, *we* are likely the ones who are the more “rich and in need of nothing” – particularly in material terms - not always, but many times. How many of you have experienced this...maybe on a mission trip, feeding the homeless, or visiting a nursing home, or whatever situation...but it never fails to break this heart of stone and softens it up, humbles me, makes me much more aware of and more grateful for how truly blessed I am, teaches me to hold on loosely and to give freely - all these things grow us and move us back closer to God’s original design. These are the heart attitudes He wants to instill in us, so that it will be as easy and reflexive and involuntary for us to love others as it is for us to breathe.

SUNDAY

Introducing the Sermon on the Mount

Jesus also talked a lot about the Kingdom of Heaven - specifically during His sermon on the mount and in the Beatitudes...this is the subject of Sunday’s Lesson.

Again, we talked a bit about this last week so let’s review and see how much we learned...and retained.

Christ goes down a whole list of qualities, attributes, and attitudes...and how do those sound?

Are they typically things we would strive for?

They sound not so appealing - unpleasant, even - but then He elevates these folks and describes them as “blessed” and “inheriting the kingdom”.

These are people who are poor in spirit, who are meek and lowly, or hungry and thirsty, or in mourning - how could any of those things be considered a blessing, and how could anyone with those traits be considered blessed?



Do you have any inkling of how revolutionary and exactly counter to that culture these teachings must have been?

Even more so than today, the health/wellness gospel was in full swing - folks believed that health, and wealth, and status, and position were outward signs or proof that one was blessed by or in favor with God - particularly those with the wealth, status, and position. The characteristics described by Christ were just the opposite, and were taken to mean that someone was out of favor or cursed by God for some hidden unconfessed sin. But as it's often described, the Kingdom of Heaven is an upside down kingdom or a backwards kingdom - do you remember some of the upside down elements of Christ's kingdom that we discussed previously? What makes it different...polar opposite, in fact, from other earthly kingdoms?

How do human governments function?

What methods do they use? Why?

What law construct are all human governments built upon?

But Jesus said His kingdom is not of this world...it doesn't operate upon the *principles* (or laws) of this sinful world, so what kind of law is Jesus' kingdom built upon? Design law - and the big ones are love, truth, and freedom.

What kind of kingdom operates upon truth?

Do any kingdoms of the world operate upon pure truth, never deceiving, never using falsehood?

Thus, there are no dictatorial methods in Christ's kingdom - compelling power is found *only* under Satan's government - there are no rules imposed and enforced with threat of punishment, rather there is truth, presented in love, and leaving others free. [How should the church practice this method - both within the institution and when dealing with those outside the denomination?]

God's kingdom is based on a “**power under**” rather than a “power over” approach - those with the most abilities, power, and resources are to serve those with the least...just as in John 13, when *all* power in heaven and on earth had been given to Christ, what did he do with it? He served His disciples by humbly kneeling down and washing their feet.



The more you give, the more you receive...worldly kingdoms operate on the premise of the more you make/take/accumulate, the more you receive. I mean, is this common core? This kingdom math doesn't compute.

The first will be last, and the last will be first/whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life will find it —what does this mean? [How does this work in the church?]

We talked about this last week, and I love that the lesson emphasizes again this week that along with the deep spiritual truths of Christ's teachings come practical applications deeply relevant for our daily lives, right now, today - why is that?

Why are spiritual truths always practical truths? Because those truths are based on design laws—how reality is built and how reality actually operates!

Trusting God and cooperating in His healing transformation leads one to live their life in harmony with God's laws, and this is always practical and beneficial. Pursuing spiritual development through design law understanding always leads to practical applications, not just eternal-life benefits by claiming some legal payment in a book in heaven, but immediate benefits in this temporal life.

Do you think this might be why Jesus continually described the kingdom of heaven as a tangible reality that we can be part of, here and now?

Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. It was to implant this love, to make us children of one family, that the King of glory became one with us. And when His parting words are fulfilled, "Love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12); when we love the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished. We are fitted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts. — {DA 641.3}

MONDAY

Overcoming Evil With Good

Don't we need some of this right now here in our world and in our country?

Monday's lesson tries to really enlighten us to some of the context surrounding Christ's teachings, and the circumstances and conditions most of His followers found themselves in. He had begun to attract large crowds of people, made up mostly of common folk – there were a few Jewish rulers and religious leaders, but mostly lower to middle class. They lived under the imperial rule of the Roman empire, and they lived a rather difficult existence. Their life choices and options were very few, they were burdened by heavy taxation, and weighed down by endless religious rules and traditions. In



teaching these people, Jesus was obviously concerned with offering them a way to live well, to live with dignity and courage, regardless of their circumstances.

The instructions He gave in Matthew 5:38-48 - things like “turn the other cheek,” “give them the shirt off your back,” and “go the extra mile”—are so well-known to us that they are just common clichés. But our familiarity with the terms belies the radical actions and attitudes that Jesus is teaching here.

The scenarios Jesus described were not hypothetical clichés, they were literal *common experiences* for many of His listeners. They were often violently assaulted by their “superiors” or masters. They were often indebted and lost their property to the landlords and lenders. They were often pressed into labor by the occupying Roman soldiers.

Jesus taught the people to respond with integrity, to treat the oppressors better than they deserved, and, by so doing, to resist the loss of their humanity. While these oppressors tried to exert their power, the people always had the freedom to choose how they would respond, and by resisting nonviolently and responding generously, they exposed the evil of the oppression and injustice that was being done. You want to talk about some spiritual truths with practical application?

And notice that Jesus’ focus was NOT on behavior, His focus was on heart attitude. We are not blessed for doing the right thing; we are blessed for having the right heart! And such a heart we cannot create, we can only receive it in relationship with Jesus Christ!

We are also blessed when we endure the abuse of the world with a heart like Christ, when we love our enemies, when we turn the other cheek, when we pray for those who spitefully use us. Again, we are blessed when our hearts are divergent from the world, when our hearts are in harmony with the King of love from the kingdom of love.

Romans 12:17-21

Don't repay evil with evil, for in so doing you only allow the infection of selfishness to be strengthened and thus damage your mind and character. Be sure to 'do what is right because it is right'—openly for all to see. Do all in your power to live at peace with others, but be aware that others may still perpetrate evil against you. And when this happens, my friends, do not take revenge—there is no need for it!—for every act of sin reacts upon the sinner, damaging and slowly destroying their God-given faculties. Be patient and permit God's wrath to work—God's wise method of letting one go to reap the consequences of one's choice—and hopefully it will bring your enemy to repentance; as it is written: "It is mine to discipline; I will settle any debts," says the Lord. Rather than taking revenge, "If your enemy is hungry, feed them; if they



are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing good to your enemy, you will bring guilt and mental anguish like burning coals down on their head." So don't let evil and selfishness consume you, but rather expel evil and selfishness from your heart by doing good and loving others.

TUESDAY

The Good Samaritan

Tuesday recounts the familiar parable about the Good Samaritan that we have studied several times in this class, so we don't have to spend a ton of time here...but I want to bring out just a couple of points.

In Desire of Ages, Ms. White says that in this story, Christ illustrated the nature of **true** religion. "He shows that it consists **not** in systems, creeds, or rites, but in the performance of loving deeds, in bringing the greatest good to others, in genuine goodness." Just as it was in Christ's day, this is not good news for leaders and officials of religious institutions who are responsible for developing those systems, creeds, rites, and such.

Question...did stopping and helping the man in need change the Good Samaritan's heart...or did he stop and help the man in need **because** his heart had already been changed?

This is such an important concept to grasp, because we are **NOT** saved by our works! Our works, and the change/transformation in our works is evidence of the heart change and the healing process taking place in our lives.

This is another place where the legal metaphor really breaks down and just causes confusion. Imagine someone is sick with a terminal disease, cancer is spread throughout their body, in its late stages – will any "work" on the part of the sick person heal them?

If for instance, people who are healthy eat well, can the cancer patient make the cancer go away by eating a full meal everyday?

If healthy people participate in physical activities, could the cancer patient make the cancer go away by playing basketball, baseball, running, biking, etc.?

What happens to a person's ability to eat well and participate in physical activities when the cancer progresses?



What happens to their ability to FUNCTION normally? It is impaired. Now, if a person with cancer receives a cure, a remedy which puts the cancer into remission, what changes might we see in their function?

How might we recognize that the person is now well, or on the road back to health?

Might they start eating regularly again, might they start engaging in more physical activity again?

Do such behaviors heal them...or do such behaviors occur **WHEN** they are healed?

How was mankind originally designed to function? In selfless love to others, and what did sin do to our functioning? Turned us fearful and selfish, is there any work we can do to change ourselves? No, but when Christ heals us will our functioning change? Absolutely!

But it is a healing **process**, in many ways the work of a lifetime as Paul points to in Romans 7 - "What a wretched man I am...I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different."

WEDNESDAY

The Rich Man and Lazarus

The first paragraph in the lesson summarizes this parable and then says about the two men,

"In life, their respective circumstances remained unchanged; but in death, as judged by God, their positions were dramatically reversed."

Any thoughts about that?

Was the dramatic reversal of positions caused by or a result of God's judgment?

Then what?

I want to contrast the view we just read from our quarterly with one of the founders of our church. In the book, *Christ Object Lessons*, there is an entire chapter - Chapter 21 - devoted to the meaning and interpretation of this parable...listen to just the first two paragraphs and see if you can detect any differences.



“In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Christ shows that in this life **men decide their eternal destiny**. During probationary time the grace of God is offered to every soul. But if men waste their opportunities in self-pleasing, **they cut themselves off from everlasting life**. No afterprobation will be granted them. **By their own choice** they have fixed an impassable gulf between them and their God. This parable draws a contrast between the rich who have not made God their dependence, and the poor who have made God their dependence. Christ shows that the time is coming when the position of the two classes will be reversed. Those who are poor in this world’s goods, yet who trust in God and are patient in suffering, will one day be exalted above those who now hold the highest positions the world can give but who have not surrendered their lives to God.” {COL 260.2}

In the great Judgment day, those who have not worked for Christ, who have drifted along thinking of themselves, caring for themselves, will be placed by the Judge of the whole earth with those who did evil. They receive the same condemnation. – {DA 641.4}

What condemnation? Why are they condemned?

This same author describes it in these ways...at the end of COL Chapter 21, the last two sentences are:

“**By their own neglect** they have formed a chasm which nothing can bridge. Between them and the righteous there is a great gulf fixed.”

And in the book, *The Great Controversy*, another familiar quote in this class:

“The destiny of the wicked is fixed **by their own choice**. Their exclusion from heaven is **voluntary with themselves**, and just and merciful on the part of God. Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God’s verdict that the wicked are incurable.” {GC 542}

Again, this is not about works or behaviors...this is about a change in heart motive, to love others more than self. Could I start a charitable organization, under the guise of helping people, but with ulterior motives...financial gain, tax advantages, getting my child into a good college? And might that organization actually end up helping and blessing people in need? But is my heart converted and healed? Same with giving or volunteering.

Remember the folks at the end who will have prophesied, preached, performed miracles...in who’s name? They really thought they were doing the right things, they had the behaviors down pat...but their hearts were still stone, and they never really knew God.



THURSDAY

The Least of These

The only infinite resource we finite humans have on this earth is our capacity to love...even Christ as a human was subject to his limited, finite humanity. Jesus took time away from the masses to meditate and rejuvenate—and Jesus' humanity was like ours. His humanity didn't have infinite resources—it required him to rest and recover.

With that in mind, can we “help” too much?

Our finite resources must be spent in a controlled manner - and are subject to the “Law of Restoration”.

In the healthcare arena, whose health, well-being, and safety are the most important? Why? Because if the caregiver goes down, then no one is getting any care...not only that, and even worse, the caregiver then becomes a patient and taxes the system even more.

Same reason why in an airplane emergency they tell you to put your own mask on first before trying to assist others.

Think about this analogy...there has been a big, traumatic event downtown and main trauma hospital is desperately in need of blood donations in order to treat the injured. You know that your blood type is in high demand and you want to help, so you go down, you donate a pint of blood, and you're able to save a couple of people's lives. But you figure if you donate another pint, you could save even more lives...and 3 pints could save even more!

Is that a good idea? But why not? There are so many people injured and they really need more blood! Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and strength...and your neighbor as yourself.

Should the church/Christians, use their energy to reform governments, get the right politicians elected, the right judges in office and seek to use the power of the state to enforce its beliefs on society?

In Christ's day, what was society like?

Were there human rights abuses of all kinds?

Was there hedonism and perversions?



Did Christ or His disciples use their energies or that of the church to try and get the right senators or governors into office or change the laws of Rome?

What did Jesus and the disciples focus their energy on? Converting the hearts! To take the message of eternal salvation to people and change hearts and minds.

And when they converted the hearts, what happened to the empire of Rome? It transformed the world!

That is our mission - our mission is to change hearts - to convert people away from the worldly system to the Godly way of doing things - to convert them from self-centered, survival of the fittest methods to other-centered love. And when we do that, then we don't really have to worry about passing laws.

Do you understand why heaven is going to be heaven? Because every person there would rather die than ever hurt you...and you would rather die than hurt anybody there - everybody else loves you that much.

In a place like that, do we need arbitrarily imposed laws? On this Earth, we have to pass such laws, because people don't have love in their hearts.

Don't be fooled into investing in agendas that have laudable goals on the surface but use ungodly methods to achieve those goals, i.e. the position of protecting innocent life by the use of coercion, intimidation, force and imposition.

God's methods are the methods of truth, presented in love while leaving others free. We want to promote life and health in the context of freedom because love can only exist in an atmosphere of freedom.

Many feel that it would be a great privilege to visit the scenes of Christ's life on earth, to walk where He trod, to look upon the lake beside which He loved to teach, and the hills and valleys on which His eyes so often rested. But we need not go to Nazareth, to Capernaum, or to Bethany, in order to walk in the steps of Jesus. We shall find His footprints beside the sickbed, in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great city, and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation. In doing as Jesus did when on earth, we shall walk in His steps. – {DA 640.2}

What is truly helpful?

Read Dr. Jennings' blog on comeandreason.com, "Work or Handouts...how to help those in need."



2019 Q3 The Least of These: Lesson 9 Ministry in the New Testament Church

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

One of our online friends and listeners, Allen Weber, wrote:

Based on your excellent discussion of the EGW quote from GC539-40 in the Friday section of Lesson 7, I attempted a paraphrase of the paragraph. I have attached it to this email. One of my recurring questions is why it has taken so long to restore God's reputation. E.g., if the Great Controversy had been written with the concept of design law instead of making it so easy to "support" penal substitutionary theology or if the interpretation of the sanctuary symbols had been more explicitly explained so the Jews didn't think salvation came from ritual, would things have moved along faster? I pray for you and your ministry often. Have a great evening. Allen.

Before we get to Allen's paraphrase of the quote from the GC, I want to discuss his questions. What are your answers to his questions?

Do you hear any assumptions in his questions? First assumption is that it wasn't explained in the design law way originally.

Consider this quote:

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}

There are many more quotes, but what is expressed in this passage, is that human beings became more and more distant from God, more corrupted by sin, more darkened by misunderstanding and God continued to step down and dumb down the truth to reach human beings where they were. Thus, when we read Scripture we read God working through His agencies to reach people throughout human history at all stages of moral development. We read God communicating to slaves operating at level one and also at friends operating at level seven. This makes God out to be beautiful, like a parent who speaks differently to a 2-year-old than a 10-year-old and different to an adult.

Finally, why don't math texts books just give the answers to all the questions? It is by working through the problems one actually develops understanding and ability. God does NOT want us to memorize a



list of right answers, He wants us to actually understand Him, the issues in the Great Controversy and develop the ability to discern the true from the false.

But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Heb 5:14 NIV84

Original Quote

“God has given in His word decisive evidence that He will punish the transgressors of His law. Those who flatter themselves that He is too merciful to execute justice upon the sinner, have only to look to the cross of Calvary. The death of the spotless Son of God testifies that “the wages of sin is death,” that every violation of God’s law must receive its just retribution. Christ the sinless became sin for man. He bore the guilt of transgression, and the hiding of His Father’s face, until His heart was broken and His life crushed out. All this sacrifice was made that sinners might be redeemed. In no other way could man be freed from the penalty of sin. And every soul that refuses to become a partaker of the atonement provided at such a cost must bear in his own person the guilt and punishment of transgression.” {GC 539.3}

Paraphrase

The Bible is an inspired history of how God deals with His children. It is conclusive, crucial, convincing proof of what God’s punishment is. What does He do to those who refuse to accept the way He’s designed reality? Some excuse the damage they inflict on themselves and others, thinking God’s leniency and pity will let Him exempt them from the reality of consequence. They have ignored the evidence of Jesus’ death on the cross. He died even though He was perfect. Separated from His Father by His own choice to save humanity, He demonstrated that “sin pays its wage.” His death was testimony that life is impossible outside God’s design – no exceptions. God need not impose an external punishment because the effect of violating a principle of design is intrinsic to that principle and there is no way to outwit the principle, elude the consequences, or undo the damage. Christ lived in perfect harmony with God’s design for Him. But by willingly choosing the fate of humanity, which has mostly rejected God’s design for us, He experienced the result of our choice—the separation from [God] that accompanies that choice. But for [Christ] that separation was heart-breaking... [crushing out his life]. This sacrifice made by Jesus and His Father was so those too fearful to trust God could trust again. God’s power to heal is unlimited but will do no good in a universe designed as a circle of love unless we trust the Remedy. If a heart is untouched by God’s offer to heal, if an individual is not reconciled to trust our God when it cost so much to disprove Satan’s accusations, God will not intervene to force that person’s will. But the responsibility and the consequences of rejecting His design for us will inevitably lead to extinction because life is only possible by voluntary connection to our Creator.

I want to commend Allen for wrestling with this passage and working to understand the true meaning. This is the type of work we each need to do. Such exercise helps us grow in our understanding of God and His methods of truth, love and liberty.

SABBATH

Read memory text: “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” James 1:27 NKJV

What is being advocated here?

Is it talking about financial support?

Or, is it talking about building relationships with people who are more likely to find themselves lonely, isolated, and disconnected from society?

Why is James advocating building relationships with the orphans and widows?

What has the biggest impact on changing people, mere theory, or real experiences with people?

What would be the purpose of visiting them?

And who is to do the visiting? How much visiting is enough? Should a pastor (or any person) visit the orphan and widow while neglecting his own family? How do we achieve balance?

In countries like the US, Canada, European Union—do widows stand in a different place in these societies than in ancient Israel? What would be different?

Is it often the case today, that widows are left with life insurance, homes, social security or other sustenance? But what about in ancient Israel?

But would the widow and orphan, regardless of financial position, struggle with isolation, loneliness and need to be reassured that they are valued and connected with people who love and care about them?

What does it mean to keep oneself unspotted from the world?

Other versions say uncorrupted or unpolluted by the world—what would this mean?

What are the principles and methods of the world?

- lies
- coercion
- selfishness

Some of the biggest lies are sown with truth—taking a truth to make a false point.

The mature are those who have developed the ability to discern the difference between true and false.



So, if we seek control of government to force others to live according to our religious beliefs, even if our religious beliefs are Biblically correct, would that be Godly or the methods of the world?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “After Jesus’ ascension...” What made this new Christian community different from the Jewish community in the first century, and later different from Muslim communities?

What differences can you cite between the Christianity taught by Jesus, practiced by the first century Christians, and Judaism and Islam?

- Do all three believe in God?
- Do all three believe that God is the Creator?
- Do all three believe that the Scripture is inspired by God?
- Do all three believe God sent His prophets to give the messages of Scripture?
- Do all three believe human beings are fallen into sin and need saving by God?
- Do all three believe God has a law?
- Do all three believe sin is breaking God’s law?

So, what are the difference?

- Do all understand the law in the same way?
- How did the Jews understand the law at the time of Christ?
- What did Jesus teach about the law?

What does Islam teach about the law? What methods does Islam use if they control society?

What methods did the New Testament Christians teach regarding law?

- Let every person be fully persuaded in their own mind. Rom 14:5
- Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰ Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Rom 13:8-10
- For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Gal 5:14 KJV

What about the ruling of the Jerusalem Counsel in Acts 15, did they promote rules or design law?

James said at that counsel:

It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by



idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. Acts 15;19,20

Is this a list of rules or the promotion of design law?

From my book, *The God-Shaped Heart*:

These instructions are not imposed rules but are the wisdom of design law.

Food polluted by idols:

- An idol cannot change the nutritional quality of the food. Therefore, eating foods offered to idols does not pollute the body. Paul makes this clear in Romans chapter fourteen.
- The issue they were addressing is the design law of worship—by beholding we become changed... this is called modeling. What we believe has power over us, truth heals and sets free, while lies damage and enslave. Don't allow your minds to become contaminated by giving any credence to idols. Thus, don't eat foods that are polluted by the *idea* it is a bounty given you by a false god.

Sexual immorality:

- God designed relationships to operate upon love and trust. When sexual intimacy occurs between husband and wife, as God designed, healthy bonding occurs—the brain actually rewires and reward circuits are heightened for one's spouse. This is design law—how our biology is actually built to work. But deviating from this design is damaging to mind, body and relationships.
- It is violation of design law, altering brain circuitry, inflaming selfish and fear circuits, thus obstructing healing of mind and character.

Meat from strangled animals or blood:

- It also violates design law—the laws of health.
- Humans were not designed to eat meat, and the blood carries waste products, stress hormones, and various inflammatory factors. Eating raw meat and drinking blood increases disease risk, and when the body is unhealthy the mind is compromised.

The New Testament church rejected the imposed law rules and focused instead on living in harmony with God's design law for life!

So, what was different about the New Testament community to Judaism—they moved away from a rule-based lifestyle, to a principle-based lifestyle seeking to live in harmony with God's design laws of love, truth and freedom.

They focused on character, which comes from a relationship with God, (circumcision of the heart) rather than tribal affiliation, or adherence to dogma, or codes of conduct, or ritualistic worship.

Thus, anyone, who accepted Jesus and was transformed in character became part of the Christian family—but Judaism required tribal affiliation and adherence to rules; Islam requires ritualistic



adherence to rules and is intolerance of divergent views seeking to suppress opposing theological views by the enforcement of human laws, including seeking to kill those who teach other views.

Some get confused by this as there are individuals within all these groups that are exceptions to what the group teaches and practices:

- There are Muslims and Jews who are not caught up in rules and who love others and live to serve
- There are Christians who practice imperialism and seek to control others by law

But what would happen in any predominately Christian country if someone publicly burned a Bible, or mocked Jesus like the artist who put a crucified Jesus in a jar of his own urine? Verbal condemnation by the Christian community.

What would happen in a predominantly Muslim country if someone publicly burned a Koran or put an image of Muhammad in urine? Riots and attempts to kill the person who did it. Author Salman Rushdie, who wrote *The Satanic Verses* still lives in hiding because a death warrant is still out on him by Muslim zealots.

But something happened to Christianity after the New Testament church; it began practicing the same authoritarian methods of coercion, imprisonment, crusades, inquisitions. What happened?

Christianity became infected with imperialism exchanging design law for imposed law construct and sunk into the Dark Ages and the most gross abuses to humanity—all in the name of Jesus.

The second paragraph talks about the importance of ministering to the poor—why is it that there has been poor in every society in human history?

Has any human government in history been able to eliminated poverty in their society?

Do some forms of government claim they will do just that? Socialism, Communism—why haven't societies in which these methods have been employed resulted in utopian countries where there is no poverty? Because selfishness governs the human heart and power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely—so all human governments eventually become selfish and corrupt with people in power exploiting those without power. That is why the founders of the US constitution broke up the powers to limit the amount of abuse that could be concentrated in any person or group.

To me it is much more vile to abuse people while claiming to be protecting them, than to just state your agenda. Like:

- Nurses who, by their occupation present as a helper, someone there to assist in returning the sick to health but who have murdered their patients
- Childcare workers or priests who present to protect children and teach them and help them grow up health instead molest children
- Politicians who promote socialism or communism, promising equal economic and social success to all people only to exploit and abuse their societies for their own advancement



So, capitalism, which is not God's government and open to all kinds of abuses, is less vile to me because it is open about its stated agenda. Capitalism doesn't say it is here to help everyone. It states it is a system to reward hard work and give opportunity for people to get ahead on their own merits, but the goal is to advance oneself.

This principle of advancing oneself—capitalism—is clearly not God's government—but the honesty and openness about what one is doing is. The other systems (socialism and communism) also are not God's government, but they are duplicitous about their goals and what they actually accomplish. If they were honest these forms of government would never be implemented. They require deceiving the populous with promises that will never be realized.

But, back to the question of caring for the poor: If all Christians gave the maximum amount of money they possible could to help the poor, would that eliminate all the poor in the world?

Why not?

Does this mean we should ignore the poor and not minister to help them?

So, what is the right action to take toward the poor and needy?

I found a couple of quotes that I thought were quite interesting from a book *Counsels to the Church*:

There are two classes of poor whom we have always within our borders—those who ruin themselves by their own independent course of action and continue in their transgression, and those who for the truth's sake have been brought into straitened circumstances. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves, and then toward both these classes we shall do the right thing under the guidance and counsel of sound wisdom. {CCh 284.2} [Is this suggesting that perhaps we are to think about what a person needs in various circumstances? That the help provided may vary depending on how and why a person is in need?]

There is no question in regard to the Lord's poor. They are to be helped in every case where it will be for their benefit. {CCh 284.3} [Does this imply that there are times when helping someone might not be for their benefit? Can you think of any examples?]

God wants His people to reveal to a sinful world that He has not left them to perish. **Special pains should be taken to help those who for the truth's sake are cast out from their homes and are obliged to suffer... The poor among God's people must not be left without provision for their wants. Some way must be found whereby they may obtain a livelihood. [What is the help advocated here? Is it a handout or is it something else? What is the difference to the person in need to receive a handout versus receiving employment? What is it God wants for all humans? The restoration of godliness in them—which would mean not only a pure heart and right spirit, but integrity, intelligence, wisdom, ability to think and to act, industry, meaningful usefulness. Should we seek to help people develop these abilities, or should we**



infantilize capable people by merely giving handouts?]

Some will need to be taught to work. Others who work hard and are taxed to the utmost of their ability to support their families will need special assistance.[What is special assistance? Do you notice a single cookie cutter intervention won't work?] We should take an interest in these cases and help them to secure employment. There should be a fund to aid such worthy poor families who love God and keep His commandments. {CCh 284.4}

Methods of helping the needy should be carefully and prayerfully considered. We are to seek God for wisdom, for He knows better than shortsighted mortals how to care for the creatures He has made. **There are some who give indiscriminately to everyone who solicits their aid. In this they err. In trying to help the needy, we should be careful to give them the right kind of help. There are those who when helped will continue to make themselves special objects of need. They will be dependent as long as they see anything on which to depend.** By giving undue time and attention to these, we may encourage idleness, helplessness, extravagance, and intemperance. {CCh 285.1}

When we give to the poor we should consider: "**Am I encouraging prodigality** [wastefulness like prodigal son]? **Am I helping or injuring them?" No man who can earn his own livelihood has a right to depend on others.** {CCh 285.2}

How do we help those in need? What is the goal of our help?

MONDAY

Very interesting story of Dorcas—she was a godly woman who worked to provide clothing for those without clothes. She became sick and died, and the community grieved and reached out to Peter who prayed for Dorcas and God resurrected her to life.

Very powerful story—for whose benefit was this miracle performed?

For the New Testament Church—was this miracle primarily performed as a benefit for Dorcas?

Did she arise with an immortal body free of aches, pains, aging, and disease? Did she arise free of the pain and suffering this world brings?

Hadn't she fought the good fight, run the race, crossed the finish line, and then is called back to run again? Was this miracle primarily for Dorcas, or was her soul already safe and secure with God for eternity?

Then, she must have been a real friend of God that God could call her back to life knowing she would be a trusted friend and continue on fighting the fight of faith.

The bottom green section asks "If you were to pass away, would your contributions be mourned and missed like the ministry of Dorcas was remembered and mourned?"



I would like to ask, if you were to pass away, would you want to be resurrected back into this world of pain, suffering and sin, or would you prefer to be resurrected as the second coming?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Paul’s letter to the Romans...” How would you explain the doctrine of salvation by faith through the death of Christ?

Is the practical guidance given by Paul starting in Romans 11 something different than what Paul was writing about in the first 10 chapters of Romans?

What is the message of the first 10 chapters?

Humankind is in a terminal condition of fear and selfishness that we inherited from Adam. Jesus came as the second Adam, took upon Himself this condition and cured it and offers a free remedy (new heart/right spirit) to all who trust Him. When we trust God we receive Christ within and that results in a change in how we live, the fruits of the Spirit, which is the practical application of God’s methods of truth, love and freedom described in the later chapters of Romans.

Let’s read Romans 3:19-26 from *The Remedy*:

¹⁹Now, we know that the Ten Commandments are like a medical diagnostic instrument identifying infection and exposing disease. It diagnoses accurately everyone who is infected with distrust of God — who is filled with selfishness and dying of sin — so that everyone who claims to be sin-free or free of selfishness will be silenced, and the entire world will recognize their need of God's healing solution.²⁰Therefore no one will be recognized as having a healthy relationship with God and being like Christ in character by adhering to a set of rules; rather, it is through the Ten Commandments that we become aware of our sickly state of mind.

²¹But now God has revealed a healthy state of being — a character that is right and perfect in every way — that did not come from the written code, but is exactly what the Scriptures and the Ten Commandments were pointing your minds toward.²²This perfect state of being comes from Christ and is created within us by God when we place our trust in him. Our trust in him is established by the evidence given through Jesus Christ of his supreme trustworthiness. There is no difference among any ethnic groups,²³ for all humanity is infected with the same disease — of distrust, fear and selfishness — and is deformed in character and falls far short of God's glorious ideal for humanity.²⁴Yet all who are willing are healed freely by God's gracious Remedy which has been provided by Jesus Christ.²⁵God presented Jesus as the way and the means of restoration. Now, through the trust established by the evidence of God’s character revealed when Christ died, we may partake of the Remedy procured by Christ. God did this to demonstrate that he is right and good — because in his forbearance he suspended, for a time, the ultimate consequence of us being out of harmony with his design for life — yet he has been



falsely accused of being unfair.²⁶ He did it to demonstrate at the present time how right and good he is, so that he would also be seen as being right when he heals those who trust in Jesus.

Read third paragraph, “Paul describes in practical terms...” What is the Jesus-like response to the injustice in society today? What is the Godlike response to mass shootings?

What is the danger in the social-justice gospel? Trying to promote God’s kingdom, not by heart change, not by truth presented in love leaving people free, not by converting hearts to love our neighbor as ourselves, but by legislation and policy to force an agenda upon people not persuaded in their own minds.

When it comes to love, it cannot be commanded, it cannot be coerced, it cannot be compelled, and any attempts to do so always results in rebellion.

We must differentiate the difference between **Goals** and **Methods**

Goal: Social justice — equality for all people — good goal

Method: Imperial legislative enforcement — bad method

This is the problem with social justice movement, it seeks to fix social injustice with laws forcing people to comply with their standard of social justice, rather than seeking to convert hearts. The method of compelling actually incites greater divisions in society because it always disadvantages someone.

Social justice legislations or policies always chooses to advance one group at the expense of another group, thus creating social injustice. It might be done under the guise of repairing damage from prior social injustice, but it results in more division, more resentment, more contentions, more conflicts.

For instance, Martin Luther King Jr., said he had a dream that his daughters would grow up in a country where they were judged by the quality of their character not the color of their skin. This was a godly principle, this was moving past racism or sexism to what really matters—character.

However, social justice doesn’t care about the quality of character—it cares about advancing one group that it has identified has having been disadvantaged. So, they pass laws based on skin color or gender, not character, that give advantage to businesses seeking government contracts that are owned by minorities or women—not advantages to business that have demonstrated honesty, coming in under the bid, coming in earlier than projected, having history of treating their employees with equality etc. Character doesn’t matter, race or group status does. One group advanced over another.

True Godly social justice only occurs when we love all people equally and value Godly character and advance Godly principles of “every person is fully persuaded in their own minds” have new hearts and actually love others as their own family and friends. This transformation is obstructed by the social justice movement and many good people will divert their energies into policy and legislative actions



seeking a good cause but by methods that will fail to work. And then this causes a sense of injustice to those not in the favored group, which instills greater resentment and further societal divisions.

Seeking a good cause, social justice—equality of all people—with imperial methods like this is like the doctors who sought to cure George Washington’s pneumonia by bleeding half his blood supply—they sought a good cause, but their methods made it worse.

This is why Jesus and the Apostles did NOT seek social justice changes of the Roman government, despite slavery, despite rampant child abuse, trafficking, killing people in the arenas etc. They sought to change the hearts of people and in so doing, society did change. Their refusal to seek governmental changes to social injustice was NOT an endorsement or support for the abuse, but a statement of the METHODS to be employed in addressing the problem—and the problem is SIN—selfishness in the heart and this CANNOT be addressed legislatively.

Does this mean we don’t seek to pass laws that are in harmony with Godly principles, if our society allows our input into such laws? Of course not, we do, but we recognize the boundary difference between laws to protect and laws to impose.

Thus the Bible teaches not to conform to the pattern of the world but to be renewed by the renewing of your mind Romans 12:2

THURSDAY

Why is the religion that matters one that helps others? Because of God’s design for life—the law of love.

The more you give the more you will receive—what does this mean?

Read third paragraph, “The author of James...” Why do you think Martin Luther said he couldn’t find Jesus in the book of James and put James, Hebrews, Jude and Revelation?

Martin Luther felt these books went against salvation by grace alone, why?

Because James speaks clearly about faith without works is dead—why is this a problem for Luther?

Because Luther created the legal fiction known as penal substitution theology. In this fiction—and fiction is something feigned or imaginary or invented but not real—in this fiction:

- God’s law functions like human law—imperial/imposed rules
- Sin is breaking an imposed rule putting sinners in legal jeopardy
- God’s justice requires that sin be punished and the law upheld
- God must therefore inflict punishment on sinners
- Jesus came as man’s substitute and all sins of all people from all time were placed on Jesus and God punished Jesus killing Jesus on the cross



- Legally the punishment for all sins was accomplished in Jesus at the cross so no unpunished sins remain so no need for purgatory
- The saved merely have to accept Jesus, claim His blood payment and in the court of heaven they are declared legally righteous, even though they are not righteous

Why is this fiction? Because it is all based on a lie—that God's law functions like human law. But the truth is that God is Creator of all reality and His laws are the laws upon which reality functions—sin is breaking design law which takes one out of harmony with life and results in ruin and death unless God heals the damage and restores us back to unity with Him.

He did this for the species in the person of Jesus and offers the Remedy procured by Jesus to all who will accept it. But, the healing is the healing of our characters, our individualities, and God cannot do this without our cooperation and purposeful effort. God cannot save us without our choosing because to do so against our will would destroy our individuality. But we cannot be saved by our own effort because we cannot procure a perfect sinless character—we must partake of the divine nature as a gift from God procured by Christ.

Here are some quotes from historic Adventism—what the SDA was founded upon, but which many have forgotten and slipped back into Luther's theology which is 500 years out of date.

We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}

There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies-- divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding,** but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . .** . Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}

And he who seeks to give light to others will himself be blessed. "There shall be showers of blessing." "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." Proverbs 11:25. **[the law of exertion and law of love] God could have reached His object in saving sinners without our aid; but in order for us to develop a character like Christ's, we must share in His work.** In order to enter into His joy,--the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice,--we must participate in His labors for their redemption. {DA 142.2}



Why must we work with God? Because of how reality works, the only way for our salvation is for us to actively participate in God's grace through faith.

But, what was meant by God being able to reach His object in saving sinners without our aid, if we must participate in our character development?

I believe it is talking about taking the gospel message—God could have taken the message to people by His Spirit and by His angels, He had other than human means of communicating the gospel to sinners, but I don't believe it is saying God could have saved sinners without the sinners choice or participation in their own salvation—that would be contrary to the law of love and liberty and make people into robots.

So, practical application of the gospel is what James is speaking about—is there another very powerful practical application that the SDA church was advised was to be an integral part of the gospel message?

What about the healing arts—medical work?

I read the following from the book *Testimonies to the Church Vol 6*. What do you think, what lessons are being taught and why?

Again and again I have been instructed that the medical missionary work is to bear the same relation to the work of the third angel's message that the arm and hand bear to the body. [Who was instructing? Did the author believe it was important that she was instructed again and again? What is the message of the three angels? When you hear it do you hear a message that immediately connects to medical work? What kind of law does medical practice work upon? Design law—laws of health. Who are we called back to worship in the 3 angels messages? The designer/creator, which means design law. What is the plan of salvation except the plan of healing, so we cannot effectively take the 3 angels message to the world divorced from the medical work] Under the direction of the divine Head they are to work unitedly in preparing the way for the coming of Christ. The right arm of the body of truth is to be constantly active, constantly at work, and God will strengthen it. **But it is not to be made the body.** [What does this mean? It simply means the message of salvation is not primarily a message about healing our mortal bodies from physical illness. While the healing arts operate on design law, and vividly portrays the plan of salvation is to heal us, the plan of salvation is about healing our characters not our bodies. So if we make it merely about physical health we miss the entire point.] **At the same time the body is not to say to the arm: "I have no need of thee." The body has need of the arm in order to do active, aggressive work.** [But when we divorce the gospel message from the medical work we make the spreading of the gospel ineffectual] Both have their appointed work, and each will suffer great loss if worked independently of the other... {6T 288.1}

The medical missionary work should be a part of the work of every church in our land. **Disconnected from the church it would soon become a strange medley of disorganized**



atoms. It would consume, but not produce. Instead of acting as God's helping hand to forward His truth, it would sap the life and force from the church and weaken the message. Conducted independently, it would not only consume talent and means needed in other lines, but in the very work of helping the helpless apart from the ministry of the word, **it would place men where they would scoff at Bible truth.** [have we seen this happening in our world as healthcare has become an end unto itself and the costs have skyrocketed and many in the healthcare field scoff at the Bible?] {6T 289.1}

The gospel ministry is needed to give permanence and stability to the medical missionary work; and the ministry needs the medical missionary work to demonstrate the practical working of the gospel. [The gospel—good news about God give permanence because it brings people into a saving relationship with God so they will experience everlasting life—eternal healing. Without the gospel then life is temporary. And the ministry needs the medical work to make it practical, in other words to show the plan of salvation transforms and heals, it is not theoretical] Neither part of the work is complete without the other. {6T 289.2}

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Multi-Languages: We are beginning to create resources in diverse languages. We currently have *Could It Be This Simple?* available in Polish and Bulgarian as well as some blogs translated into Bulgarian. The New Paradigm is now available on our website in Spanish and Portuguese. We are working on getting other material in various languages.

PODCAST: Come and Reason with Dr. Tim Jennings weekly Podcast is now broadcasting, please follow us.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!! January 17-19, 2020, in Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport) we will have a Come and Reason Ministries: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly.

Check our website for new chapters of *The Remedy* the Psalms will be going up slowly as they are completed and edited. When an entire book of the Old Testament is complete then it will be added to the app and when you update the app you will get the new book. Thank you for your prayers and support as I work on this project.

September 13,14, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Gentlebrook Intermediary Care Facility, Hartville, OH.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

November 15-17, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Norwegian SDA Health Worker's Retreat in Oslo, Norway.

January 17-19, 2020: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly. Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport). See events.comeandreason.com for more details and to sign up.



2019 Q3 The Least of These: Lesson 10

Living the Gospel

by Russell Atkins

SABBATH

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8–10, NKJV).

Which “Gospel” are we to live? How many different “gospels” are there? What are some of the fundamental differences between “gospels”?

From the lesson:

“As soon as we talk about God’s commands, requirements, or instructions, we run the risk—or even face the temptation—of thinking that somehow what we do can earn or contribute to our salvation or otherwise gain favor with God. But the Bible tells us repeatedly that we are sinners saved by God’s grace through Jesus and His substitutionary death for us on the cross.”

From SDA 28 fundamental beliefs:

“The great principles of God’s law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God’s love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These precepts are the basis of God’s covenant with His people and the standard in God’s judgment. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit they point out sin and awaken a sense of need for a Saviour. Salvation is all of grace and not of works, and its fruit is obedience to the Commandments. This obedience develops Christian character and results in a sense of well-being. It is evidence of our love for the Lord and our concern for our fellow human beings. The obedience of faith demonstrates the power of Christ to transform lives, and therefore strengthens Christian witness. (Exod. 20:1-17; Deut. 28:1-14; Ps. 19:7-14; 40:7, 8; Matt. 5:17-20; 22:36-40; John 14:15; 15:7-10; Rom. 8:3, 4; Eph. 2:8-10; Heb. 8:8-10; 1 John 2:3; 5:3; Rev. 12:17; 14:12.)”

SUNDAY

For God so Loved

The lesson points out that the Greek word “kosmos” is used for “the world” in John 3: 16. “Kosmos”? Cosmos? Universe?

Does the text read any differently if it says, “For God so loved the Cosmos, that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes should not perish, but have eternal life.” ?



Any other texts coming to mind to support this hypothesis?

For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. 1 Cor 4: 9. ESV.

And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” John 12: 32. ESV. [ed: We understand the word “people” to have been added by the original transcribers of Scripture].

The lesson asks us to consider John 3: 17 along with its more famous predecessor.

“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

How have Christians historically lived out this text? Have we presented Jesus as one who tries his best to heal and save or as one who condemns? How have we presented His Father?

MONDAY

Compassion and Repentance.

From the lesson:

“Our world is not what it was created to be, and though we still bear the image of the God who created us, we are part of the world’s brokenness. The sin in our lives is of the same nature as the evil that causes so much pain, oppression, and exploitation all over the world.”

Well said.

Have you ever passed a homeless person or, perhaps, someone with a physical or mental deformity and thought “there, but for the grace of God, go I”?

Have you ever thought that about a murderer, rapist, embezzler, slave trader, or child molester?

Guess what? Without God’s restraining grace we could **all** be capable of these evils and many more.

Again from the lesson:

“Thus, it is right for us to feel the hurt, discomfort, sorrow, and tragedy of the world and of the lives around us. We would have to be robots not to feel the pain of life here. The laments in the book of Psalms, the sorrows of Jeremiah and the other prophets, and the tears and compassion of Jesus demonstrate the appropriateness of this kind of response to the world and its evil, and particularly to those who are so often hurt by that evil.”



I want to suggest that as our characters are molded and shaped to that like Christ's, this will be our new natural reaction to pain and suffering. We will become more empathetic to the pains and needs of others.

“Selfishness, greed, meanness, prejudice, ignorance, and carelessness are at the root of all the world's evil, injustice, poverty, and oppression. **And confessing our sinfulness is a first step** in addressing this evil, as well as a first step toward allowing the love of God to take its rightful place in our hearts: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9, NIV).” Emphasis mine.

I would submit that knowing a God of Love is the first step in addressing this evil . . .

What good does it do to confess sin to a God who wants to kill you for it? This is where we develop doctrines having one member of the Godhead protecting us from another one.

TUESDAY

Grace and Good Works

I used to think that works came before grace. Grace had to be earned, and the better and more numerous the works the more the grace. Now I understand that the works result from the Grace.

“Those who receive are to impart to others. From every direction are coming calls for help. God calls upon men to minister gladly to their fellow men.”—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 103.

Which law is being described here?

WEDNESDAY

Our Common Humanity.

Man / woman / black / white / rich / poor / Christian / atheist / young / old / genius / imbecile / father / mother / slave / free / brother / sister all came from common parents and share nearly the same DNA.

We are all bound up together in that we all have sinned and “come short of the glory of God” and ALL need a savior and healing. We can experience loss and forgiveness and pain and joy and are connected by quantum bonds and common experiences and the umbrella of God's infinite love.

THURSDAY

The Everlasting Gospel

“Everlasting” e.g. Eternal. Past, Present, Future Eternal. From the lesson:

“The transforming invitation and appeal of the gospel “to every nation, tribe, language and people” (Rev. 14:6, NIV) has continued throughout Christian history. However, Revelation



describes a renewed proclamation of this message—the good news about Jesus and all that entails—at the end of time.”

Has the “Everlasting Gospel” gone to every nation, tribe, language, and people throughout Christian history? I don’t think so. I believe Christ would have come long ago had this been the case.

Revelation speaks of a need to “come out” of Babylon [symbolic of religious confusion]

Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Revelation 18: 4 ESV.

Malachi also speaks of an “Elijah” message before the end of time.

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ⁶ And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.” [Malachi 4: 5, 6 ESV].

The lesson focuses on Judgment, Worship, and Creation themes from Revelation 14. Are these linked? How?

What do you hear when you hear the word “Judgment”? Do you hear a legal proclamation? A verdict with sentencing? Or do you hear discernment? Diagnosis and treatment recommendations?

	Imposed Law [Levels 1-4]	Design Law [Levels 5-7]
Judgment	God’s coming with fire and brimstone to execute judgment on the wicked because He’s angry they broke his holy Law. Punishment is nigh. His anger must be appeased.	God’s coming to correctly diagnose human characters and He will diagnose some as healed and some as terminally ill. His diagnosis will be in harmony with human choices.
Worship	We need to worship God because He said so, and He will be angry if we worship idols or, worse, if we become atheists. And we have to worship Him in my way, not yours. His ego must be appeased.	One of God’s design laws is the Law of Worship. Our characters are transformed in to the likeness of our object of worship. Worship a God of Love because it’s how life is designed to operate.
Creation	God is powerful enough to speak the universe in to existence. He brought us in to the world and He will take us out if we don’t comply with His mandates. His power must be appeased.	God designed life to operate around a set of protocols. Any deviation from these protocols bring sickness and eventually death. Learn and follow these protocols and live – forever.



2019 Q3 The Least of These: Lesson 11

Living the Advent Hope

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

What does the title of the lesson bring to mind?

Do we really have hope of the Advent? Is your hope in our lifetime, or do you think of your children or grandchildren's lifetime?

What do you think of this quote?

The days in which we live are solemn and important. **The Spirit of God is gradually but surely being withdrawn from the earth. Plagues and judgments are already falling upon the despisers of the grace of God.** The calamities by land and sea, the unsettled state of society, the alarms of war, are portentous. They forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude. **The agencies of evil are combining their forces, and consolidating.** They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and **the final movements will be rapid ones.**--Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 11.

Do we read that the final events could be accomplished quickly so the Lord could come in our lifetime?

Does it give you hope or fear?

- Why do calamities come?
- Is it because God uses His power to send it, or that God is slowly withdrawing His protective presence?
- Why is God withdrawing His protective presence?
- Where is the dwelling place of the Spirit? Hearts and minds of people, but this quote says God's Spirit is gradually being withdrawn—what would that indicate?
- What would be the reason the Spirit is withdrawn? Hearts and minds are gradually hardening and closing to the Spirit of God.
- Who then gets more freedom to influence the forces of nature and the people hardened against God? Satan and evil angels.
- So where do the calamities come from? From Satanic agencies!
- What are the judgments of God? That people have rejected Him hardened their hearts and beyond healing—so God withdraws and sets more and more people free and more and more earth free to their ruler Satan.



Are you comfortable believing God's end-time judgments upon the earth are not the dispensing of divine power to cause pain, suffering, plagues, or disasters but the withdraw of His power because people insist on rejecting God and being free of His presence and influence?

Consider these two quotes:

"How great is the long - suffering of God toward the wicked! The idolatrous Philistines and backsliding Israel had alike enjoyed the gifts of His providence. Ten thousand unnoticed mercies were silently falling in the pathway of ungrateful, rebellious men. Every blessing spoke to them of the Giver, but they were indifferent to His love. The forbearance of God was very great toward the children of men; **but when they stubbornly persisted in their impenitence, He removed from them His protecting hand. They refused to listen to the voice of God in His created works, and in the warnings, counsels, and reproofs of His word, and thus He was forced to speak to them through judgments.**" - PP 587.4

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

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

It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of." Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

Read second paragraph, "But Jesus also..." While there are no time prophecies left unfilled that would point to times or dates, is there anything that the Bible predicts does need to happen before the Lord comes?

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. Mt 24:14 NIV84

The gospel of what kingdom? Consider this quote, sent as a message to the SDA church at the 1888 General Conference from EGW:

Said my Guide, "**There is much light yet to shine forth from the law of God and the gospel of righteousness. This message, understood in its true character, and proclaimed in the Spirit, will lighten the earth with its glory.** The great decisive question is to be brought before all nations, tongues, and peoples. **The closing work of the third angel's message will**



be attended with a power that will send the rays of the Sun of Righteousness into all the highways and byways of life, and decisions will be made for God." --Ms 15, 1888, p. 5. (To "Dear Brethren Assembled at General Conference," Nov. 1, 1888.) Released July, 1958. {2MR 58.2}

What is the light that was yet to shine about God's law and the gospel of righteousness? Could it be the truth about God as Creator and His law is design law and the rejection of Rome's imperial law model?

The truth about God's law being design law leads then to the truth about the gospel of righteousness—the good news that Jesus came and achieved the remedy to sin so we might *become* righteousness—sinless—restored back to God's design for life with His law restored in us. As Scripture says, "he who knew no sin became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God." 2Cor 5:21.

This is quite different from the Roman legal view of imposed law that we get legally declared righteous even though we are not. The message of actual righteousness by faith, coming from the truth about God and His design law was brought in 1888 but the church leadership rejected it and went with imposed Roman law with a legal view instead.

Today there is still much light to shine forth about God's law and the gospel of righteousness and this message will lighten the world.

Consider this quote:

It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. **Men are losing their knowledge of His character.** It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. **At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known.** Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth... {COL 415.3}

The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. {COL 415.5}

The light of the Sun of Righteousness is to shine forth in good works--in words of truth and deeds of holiness. {COL 416.1}

Do you hear the first angel's message—the hour of his judgment has come—the hour in human history when people are to make a right judgment about God. We are to stop viewing God as a dictator, the source of pain and suffering and death and start seeing Him as our loving Creator who only wants to heal us from this terminal sin condition?



Our duty to obey this law is to be the burden of this last message of mercy to the world. God's law is not a new thing. It is not holiness created, but holiness made known. It is a code of principles expressing mercy, goodness, and love. It presents to fallen humanity the character of God, and states plainly the whole duty of man (MS 88, 1897). {1BC 1104.9}

What law lens do you hear this quote through? Imposed/imperial human law—we must keep a bunch of rules, or do you hear design law—we must be healed to live in harmony with God's design for life?

Do you hear the first angel again—be in awe of God and give Him glory, by revealing His character and methods in your life—because you have had the law of God written in your heart and mind?

What of Revelation 18:

After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. With a mighty voice he shouted:

“Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!
She has become a home for demons
and a haunt for every evil spirit,
a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird.
For all the nations have drunk
the maddening wine of her adulteries.
The kings of the earth committed adultery with her,
and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries.”

Then I heard another voice from heaven say:

“Come out of her, my people,
so that you will not share in her sins,
so that you will not receive any of her plagues; (vs 1-4 NIV84)

What do you hear?

Do you hear, that after the initial presentation of the 3 angel's messages of Revelation 14, which we believe began in the 19th century, that the message of the second angel—the fall of Babylon, the truth revealing its corruption and a call to leave that system will go forth again?

And what is the root corruption of Babylon? That God's law functions like human law, imposed rules and the gods of Babylon require payment to render blessings—i.e. paganism.

So, Revelation 18:1-4 from *The Remedy*:

After this, I saw another messenger coming down from heaven — symbolizing the Godly origin of his message. He had the great authority and power of truth, and the earth was



illuminated by his splendor.²With a voice reverberating throughout the earth, he shouted: "Babylon the Great is a fallen system of religious tradition, fable, and falsehood distorting the truth about God! Every demonic distortion about God, every evil attitude toward God, and all filthy and destructive heart-motives find their home with her,³for she intoxicates the world with her pagan views of God, maddening them with her adulterous idea that God coerces and must inflict punishment if not properly appeased. Earth's leaders corrupt themselves with her by practicing her methods, and people not anchored in God's kingdom of love, and those who wander from philosophy to philosophy, fill their minds with her smorgasbord of lies."⁴Then I heard another voice calling from heaven, saying: "Come out of her, my people! Leave that confusing mess of evil thinking so that you will not share in her spiritual sickness and rebellion, and so that you will not receive the suffering she has chosen;

What is the gospel of the kingdom?

"The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation,²¹ nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20,21 NIV84)

Jesus said the kingdom of God is within you—what does that mean? It means the law, methods, protocols of God are the foundation of our character, motives, heart and mind.

I ask you, Is this kingdom of God within you? God's people are to be minutemen, always ready, always composed in Jesus Christ. The time is come now when one moment we may be on solid earth, the next the earth may be heaving beneath our feet. Earthquakes will take place when least expected. {20MR 114.1}

Christianity has a much broader meaning than many have hitherto given it. It is not a creed. It is the word of Him who liveth and abideth forever. It is a living, animating principle that takes possession of mind, heart, motives, and the entire man. Christianity-- Oh, that all might experience its operations! It is a vital, personal experience that elevates, purifies, ennobles the whole man. Every man is responsible to God, who has made provision for all to receive this blessings. {20MR 114.2}

What is the final message? It is simply the truth about God which has always been true, the eternal good news that God is love and His law is the design law of love built into reality, the protocols that life and health are based upon. And that Jesus is God's agency to restore God's law back into the species human—the systems of the world are fallen, fallen into the imperial law model with its legal penal systems that distort the truth about God. We are to give God glory by revealing His character in our lives, His living law written on our hearts so that we reflect Him and the light of His glory will go throughout the world.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Throughout the Bible's story..." What do you hear?



In the world people segregate into different groups, sects, creeds, religions, nationalities, divisions along racial lines, social, economic, and many other, and people then abuse their fellow human beings. This is the history of the human race filled with sin—with selfishness.

Selfishness always divides—it never unites; love heals and brings unity.

If we view things from a heavenly view—what are the only two divisions in the world that actually matter? –The righteous and unrighteous—those who have been renewed in heart to be like Jesus and those who have not. Perhaps we could divide the category of the unrighteous into those who haven't yet had opportunity to know the truth and be renewed in Jesus and those who have but then rejected it and hardened themselves in selfishness, but it is still a division of righteous and unrighteous.

What causes division in our world?

What do you think of this quote?

Then as the children of God are one in Christ, **how does Jesus look upon caste, upon society distinctions, upon the division of man from his fellow man, because of color, race, position, wealth, birth, or attainments? The secret of unity is found in the equality of believers in Christ. The reason for all division, discord, and difference is found in separation from Christ. Christ is the center to which all should be attracted; for the nearer we approach the center, the closer we shall come together in feeling, in sympathy, in love, growing into the character and image of Jesus.** With God there is no respect of persons. {1SM 259.2}

From God's perspective does He see multiple races or one human race? Does He offer salvation to some but not others, or is salvation offered to all human beings?

What happens to a person if they refuse the healing of heart and mind (salvation) Jesus offers?

Does God have to take an action to cause the rejecters of His mercy to be damaged, to suffer and ultimately to die?

Do we see evil in the world, abuse, exploitation, and injustice—wrongdoing?

Yes, why? What is the cause?

Is the cause of abuse and injustice in society due to lack of education? If we just had better schools then injustice would cease?

- Poor medical care?
- Poverty?
- Racism?
- Sexism?



What is the cause of injustice in the world? Fear and selfishness dominating the human heart—the lack of love and truth.

Can any human government fix the problem of injustice in the world?

Why or why not?

Does this mean human governments should not exist or that governments should not work to impose laws and policies designed to oppose abuse and exploitation—i.e. to promote justice?

What happens when the church and Christians believe that their mission is to fix the abuses in society by legislation?

Read second paragraph, “But these rescues were usually short-lived...”

Can God rescue people from sin and injustice by using might and power—by punishing people who do wrong?

When God rescued people with might and power in history: Flood, slaves from Egypt, Jericho, Mt. Carmel, 185,000 Assyrians...what was the result? Did the use of such power result in righteousness in those He rescued?

No, God cannot get the victory from sin by use of might and power, thus the Scripture says, “Not by might nor by power but by my Spirit says the Lord.” Zech 4:6

God cannot get love, trust, devotion, loyalty and a heart restored to righteousness by might and power, only by truth, love and freedom.

God has a plan to bring sin and hardened sinners to an end—how can God bring this about? If might and power cannot eliminate rebellion, eliminate distrust, instill love and loyalty into the heart—how can God eliminate sin and sinners without inciting more fear and rebellion?

What law lens do you understand the problem and solution through? If human law, imposed rules, then there is no answer—only perpetual warfare—which is Satan’s goal.

But if we worship the Creator and understand His laws as the laws upon which reality are built, then we realize that God setting people free to reap what they choose is how He accomplishes His goal. God brings events to a point that everyone sees for themselves that the wicked hate love, hate truth and don’t want to live in God’s presence and they voluntarily surrender their lives begging the mountains to fall on them—they reap the suffering of unremedied sin; then all realize God did everything for each person and only those who refused God die in the end, which is what they freely choose.



Read third paragraph, “The Psalms...” I have found that the Psalms have many distortions written in by the translators who have gone to the Hebrew with the assumption that God’s law works like human law and God’s justice is punishing sin. With this assumption they translate in many ideas that are legitimate possible translations, but not the only possible translation. When one understands God’s law as design law then often times another view is realized.

Let’s read Psalms 94 from *The Remedy*

- 1 O Lord, the God who exterminates evil!
O God, eradicate fear and selfishness—let your love and truth shine forth.
- 2 Rise up, O Creator who governs the earth;
let the proud reap what they have sown.
- 3 How long, O Lord, will your mercy shield the wicked?
How long will they celebrate in their terminal state?
- 4 They are constant torrent of self-importance;
the selfish overflow with boasting.
- 5 They walk all over your people, O Lord;
they oppress those who have your character of love.
- 6 They kill the powerless, widows and immigrants
and murder the orphans—those without family.
- 7 They tell themselves, “The Lord does not see;
the God whom Jacob worshipped doesn’t even know.”
- 8 But know this, you who deny reality and live in ignorance;
you foolish people, when will you wise up?
- 9 God created our ears—don’t you realize he hears everything?
God created our eyes—don’t you realize he sees everything?
- 10 The Lord disciplines the nations, so get this straight:
he will reveal the truth to correct the people and teach them how reality works!
- 11 The Lord knows how the worldly-wise think;
he knows that their selfish ideas are misleading, destructive and futile.
- 12 Happy and healthy is the person whom you disciple, O Lord—
the person you teach to live in harmony with your design law for life;
- 13 you provide them healing and deliverance from the day of trouble,
but the wicked dig the pit of their own eternal destruction.
- 14 The Lord will not abandon his people—those who partake of the remedy;
he will never forsake his inheritance—those who possess his character of love.
- 15 Justice returns to design law—the law upon which life is built to operate;
and all the healed—those who are pure in heart—live in harmony with it.
- 16 Who will help me fight against selfishness?
Who will stand with me against those who promote evil?
- 17 If the Lord had not given me his remedy,
I would have quickly succumbed to the silence of death.
- 18 When I said, “I am slipping into selfishness,”
your perfect love, O Lord, healed me.



- 19 When doubts and fears trouble my mind,
abiding in your truth and love brings peace to my soul.
20 Selfish leaders who practice evil are not allied with you;
they pass imposed laws to cause suffering and injustice.
21 They plot together against the pure of heart
and condemn the innocent to death.
22 But the Lord protects me;
in union with my God is where I find safety.
23 The Lord will allow the wicked to reap what they have sown;
their rejection of the remedy and persistent wickedness destroys them,
and the Lord will sadly let them go.

The last paragraph states, “In a sense, injustice is more difficult to endure among those who believe in a just God who desire justice for all His people.”

What law lens do you hear this through? Do you hear justice like human law, inflicting punishment or justice like design law, healing and delivering those dying in sin?

The following is an excerpt from my book *The God-Shaped Heart*:

Keith Johnson is an online friend, who has worked for years in prison ministry teaching inmates about God’s design law, helping them to move past imposed law constructs of right, wrong and justice. He developed four questions to help them understand more clearly what justice is from God’s viewpoint. Take a moment and answer each question for yourself.

1. What if I told you that your youngest child was murdered? Would you want mercy or justice *for* the perpetrator?
2. What if I told you that the murderer was your oldest child? Would you want mercy or justice *for* the perpetrator?
3. What if I told you that you are guilty of the murder of the only begotten Son of God? Would you want mercy or justice *as* the perpetrator?
4. What if I told you that you had a daughter, your only daughter, the apple of your eye, who has never given you a moment’s grief, but tonight, as her father, you happen to have your tux hanging in the closet, because tomorrow you are scheduled to walk your daughter down the aisle and give her away to someone whom you approve? If you’re the mother, you have your new dress hanging next to her wedding gown that you have been planning and preparing for since the first time she held her in her arms. But tonight, your daughter is at a bachelorette party with her peers and they talk her into having “one-for-the-road,” the first ever in her life. Two, three, four, five, six, seven (drinks) later, while on her way home, she wipes out a school bus full of little children on their way to camp. Everybody aboard the bus dies in a fiery inferno, but you daughter survives. Do



you want mercy or justice for your daughter (?) and...what do those who are related to the victims who were on the bus want? ¹

Human justice is based on human law—imposed rules, and is motivated by selfishness and seeks vengeance under the name justice. The selfish heart has an ingrained sense of justice, but which in reality is nothing more than vengeance, and which is easily exposed because such ‘justice’ is sought only so long as it doesn’t apply to them or theirs.

MONDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “Religion has often...” First, is our hope in the second coming, a world without sin, a world without disease and death a misplaced hope? Is it escapism from living in this world?

What are your thoughts about the second point—that some telling the poor and oppressed to accept their sad lot because it will all be made right when Jesus comes?

This second idea is a distortion of truth—it is true that Jesus will restore the world and all who trust Him—but this truth is used to create a false narrative that one should just accept pain, suffering, abuse, exploitation, poverty etc. Not so.

Christians—those who are like Christ—are to be agents of love, truth, and compassion in the world—to reach out in their communities to be a benefit to those around them, all while practicing God’s principles in their lives—which means we at times restrain ourselves from intervening, when in our judgment, the intervention would cause more harm—prodigal son for example was left to come to his senses.

But, the idea that Christ suffered for our salvation is also perverted by some to teach that because Christ suffered, we should rejoice in abuse, mistreatment and in fact we need to be abused in order to be like Jesus. This distorted idea gets used to abuse people.

It is true, that in the process of conversion there is a suffering of heart, mind, soul as selfishness is confronted and we die to self. This is the type of suffering the Bible says we are to rejoice in, the suffering that comes from overcoming sin in our own lives.

But this does not necessarily require physical suffering, or poverty, and certainly doesn’t require being abused by others. It is true, the righteous may find themselves abused and mistreated because of their faith in God—but the abuse is not God’s doing nor needed for their spiritual growth, but because Satan and evil people want to discourage and destroy them.

¹ Keith Johnson has a Master’s in Correctional & Alternative Education and has worked for 34 years in federal, state, private, county prisons and juvenile detention centers.



This distortion of the Cross is rooted in the lie about God's law and the need for God to punish Jesus, and thus the idea gets perpetuated that being mistreated, abused, punished, even when innocent, is virtuous and, therefore, for the innocent to protest mistreatment is unChristlike.

This is all fraudulent, but it has led to some very distorted theologies in opposition to this falsehood: feminist theologies or womanist theologies in which people teach that the Christ's death was not necessary for our salvation—that only His good example of sinless life was necessary. So, they reject the crucifixion of Christ as having any benefit in our salvation.

Understand—that they are rejecting a lie—they are rejecting the lie that legal infliction of pain by God was virtuous, righteous, holy, good, or beneficial. They are right to reject this lie because God did not lay a hand on Jesus. God did not use power to torture or punish Jesus.

But, these people who reject the penal lie have substituted their own false narrative that the death of Christ wasn't necessary for salvation.

This is a common strategy of Satan to pit false ideas against each other and have groups argue the false ideas—so many of the Protestant Catholic arguments are like this—both groups promoting a false idea—because they both are in some way rooted in imposed law.

Just because it wasn't necessary to appease God or pay a legal penalty, doesn't mean Jesus' death wasn't necessary for our salvation—it was. The key is design law—what was actually wrong that needed fixing.

Adam and Even changed their very nature from love to selfishness. Life is built to operate upon the law of love. No human after Adam sinned could develop a perfect sinless character of love. Christ came to do that for us and as a human did exactly that. Satan opposed Jesus, first by flattery and trickery, then by inducements and finally by torture—both emotional and physical—to get Jesus to choose to act selfishly and thus corrupt His sinless human character.

Jesus, was tempted in every way like us, but instead of succumbing to the temptations, Jesus chose to love perfectly thus at the cross He destroyed death (the infection of fear and selfishness) and brought life and immortality to light. He developed a perfect sinless humanity.

It was not possible for this perfect sinless human character to be developed and procured without the death of Christ. To take away the cross we take away the remedy to sin.

TUESDAY

This takes us right into Tuesday's lesson about the resurrection—why did Jesus rise again?

What is the basis of life? The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. Ps 19:7 NIV84



The law of love is the law of life—the law upon which life is built, thus when Jesus perfectly restored it into His humanity the inevitable outcome was He would rise again.

Did you ever notice that Jesus predicted over and over again to His disciples that He would die and rise on the third day?

Yet in the book *The Desire of Ages* EGW wrote:

Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. p. 753

How could He predict He would rise again if He couldn't see through the portals of the tomb?

Can you predict what will happen if I drop this pen? How, do you have prophetic vision of the future? Or do you know the law—the law of gravity? Jesus knew His mission, what He was to accomplish, the law upon which life was based and knew what would happen when He succeeded, but He did not have the veil of time pulled aside and had need seen a vision of the future.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “While suffering..” What do you hear? What do you think they are describing? Are they describing a judicial process? Why is this unjust?

What is Biblical justice? What defines justice—the law, and what is God's law?

What justice would you prefer if your child was murdered—a trial to punish the murderer or resurrecting and restoring your child to you?

From my book *The God-Shaped Heart*

Kent Whitaker and the Power of Love

Fortunately, I have never had to face such a terrible situation, but on December 10, 2003 Kent Whitaker did. I had the privilege of meeting Kent and I heard firsthand about his unimaginable ordeal.

On that fateful day in December, Kent, his wife and two sons, Kevin and Bart went out to dinner to celebrate Bart's upcoming graduation from college. After a wonderful family dinner they returned home. As the family approached the house, Bart ran back to the car to get his cell phone. When the rest of the family entered the house a masked gunman jumped out and shot and killed Kevin and Kent's wife. He also shot Kent in the chest, but fortunately he survived. As devastating as the murders of his wife and son were, the worse part for Kent was yet to come—the police, upon investigation, discovered that Kent's surviving son, Bart, had been the one who arranged to have his family murdered so he could inherit the family money. I cannot



imagine the depth of pain, heartache and despair with which Kent was faced. Bart was arrested and tried for murder with the prosecutor seeking the death penalty.

If you were Kent what justice would you want for Bart? What law lens do you view this tragedy through? Do you see only through imposed human law and seek punishment for Bart, or do you see through God's design law and realize Bart is sick of heart and mind and in need of healing and restoration? If, you realize your son is sick of heart and mind, what do you want for your son—to be executed for his crimes, or to be transformed in his character?

Kent understood his son was sin-sick and needed healing and therefore he forgave his son and publicly asked the prosecutor not to seek the death penalty. But the prosecutor, an agent of the human imposed law system, did what he thought was just and sought to punish—he sought the death penalty. Bart was found guilty and sentenced to death.

Kent stood by his convicted son, pouring his forgiveness and love upon him, visiting him in prison and seeking his eternal healing. Bart eventually said, "If you can still love me and forgive me for all I have done, then I believe God can also." And, though still on death row, Bart gave his life to Christ.

In 40-minute interview in 2012 with a KPRC Local 2 reporter, Bart confessed:
"I've made some really bad mistakes in my life. I was a very messed up young man. There are some people who are never going to get past that."

"I think about what I could have done every day. But those types of thoughts are really torture back here. I have to limit myself to the good I can do in the here and now, or otherwise I will break."

"If there's any way my mother and brother are watching me, I want them to be proud of the way I'm living now," said Whitaker. "That is foremost in my mind every minute of every day."²

Kent said that while he has lost his wife and younger son on this earth and will also lose Bart, he has peace knowing that through all of this Bart will now be with them in heaven and their family will be together for eternity. Such grace, such forgiveness, such love is only possible when we realize the truth about God and experience his love in our lives—when we come back to focus on design law and reject the fallen human imposed law construct. This is the goal. This is the God-shaped heart. This is the new covenant—having God's law of love written on the heart.

What is justice in this story? Is it just for God to heal Bart and give him eternal life? How was it just? Could God give Bart eternal life through a legal declaration, an adjustment of a record in heaven, or

² http://www.click2houston.com/news/bart-whitaker-talks-about-killing-family-death-row-complaints_20151124160736126



did it require that God actually do something in the heart, mind, character of Bart? And what did God do in Bart's heart? He healed him, purging selfishness and restoring His methods of truth, love, freedom—His law in Bart's heart and mind. Was it just for God to do this?

Satan says it is not just, that every sin must meet its punishment. Satan is the author, the originator of the imposed law lie about God and continues to present His lie that God's law functions like human law.

But we live at the time in human history in which greater light, greater truth about God's law and the gospel of righteousness is to lighten the world. We are to call people out of Babylon—that fallen system of penal/legal religion and back to worship Him who made the heavens earth and fountains of water—back to Creator worship—and this requires we return to design law understanding of God's government.

Read last paragraph, "The hope of judgment..."

Yes, what is the core nature of God—is God like Caesar and imperial dictator who is the source of inflicted pain and suffering, or is God our Creator of love who constantly gives for the health and welfare of His universe?

What about the Judgment? The reason this has been misunderstood so terribly is because, first God's law has been misunderstood to be like human law, but second: there are actually three judgments, not one so people merge all the evidences into one morphed event. But clarity comes when we see through God's design law and also separate the different judgments:

First Judgment:

- Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water." Revelation 14:6,7 NIV84
- God must be true, even though every human being is a liar. As the scripture says, "You must be shown to be right when you speak; you must win your case when you are being tried." Romans 3:4 GNB

Second Judgment:

- Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years. "So I will come near to you for judgment..." Malachi 3:1-5
- And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. Dan 8:14



- The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by Malachi, are descriptions of the same event; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25. {FLB 207.4}
- Jesus's work in the Heavenly Sanctuary to determine (judge):
 - Who has trusted Him and given Him access to their hearts
 - What residual elements of sin remain to be removed in order to perfect them for the resurrection and second coming

Third Judgment:

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it...And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. Revelation 20:11,12

THURSDAY

No More Tears or Pain

Are you looking forward to no more tears and pain? How is this achieved? Is it achieved by memory erasure?

Do you see justice in this restoration?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, "When the voice of God..." What happens in the character of those people?

Read second paragraph, "The great controversy is ended..." what happens if we sever this tie?

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

PODCAST: Come and Reason with Dr. Tim Jennings weekly Podcast is now broadcasting, please follow us.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!! January 17-19, 2020, in Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport) we will have a Come and Reason Ministries: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly.

The Remedy Psalms is complete and online and will soon be updated to the free app.

September 13,14, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Gentlebrook Intermediary Care Facility, Hartville, OH.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

November 15-17, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Norwegian SDA Health Worker's Retreat in Oslo, Norway.

November 24, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Aachen Germany.

January 17-19, 2020: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly. Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport). See events.comeandreason.com for more details and to sign up.



2019 Q3 The Least of These: Lesson 12 To Love Mercy

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “As we have seen...” No doubt God is concerned for the poor and oppressed, and we also should be concerned for them.

But I have some questions—do we separate people into the poor and oppressed versus the rich and oppressor?

Does God not have concern for the abuser, the exploiter, the powerful person who takes advantage of the weak? What about King David in the case of Bathsheba and Uriah—did God have concern for Uriah and Bathsheba? Did God also have concern for David?

From God’s perspective, in that situation who was the one in the greatest need? Who was the one that needed God’s grace the most—the one in most jeopardy of losing salvation?

When we see evil and sin being perpetrated in the world today—do we not only have concern for the victims, but do we recognize the great need the perpetrators have of God’s saving grace? Do we see the perpetrators as people to hate, as enemies we should seek to punish, to harm, to war against, or do we see them as people sick in heart that need God’s remedy of love, truth, grace? Do we see them as people that need our love?

Jesus said:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:43-48 NIV84)

What do you hear in Jesus’ words?

Do you hear any law being described here? What kind of law is being described in the sun and rain? Design law, it isn’t about imposed rules, but about how God built reality to operate.

If you want to be part of God’s family, i.e. a child of your Father in heaven, then you have to operate in harmony with Him. You have to live in harmony with the design laws upon which God built reality



to operate. Which means we have to love others; and when we trust God with the outcomes, with our lives, and we love even our enemies, then we are perfect.

Notice, Bible perfection isn't about a behavioral list of rules, it is about maturity of character, about living in harmony with God's methods of love.

thoughts?

How can we experience this? Think design laws—

- law of worship—by beholding we are changed—we cannot avoid becoming like the God we admire, worship, spend time with.
- law of truth—truth will set you free, displace lies, restore to trust and shape character
- law of love—the more you give the more you receive
- law of exertion—if you want something to get stronger you must exercise it, including exercising your trust in God

If we spend time in daily prayer, meditation of God's character, methods, principles as revealed in Scripture and nature, embracing and applying the truths as God reveals them to us we grow in Godliness, we are transformed.

Is this a salvation by works method? Absolutely not! Salvation is totally of God's origination in Christ. But we are partaking of Christ, which is our work, thus we work out our salvation with awe and trembling. In other words, Christ procured the remedy to sin, but we must actively participate by our own choices to partake and apply what Christ achieved to our own lives—i.e. the work of faith or trust.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "As was made clear in the teachings of Jesus..." thoughts?

How would you describe God's kingdom?

What would you say are the defining differences between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of the world?

- Law of love, truth and freedom (design law) versus law of sin and death—the fear driven survival of the fittest motive which leads to selfishness, deceit and coercion—thus leading to imposed laws.

Which kingdom does would these statements fall into:

- The end justifies the means



- Might is right
- The strong survive
- Do unto others before they do unto you
- Fake it til you make it
- The law requires punishment—therefore sin must be punished
- Justice requires God inflict punishment upon sinners
- The Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience

If you wanted to get people who are living for God's kingdom to leave God's kingdom and start living for Satan's kingdom what might you do? How might you get people to do that?

- Straight temptations of drugs, alcohol, sex, gambling etc.(David), financial pressures leading to stealing, embezzling etc.
- Disillusionment—pain, suffering, loss, discouragement—consider Elijah was tempted
- What about promoting a Godly goal by practicing Satan's methods? Consider the goal of bringing people to accept Jesus as Savior—a Godly goal—but what about torturing, imprisoning or killing those who don't?

Do you think the majority of people who have abused others in the name of their god, thought they were doing wrong?

Why would they think it is right to punish people who break some religious rule or dogma? Because of the lie that people believe that God's law functions like human law, or God's kingdom functions like human kingdoms and justice requires punishment.

Where is the line drawn in societies between establishing laws to protect the innocent and not violating the freedoms of people?

Read last paragraph, "Those who have power..." What do you hear? Did EGW advocate killing slave-owners in order to free slaves? Or did she advocate not obeying laws that discriminate and violated God's law? Do you see how Satan could take this principle of love—which would oppose slavery and would refuse to obey laws to return slaves that have escaped, and try to get good people to seek to kill others in order to obtain one's goals?

This is all about boundaries, methods, principles—one can have the right motive, but use the wrong methods and the result will not be health, but destruction.

For instance, the doctors who treated George Washington's pneumonia had the right motives, they wanted to save his life. But they had the wrong method, bleeding and leaching, and even though they were trying to save, they actually caused more harm. Because one cannot promote health or healing by violating God's design laws.



So Paul writes:

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. 15 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. (1Corinthians 3:10-15)

What do you understand this means?

Do you hear design law being described—reality—how things actually work?

Do you hear the difference between right motive, the builder who with good intentions and heart to help builds, but if they build with the wrong materials then what they are doing, even with good intention, doesn't last because it isn't built in harmony with how reality works?

This is a warning to pastors, teachers, parents, in how we teach and influence others, how we help to assist people in building their characters. We may have good motives, seek to help, but if we use wrong methods then we may very well suffer great loss as we see those who we influenced lost because they never internalized the truth, never grew in harmony with God's design for life.

For instance, raising children in strict indoctrination to memorize certain rules, doctrines and live by a code of behavioral conduct, all motivated by love for God and your children, longing for their salvation, but which results in the child becoming a person who lives in fear, doesn't know how to think for themselves, cannot discern truth from lies, and thus lives a zealous religious life but never experiences a renewed heart.

Or parents who in love become enablers to their children's addictions—always bailing them out, rescuing them from consequences—because they love their children, but the children never learn from their bad choices.

From *The Remedy*:

¹⁰By using the wisdom, insight and understanding that God has given me regarding his plan for rebuilding the human heart and mind, I laid a foundation in harmony with his original design, and others are now building on it. ¹¹For Jesus Christ is the only true foundation—the real source of God's character, methods and principles—and no one can replace him. ¹²One can build on this foundation using pure, holy and costly materials, or using ordinary, common and cheap materials, ¹³but ultimately, the work will reveal itself for what it is, because the day on which Christ returns will bring everything into the light of truth. On that day, the quality of a person's



character-building will be revealed by the fiery glory of God's presence—for only those whose characters are in harmony with God's character will be able to stand in the fiery presence of his life-giving glory.¹⁴ And if those whom the builders have worked to build up in Christ survive, the builders will be rewarded with happiness and joy.¹⁵ If, however, the builder's work is burned up, the builder will suffer great sorrow and loss: the builder will be saved, but only as one whose misunderstandings, errors, misconceptions and mistakes are consumed in the fire of God's truth and love.

MONDAY

What do you think of the title—Compassion Fatigue?

This is another of Satan's strategies. If he can't get Godly people to choose sin. If he can't get them disillusioned. If he can't get them to use the methods of this world. Then, he will try to overwhelm them with good missions, responsibilities, endeavors, projects that burns them out and removes them from the playing field.

This occurs because Satan tricks them into violating one of God's design laws—the law of restoration. Once a finite being expends a resource, we must rest and recover before we have more to expend. If we don't we burn out and eventually die:

- After using energy we must eat, drink, rest
- We must sleep
- We must get a weekly Sabbath rest
- Jesus took time away from the needy masses to rest and recover

Another trick of Satan is to get people to take upon themselves burdens that are not theirs—to seek to relieve burdens from another person that should be left with that person, whether literally or in imagination.

Many parents worry themselves by taking upon themselves the stress of their adult children's marriage problems, or financial problems, or work problems, or drug problems etc. Not focusing on creating opportunities for the adult to engage in healing and growth, but actually feeling the weight of the stress and being burdened with the problem as if it was theirs to fix.

This not only injures the person taking upon themselves unnecessary burdens, but to the degree they do alleviate the burden from the other person they rob that other person of opportunity for growth and advancement. Strength comes from exertion and if we take on others burdens, solve their problems etc. then they never exercise their abilities and they are stunted in their growth. So, this is not love—love will educate, teach, encourage, cheer, inspire, but ultimately leave burdens and responsibilities with the person whose they actually are.



Another trick is people who fail to differentiate *pain* from *harm* or *injury* and seek to relieve pain, or allow themselves to be mentally or emotionally distressed by someone else's pain, when in fact that pain is therapeutic.

The law of brokenness or healing: Once there is brokenness—there are no pain free options. Many fail to realize this and thus when they see someone in pain, they don't ask, is this harmful, or is this merely painful but actually good for them. A person who is doing physical therapy, weight bearing for the first time in 8 weeks after a fracture leg, will feel discomfort and pain—if you failed to understand the situation and simply heard the cry of pain, and with all compassion, you intervene, ask them to sit and you do the exercises for them—so they won't hurt—do you help them or hurt them?

While this is easy to see with physical wounds, it is not as easy to see with emotional wounds. Many people seek to relieve emotional pain, when the most healthy action is not to relieve it, but to encourage the person to wrestle through it and resolve the injury or wounds causing it. But this requires we tolerate the pain we see our loved one in.

This is why it is well known that doctors don't treat their own families the best, because they are too vulnerable to over empathize and thus not be able to give the best care, because they cannot tolerate the pain the person will necessarily experience.

The lesson points this out in the third paragraph, "There have been many examples in which well-intentioned people have caused damage to other people's lives by trying to help."

What is required beyond compassion in order to actually help?

A knowledge of reality—an understanding of design law, how God designed life to operate, and then an accurate diagnosis, what is wrong in that person's life that is causing their problems. Compassion without understanding, merely seeking to relieve pain, is like numbing a person's hand while it is touching a hot stove—relieving pain, but causing much more damage.

Read last paragraph, "Expectations:..." What is the difference between creating opportunity and demanding equal outcomes for all people?

Do you see the problem of promoting policies with the goal of demanding equal outcome?

While all people are of equal moral worth, as human beings, as children of God—not all people have equal abilities, equal desires, equal vision, equal motivation, equal aspiration, equal tenacity, equal drive, equal willingness to work, train, push oneself.

Some people will be better artists, musicians, athletes, mathematicians, carpenters etc. than others. One of the corruptions in society is the idea that we should have equal outcomes. In some school systems this desire for equal outcomes has led to teachers being instructed to refrain from praising the exceptional paper, performance, presentation for fear of hurting the feelings of the child who didn't do an exceptional performance; or giving participation awards so every child gets an award.



While the value of a person is not measured by their success in any endeavor, and we should make clear to children that they are loved for who they are and not what they do—we must also make clear that being loved for who they are doesn't develop their abilities—if they want to succeed in life they must apply themselves and develop their abilities. The law of exertion is how reality works, hard work does reap benefits.

TUESDAY

The first paragraph states, “God loves a cheerful giver” quoting 2Corinthians 9:7.

What does this mean?

What is the difference between God loves a cheerful giver and God loves a giver?

Is there a difference in giving cheerfully and giving under obligation? What is the difference?

Does God love some people more than others? If I give cheerfully does God have more love in His heart for me than for the person who gives begrudgingly?

Or is this describing a design law, how things actually work or function? God ability to send His love, share His love, imbue His love, dispense His love requires hearts open to receive and share it. Thus God is able to have His love flow into and through the cheerful giver because that person's heart is open to receive and share or give away more and more of what God has given them, but the person who gives under obligation is not practicing love—their hearts are not in tune with God and thus God cannot pour His love into their hearts.

Thus God *loves* a cheerful giver.

Consider the garden hose on your home and the fire hydrant in front of your house. If both are opened up full, which gives away more? Which receives more to it? The more you give the more you receive. If we understand the water as a metaphor for love, God loves the cheerful giver, God's love flows more fully into and through the cheerful giver. The resentful giver doesn't love and even though they may give under obligation their hearts are closed restricting God's love, thus God can't “love” them functionally.

This is how our ministry is designed to function. Many of you may know, that while we are a 501 C 3 not for profit ministry with the IRS, we do not do fund raisers. We have been practicing the principle of giving away the materials that God has blessed us with and people respond in love to give to support us in doing this. We give away:

- multiple DVD sets (4 different sets)
- *Could It Be This Simple?* here each week and at various conventions
- *The Remedy* as a free app and free audio



- Bible study guides
- Free access to all our online resources
- We give away my various books to pastors, church leaders, schools, libraries.
- Our training and equipping course is subsidized by our ministry, meaning while there is a sign-up cost to attendees, that cost does not cover our expenses for putting this on.
- At the General Conference in 2015 we gave away approximately (and I don't recall the exact number) 40,000 DVDs, 30,000 Bible Study Guides, 30,000 books, and other resources. There were three football field size rooms for the exhibits and we were the only one giving everything away. We had leaders of various other ministries coming up to us and asking us how are we able to afford to do this. And we explained God's economy, we give away and people who receive this material are moved to give back.
- We are currently scheduled to be at the GC in Indianapolis in 2020, please keep this in your prayers that God will keep this opportunity open for us. And we are working and planning for the materials we will be giving away. Last time we didn't do any fund raising, but we did let our supporters know of this opportunity and we heard back that many were glad we told them because they would have been disappointed if we didn't give them a chance to support us with their donations. So, I am letting you know again, we have a booth at the 2020 GC and are currently building our stock of materials to take and give away in case any of you want to support us in this. Our goal is to give more away than we did last time!

The bottom green section asks, "Besides giving money, even generously, what are other ways that we should manifest a generous spirit?"

WEDNESDAY

Blessed are the peacemakers—what does this mean?

How can we promote peace?

What is the only way for real peace to be experienced?

Can we ever have real peace without love and trust?

Can we get love and trust by treaties, laws, rules, force, threats of punishment?

Can God get love and trust, and thus eternal peace in His universe by punishing the wrong doers?

- Does that mean there is no punishment for sin? If I say: Parents don't inflict lung cancer on their children who smoke. Is that the same as saying smoking doesn't lead to lung cancer?
- Saying God doesn't inflict pain, suffering, death—i.e. punishment for sin, is not the same as saying there is no punishment for sin. Gal 6:8 those who sow to the carnal nature from that nature reap destruction.
- This only happens because God maintains and sustains His laws—He will not change His laws, thus "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law." (1 Co 15:56 NIV84).



How does God get love and trust and thus eternal peace?

How do we apply God's principles in a wicked world?

Do peacemakers ever use force? What kind of force? Restraining force—absolutely, what is the goal of restraining force?

What do you think of gunmaker Colt coming out with a pistol in 1873 called the Peacemaker?

Then there is this quote, unknown source, “God made some men big and others small, but Sam Colt made all men the same size.”

What is implied? That bullies exist in the world and dominate and abuse the weak and the Peacemaker would diminish the disparity between the strong and the weak and thus decreased the abuse of others.

Did this work—did the development of the revolver and its wide distribution result in greater peace? No, it just changed who the bullies are. It has always been and always will about character!

We can never get peace with greater might and power, better weapons, only by dying to fear and selfishness in the heart and restoring God's love and character within!

Do you agree—we can't get peace with weapons? Then what did Jesus mean when He said:

Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn “ ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.’ Mt 10:34-36 NIV84

What is going on? What is being described? With what law lens to you understand this through?

- What is the problem that causes division, conflict? Selfishness in the heart
- Then what is Jesus saying He didn't come to bring peace but a sword?
- Peace with what and what kind of sword?
- He didn't come to bring peace with selfishness but the sword of truth to cut it out of our hearts and minds

From *The Remedy*:

"Don't think that I have come to make peace with a selfish world. I have not come to bring peace with selfishness, but a sword to cut selfishness out of the hearts of people.³⁵ I have come to cut dysfunctional family ties: to free a son from selfish loyalty to his father's ambitions and feuds, to sever a daughter from the control of an oppressive and manipulative mother, to cut



through the fear and hostility a daughter-in-law has toward her mother-in-law.³⁶ A person's worst enemies are often members of their own family.

The last paragraph points out that Jesus said we should not be angry or hold grudges—why not?

Is there a design law involved—a law on how reality functions, something that is predictable and reproducible?

What happens, every time, in the heart of a person who refuses to forgive, who holds grudges?

What happens, every time, in the heart of the person who forgives?

This is the law of forgiveness—healing only comes through forgiveness. If we hold resentment and bitterness we cannot avoid the damaging consequences to our own characters and bodies—such attitudes activate stress pathways and cause increased inflammation and lead to more disease and earlier death.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Solomon wrote...” What is the way we go about achieving the goal of speaking for the oppressed?

Who determines who is being oppressed? What is the standard?

In some cultures, women are not allowed to be educated, are traded or sold to men, have no say in whom they are to marry, are used as baby making machines—is this oppression?

Would the leadership of those cultures agree that they are oppressing their women? Who is right, what standard is used?

What about cultures who say women are forbidden from being in leadership roles, is that a form of oppression? What would the leaders who teach women are forbidden from ordination say? Would they agree that they are oppressing women? What is right, what standard is used?

What is the standard? What about the golden rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”? Is this a good standard? Or would even this golden rule require us to understand the principles of life, the protocols upon which life is built in order not to oppress or injure others?

For instance, what would the doctors who treated George Washington want done to them had they had pneumonia? They were applying the golden rule, but they were injuring because they didn't understand reality—God's design for life.

How many in religious circles do what they think is good, believing they are following God's will, but because they don't understand God's character or His design laws actually harm?



FRIDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “Search heaven and earth...” What is this truth that none other is more powerful than? The law of love!



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!! January 17-19, 2020, in Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport) we will have a Come and Reason Ministries: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly.

The Remedy Psalms is complete and online and will soon be updated to the free app.

September 13,14, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Gentlebrook Intermediary Care Facility, Hartville, OH.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

November 15-17, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Norwegian SDA Health Worker's Retreat in Oslo, Norway.

November 24, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Aachen Germany.

January 17-19, 2020: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly. Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport). See events.comeandreason.com for more details and to sign up.



2019 Q3 The Least of These: Lesson 13

A Community of Servants

by Dr. Wendell Moses

Laws of the Mind

1. Law of Love: We are happiest / most complete when we are serving others.
 - We are designed for service not self-service.
2. Law of Worship: by beholding we become changed
 - (we become like what we focus our attention and thoughts)
3. What we believe we speak
 - (We can't help from expressing what we think / believe.)
4. Thoughts are strengthened / encouraged as we speak them.
5. The mind adapts to what it dwells upon: bigger ideas vs smaller
 - (The effect of thinking about God vs thinking about ourselves.)
6. Law of Giving: We get more when we give more.
 - (Our capacity increases as we utilize our abilities to give away what we have.
 - ♦ Law of exertion
 - ♦ Law of Love
7. Law of Rest (Sabbath Rest): An expenditure of energy requires a period of rest and recuperation.
8. First Impressions are more lasting than later ones.

Design Laws are liberating / Imposed Laws are restrictive.

Memory Text: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works." Hebrews 10:23, 24 NKJV

Read memory verse in various versions. What does the last sentence mean? The church as a community of servants.

Read the second paragraph. What is the purpose of us individually?

- As a church?
- Is it any different?

SABBATH

Read second paragraph "The temptation is that when we . . ." What is our purpose as individual humans? As a church, is it any different?

What prevents me from being the person that I should be and functioning as I should?

- Disease of sin
- Fear
- Selfishness
- Distraction



What prevents my church congregation from being what it should be?

“A healthy tree bears good fruit, but a poor tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a poor tree cannot bear good fruit. And any tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown in the fire. So then, you will know the false prophets by what they do.” Matthew 7:17-20 (GNT)

There are 3 statements here:

1. How much of the time is spent on the 1st vs the 2nd vs the 3rd?
2. the second often engenders fear
3. the 3rd often diverts our attention to others away from diagnosing ourselves.

Typically the force of a paragraph is the first statement or sentence.

- We remember ideas via 1,2,3,4
- #1 & #4
- #2
- #3 is least remembered

The devil works for us to remember and concentrate on #3 & #4 and not get the idea of the statement!

The Law was given for myself, My function/abilities are given for others. Often too much of my time is spent in applying the wrong instrument to myself vs others.

SUNDAY

Agents of Change

The purpose of the church

This is not evolution; This is restoration! Our culture is so inundated with the principles of self and evolution that we see (our paradigm of vision) in an evolutionary manner.

Read the first paragraph. The church was different in what way from what came before?

Metaphors for God's people

- sacrifice
- Christ's body
- ambassadors
- perfume

Each of the entities has an inherent function because of what or who they are.

Read the 3rd paragraph: “Each of these images has action. . .” Most of our angst, challenges, problems as a church body revolve around how we, personally, do not approve of how someone else is acting / functioning / interacting with us.

- “Not my circus; Not my monkeys”



Read the 4th paragraph: “But they also can be considered . . .” An embassy under international law:

- What is it’s purpose?
- What would happen if ?
- Terrorist activities
- subterfuge
- spying

An embassy under international law:

- What is it’s purpose?
- What would happen if ?
 - Terrorist activities
 - subterfuge
 - spying

In this world that is built on force and imposed functional law, those activities give the perpetrators an advantage.

It destroys relationships, purpose and function in a design law construct. “From that sin they reap death. . .”

“God uses us to make the knowledge about Christ spread everywhere like a sweet fragrance. For we are like a sweet-smelling incense offered by Christ to God, which spreads among those who are being saved and those who are being lost. For those who are being lost, it is a deadly stench that kills; but for those who are being saved, it is a fragrance that brings life.” 2 Corinthians 2:14-16 (GNT)

Talks about stench vs fragrance of life... What is the source?

“For we are like a sweet-smelling incense offered by Christ to God, which spreads among those who are being saved and those who are being lost. For those who are being lost, it is a deadly stench that kills; but for those who are being saved, it is a fragrance that brings life. Who, then, is capable for such a task? We are not like so many others, who handle God's message as if it were cheap merchandise; but because God has sent us, we speak with sincerity in his presence, as servants of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 2:15-17 (GNT)

It is by conversion that we become God’s messengers of His grace and peace.

- John 3:5 We cannot see the Kingdom of God without being born again.
- John 3:8 We must be influenced by the Spirit.

MONDAY

A Servant Remnant

Read Exodus 32:7 – 10 And they closed the Bible and said, “God said it, I believe it, and that is all there is to it.”

“So the Lord changed his mind and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.” Exodus 32:14



How do you understand what we have just written?

Does God know the end from the beginning?

Israel's majestic God does not lie or change his mind. He is not a human being—he does not change his mind." 1 Samuel 15:29 (GNT)

"Remember what happened long ago; acknowledge that I alone am God and that there is no one else like me. From the beginning I predicted the outcome; long ago I foretold what would happen. I said that my plans would never fail, that I would do everything I intended to do." Isaiah 46:9, 10 (GNT)

"Remember the first events, because I am God, and there is no other. I am God, and there's no one like me. From the beginning I revealed the end. From long ago I told you things that had not yet happened, saying, "My plan will stand, and I'll do everything I intended to do." Isaiah 46:9-10 (GW)

"My word, which comes from my mouth, is like the rain and snow. It will not come back to me without results. It will accomplish whatever I want and achieve whatever I send it to do." Isaiah 55:11 (GW)

Who wrote this account of the story?

- Moses
- This is what it felt like, seemed like, occurred from Moses' perspective while living through the story first hand.

This is a "funny story" about Moses arguing with God. It is my understanding that this is a test of Moses.

What is the purpose of a test?

- Verify knowledge / ability
- Diagnose a condition
- Motivate a student to study
- Teach a student something about the material to be learned.
- Prepare student for future milestones or tests

Is a test ever for the examiner's benefit? Who benefitted from this test of Moses?

- Moses
- COI
- Universe
- God (Did God's kingdom add some more evidence regarding God's ability to save and to heal a broken human being?)

We could also discuss similarly with regard to the test of Job.

Read the last paragraph: "As Moses interceded for . . ." and Ezekiel 20:21,22

Why did God not follow through with His threat?

- Reputation
- That is not like God!



TUESDAY

Reaching Souls

Are our actions tools to be used to influence people for the kingdom?

Read second and third paragraph: “Christ’s method alone will give. . .” Why did Christ “use this method”? Was it to evangelize his listeners?

The last sentence of the fourth paragraph says: “In short, one of the best ways to reach others with our message is to minister to their needs.”

Is a caring church using a method when we care for others? Is this not what we are?

Look at the metaphors that Christ used for descriptions of his followers:

- does salt use saltiness to reach others
- does a candle use light to influence its area of illumination?
- Does a tree bear fruit to influence those who eat to come closer to the tree?
- Does a shepherd do good things for the sheep to influence them to follow him?
- Do you wear a wedding garment (dress up in appropriate clothing for the occasion or location) to reach others about you or your message? Is it not to honor the wedding party? To make their day complete?
- Do you become someone you aren’t when you wear these clothes?

Read the two texts in the middle of the page (1 Peter 2:12 and Philippians 2:15).

Read the fifth paragraph: “With a broader understanding of God’s good news, . . .)

Read Isaiah 58:6, 7 “The kind of fasting I want is this: “

Read Luke 4:14, 15 “Then Jesus returned to Galilee, and the power of the Holy Spirit was with him.”

WEDNESDAY

Grace Within the Church

Read the first paragraph on the page: “At the beginning of the book. . .”

Texts: “What nation? . . .”

“What great nation ever had their gods as near to them as the Lord our God is near to us whenever we pray to him? Or what other great nation has such fair laws and rules as all these teachings I am giving you today?” Deuteronomy 4:7-8 (GW)

“That is why you are great, Lord God. There is no one like you, and there is no other god except you, as we have heard with our own ears. Who is like your people Israel? It is the one nation on earth that God came to free in order to make its people his own, to make his name known, and to do great and wonderful things for them. You forced nations and their gods out of the way of your people, whom you



freed from Egypt to be your own. You created the people of Israel to be your people forever. And you, Lord, became their God.” 2 Samuel 7:22-24 (GW)

“Who is like your people Israel? It is the one nation on earth that God came to free in order to make its people his own, to make your name known, and to do great and wonderful things for them.” 1 Chronicles 17:21 (GW)

Without the influence of divine grace, education will prove no real advantage; the learner becomes proud, vain, and bigoted. But that education which is received under the ennobling, refining influence of the great Teacher, will elevate man in the scale of moral value with God. It will enable him to subdue pride and passion, and to walk humbly before God, as dependent upon him for every capability, every opportunity, and every privilege. {CE 42.2}

“If we would follow Jesus, we cannot restrict our interest and affection to ourselves and our own families; we cannot give our time and attention to temporal matters, and forget the eternal interests of those around us. I have been shown that it is the result of our selfishness that there are not one hundred young men, where now there is one, engaged in earnest labor for the salvation of their fellow-men.” CE. 43.2

“Women can be the instruments of righteousness, rendering holy service. It was Mary that first preached a risen Jesus.... If there were twenty women where now there is one, who would make this holy mission their cherished work, we should see many more converted to the truth. The refining, softening influence of Christian women is needed in the great work of preaching the truth.”—The Review and Herald, January 2, 1879. {Ev 471.5}

“Christ is saying to us, “O ye of little faith.” Our hearts must be worked by the Holy Spirit. We must believe that the Lord wants us to come to Him just as we are, without any delay, and in faith call upon Him to work for us. The Lord desires to manifest His power among His people. Where there is now one at work there should be more than a thousand, not ordained ministers, but men and women of faith and prayer, who can work for God....” {5MR 336.2}

THURSDAY

Encourage Each Other to Good Works

How do you get courage?

There are seven major factors that contribute to rate of teen car accidents.

- Driver inexperience. ...
- Distracted driving. ...
- Not wearing seat belts. ...
- Drinking and driving. ...
- Reckless driving. ...
- Driving with teen passengers. ...
- Texting and driving.



Tefft, B.C., Williams, A.F. & Grabowski, J.G. (2012). Teen Driver Risk in Relation to Age and Number of Passengers. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. Compared to driving with no passengers, a 16- or 17-year-old driver's risk of death per mile driven:

- Increases 44% when carrying one passenger younger than 21 (and no older passengers)
- Doubles when carrying two passengers younger than 21 (and no older passengers)
- Quadruples when carrying three or more passengers younger than 21 (and no older passengers)
- Decreases 62% when a passenger aged 35 or older is in the vehicle

How do you know you are doing God's will? Results?

And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." Isaiah 30:21 (KJV)

Don't be stupid like a horse or a mule, which must be controlled with a bit and bridle to make it submit. Psalms 32:9 (GNT)

You people who live in Jerusalem will not weep any more. The Lord is compassionate, and when you cry to him for help, he will answer you. The Lord will make you go through hard times, but he himself will be there to teach you, and you will not have to search for him any more. If you wander off the road to the right or the left, you will hear his voice behind you saying, "Here is the road. Follow it. Isaiah 30:19-21 (GNT)

You have to be quiet enough to hear his whisper.

God voice is seldom in the fire, storms, or earthquakes.

Discussions in this class have often touted the Integrative Approach

- Bible
- Science
- Reason/Experience

FRIDAY

Further Thoughts

Read comments and highlighted section.

Read various highlighted areas of the Teachers Comments

New Lesson for this coming three months: Ezra & Nehemiah

A Sermon to Myself

Thanatopsis

by William Cullen Bryant

To him who in the love of Nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language; for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides
Into his darker musings, with a mild
And healing sympathy, that steals away
Their sharpness, ere he is aware. When thoughts
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight
Over thy spirit, and sad images
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at heart;—
Go forth, under the open sky, and list
To Nature's teachings, while from all around—
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air—
Comes a still voice—Yet a few days, and thee
The all-beholding sun shall see no more
In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,
Where thy pale form was laid, with many tears,
Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist
Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall claim
Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up
Thine individual being, shalt thou go
To mix for ever with the elements,
To be a brother to the insensible rock
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain
Turns with his share, and treads upon. The oak
Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy mould.
Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world—with kings,
The powerful of the earth—the wise, the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun,—the vales
Stretching in pensive quietness between;
The venerable woods—rivers that move
In majesty, and the complaining brooks

That make the meadows green; and, poured round all,
Old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste,—
Are but the solemn decorations all
Of the great tomb of man. The golden sun,
The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,
Are shining on the sad abodes of death,
Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread
The globe are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom.—Take the wings
Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,
Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound,
Save his own dashings—yet the dead are there:
And millions in those solitudes, since first
The flight of years began, have laid them down
In their last sleep—the dead reign there alone.
So shalt thou rest, and what if thou withdraw
In silence from the living, and no friend
Take note of thy departure? All that breathe
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
Plod on, and each one as before will chase
His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave
Their mirth and their employments, and shall come
And make their bed with thee. As the long train
Of ages glide away, the sons of men,
The youth in life's green spring, and he who goes
In the full strength of years, matron and maid,
The speechless babe, and the gray-headed man—
Shall one by one be gathered to thy side,
By those, who in their turn shall follow them.
So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.



The Sabbath

So live each day of the week, that on Sabbath we “can be about our Father’s business.” So rushed from our week we are unable to commune with our maker, help our fellow human beings, be restored with being a servant.

What would a Sabbath look like if we truly were being God-like in our actions, communication, and thoughts?

Jesus “worked on the Sabbath”

"The kind of fasting I want is this: Remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free. Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear, and do not refuse to help your own relatives." Isaiah 58:6-7 (GNT)

The Lord says, "If you treat the Sabbath as sacred and do not pursue your own interests on that day; if you value my holy day and honor it by not traveling, working, or talking idly on that day, then you will find the joy that comes from serving me. I will make you honored all over the world, and you will enjoy the land I gave to your ancestor, Jacob. I, the Lord, have spoken." Isaiah 58:13-14 (GNT with Deuterocanon)



2019 Q4 Ezra and Nehemiah: Lesson 1

Making Sense of History: Zerubbabel & Ezra

by Lori Atkins

SABBATH

Full disclosure...I did have to brush up on my minor prophet knowledge this week, and still have a long way to go, so hopefully we have some Old Testament scholars and experts here in class with us today to help us dig into Zerubbabel and Ezra and the Isrealite's return from Babylonian captivity and the process of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. We are also going to spend a bunch of time today in the book *Prophets and Kings*, which discusses all these events in detail and offers what I found to be some remarkable and noteworthy insights...starting in chapter 45-ish and continuing on through about chapter 50. If we have any folks watching who have to teach this lesson in 2 weeks, I highly recommend studying those chapters. I also a bunch of quotes at the end of my notes, so if I end up without enough material to fill the hour I will probably just end up reading those to you because they are so profound.

The quarterly's introduction says this about the 2 subjects of this study:

"Ezra and Nehemiah were exceptional, God-centered, Word-oriented, and Spirit-led leaders who deeply desired that God's people prosper and that His name be uplifted and proclaimed worldwide. Their lives modeled what God can do through dedicated, faithful servant leaders."

Wow...what incredible legacies and don't we all hope and pray that the same can be said about each of us them?!

"Life's discouragements are opportunities for change. Disappointments may help us focus on essentials and accelerate our spiritual growth, as we obtain victory in each crisis through God's empowerment."

"Ezra correctly understood that the only power to change comes through diligently searching, comprehending, and internalizing the Scriptures."

Why is that the only way we get the power to change?

"The key theological themes of these two books are God's providence, faithfulness, and covenant. God fulfilled His promises, even though His people were narrow-minded, disoriented, distracted, and stubborn. Through His servants, He called them from their state of



lethargy to revival and reformation. The work of restoration and reform carried on by the returned exiles, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, presents a picture of a work of spiritual restoration that is to be wrought in the closing days of this earth's history. The remnant of Israel were a feeble people, exposed to the ravages of their enemies; but through them God purposed to preserve in the earth a knowledge of Himself and of His law. They were the guardians of the true worship, the keepers of the holy oracles."—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 677.

The introduction also rightly points out that several parts of these 2 Old Testament books are written thematically rather than chronologically, which can sometimes be confusing...so we are going to start out by just laying out the event highlights and chronology of both books to hopefully provide a good foundation for moving forward in our study.

Simplified Literary Structure of Ezra:

1. Cyrus' decree leads to Return #1 from Babylon to Jerusalem.
 - a. In 537/536 BC, Zerubbabel and Joshua, at God's leading, bring back to Judah the 1st group of Israelites (Ezra 1:1 - 4:5).
 - b. God's temple in Jerusalem is rebuilt under the reign of several different foreign kings (Ezra 4:6 - 6:22).
2. 2nd Return from Babylon to Jerusalem following the decree of Artaxerxes.
 - a. In 457 BC, Ezra, at God's leading, brings back to Judah the 2nd group of Israelites (Ezra 7:1 - 8:36).
 - b. Ezra's Reforms (Ezra 9:1 - 10:44).

Simplified Literary Structure of Nehemiah:

1. Letters of endorsement from King Artaxerxes lead to 3rd Return
 - a. 444 BC, at God's leading, Nehemiah brings the 3rd group of Israelites back from Babylon (Neh 1:1 - 2:10).
 - b. The wall of Jerusalem is rebuilt (Neh 2:11 - 7:3)
2. Study of God's Word, as well as revival and reformation in Israel.
 - a. Returnees are enumerated. They dedicate themselves to God, the study of His Scriptures, and doing His will. Returnees celebrate the dedication of Jerusalem's new wall and regain national autonomy (Neh 7:4 - 12:47).
 - b. Nehemiah's final reforms (Neh 13:1 - 13:31).



Hopefully that brief outline of the basic historical highlights and timelines can help give us a bit of a framework and avoid some confusion we study these two Old Testament prophets this quarter. As the lesson title suggests, how do we “make sense of this history”...this story of the Israelites falling into Babylonian captivity and their subsequent return and revival?

Have you heard the familiar quote, “Those who cannot remember the past...or learn from history...are destined (some say condemned) to repeat it”?

What does that mean...that we should have paid more attention and done better in our high school history classes?

What about for these Israelites...what was their “history”...how did they get here...and what should they be learning from it?

- Idol worship
- Heathen/pagan practices/human sacrifice
- Intermarrying/fertility cults
- Adultery/covenant betrayal

Apostasy (def: the abandonment or renunciation of a religious or political belief) - many times associated with more relaxed/liberal/less “conservative” or a move away from rigid religious practices/beliefs...but is this actually true?

Were the Jews in the OT given a rigid set of guidelines to abide by?

What happened to them? Did they suffer with apostasy?

What about in the days of Christ? Did the Jews have a rigid set of guidelines to abide by?

What happened, did it result in apostasy?

What about the Apostolic church - did they have a rigid set of rules and doctrines, or was there great love and acceptance of a wide variety of theologies and practices?

What about during the Dark Ages, rigid rules?

Was there apostasy? Are you seeing any correlations?

So how did apostasy enter the apostolic church...how did they go from “the Way” to the church we see in the Dark Ages?

The greatest divergence of the church occurred in the 4th century when Constantine converted and called for the counsel of Nicaea. This counsel did not occur at a religious organization - why? Because up to this point in church history **there were no church buildings**. This counsel occurred at Constantine’s Palace and Constantine seduced church leaders and a huge list of problems began:



- Distorted ideas of God as God came to be viewed through the lens of paganism
- The church began to model itself structurally after Rome with an authoritarian head, thus misrepresenting God's character as authoritarian in nature
- Creeds were developed as tests of fellowship, orthodoxy of thought began and thought police were established, thus misrepresenting God as dictatorial, petty, and arbitrary
- Church buildings began to be built to model after Rome, designed to undermine thinking and reasoning and instead overwhelm with a sense of awe and the mystical
- A division between royalty and commoners, which was part of the Roman culture, entered the church with clergy and laity, undermining the priesthood of believers
- The church building elevated the clergy, modeled after the emperor of Rome, on an elevated platform, an elevated seat and pulpit – all designed to communicate a separation of rank, and instill a top down, authoritarian idea regarding church and God
- The church authority became more rigid, establishing rules, requirements for behavior and tests of fellowship
- Membership in the church became the new political party and only those in right standing with the church could wield political power or even be crowned king

Then, once these practices became entrenched over hundreds of years, they became accepted as holy and orthodox. (“And he said to them: ‘You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!’” MK 7:9)

Do we still struggle with such problems today?

Has the reformation really freed us from all the infection and these distorted ideas about God and the way He runs His universe?

Which direction do we see our own church denomination moving in?

Don't forget what we are talking about here...learning from history or being doomed to repeat it...

So while the Israelites were moving further and further into paganism and away from God...what was God doing?

How did they end up being conquered and exiled to Babylon?

Wooing, warning, reproving, disciplining, thundering, threatening

- Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.
- Divorce, removing his hand of protection



SUNDAY

The First Return of the Exiles

We are following the daily breakdown very loosely today, but this section is more of a combination of Sunday and Monday's lessons that discuss the first and largest group of exiles who Cyrus allows to return to Jerusalem following their 70 years of captivity. Not only does he allow and encourage them to go, he makes sure that they return with gifts and offerings and the original treasured vessels from the temple that Nebuchadnezzar had stolen. But he didn't stop there - Cyrus also appointed Zerubbabel (as governor) and Joshua (as high priest) to lead them home, and he instructed them to rebuild the temple of the Lord.

Well of course this first group was super excited about finally being back home and almost at once set themselves to the task of rebuilding the temple. Some close neighbors, made up of mixed race Samaritans, claimed to worship the true God and offered to "help - let us build with you, for we seek your God as ye do"...but in their hearts and practices were idolaters, prone to reverence graven images. But the Israelite leaders refused them the privilege.

Zerubbabel and his associates were familiar with God and Moses' instruction, "thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them: neither shalt thou make marriages with them...". And now, having repented of the evils that had brought on them and their fathers the judgments foretold so plainly through Moses; having turned with all their hearts to God, and renewed their covenant relationship with Him, they had been permitted to return to Judea, that they might restore that which had been destroyed.

Should they, at the very beginning of their undertaking, enter into a covenant with idolaters? Those who had recently rededicated themselves to the Lord realized that the line of demarcation between His people and the world is ever to be kept unmistakably distinct. They refused to enter into alliance with those who, though familiar with the requirements of God's law, would not yield to its claims (which law? what are its claims?).

The same principles set forth in Deuteronomy for the instruction of Israel are to be followed by God's people to the end of time. (again, it sounds like we should be learning from history?)

This is also from Prophets and Kings, talking about the duplicitous deceitful behavior of the Samaritans who were trying to "help".

"It is not the open and avowed enemies of the cause of God that are most to be feared. Those who, like the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin, come with smooth words and fair speeches,



apparently seeking for friendly alliance with God's children, have greater power to deceive. Against such every soul should be on the alert, lest some carefully concealed and masterly snare take him unaware. And especially today, while earth's history is closing, the Lord requires of His children a vigilance that knows no relaxation. But though the conflict is a ceaseless one, none are left to struggle alone. Angels help and protect those who walk humbly before God. Never will our Lord betray one who trusts in Him. As His children draw near to Him for protection from evil, in pity and love He lifts up for them a standard against the enemy. Touch them not, He says; for they are Mine. I have graven them upon the palms of My hands." – {PK 570.4}

Well, after this gung-ho start on the temple rebuilding project, much opposition arose and over several years the work started and stopped a number of times. Ultimately, God sent the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to encourage the settlers to complete the work on the temple. Any ideas on why they had so much trouble maintaining enthusiasm for this rebuilding project?

- Life - they were rebuilding their homes, gardens, neighborhoods, schools, etc. along with the temple. However, all their attempts at success in everyday life came to naught as long as they were ignoring and not prioritizing God's will and obedience to His commands
- Opposition and interference from those who profess to want to "help", but hinder instead
- Discouragement, comparisons, and misunderstanding the temple's true significance

I want to talk a bit more about each of these to see if we can glean some practical application and object lessons from what the Israelites experienced...and hopefully learn enough from their history to avoid some repetition, right?

How many of you knew that the Israelites were opposed and hindered and obstructed in their efforts to rebuild the temple?

"Untiring in their opposition, the Samaritans 'weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, and hired counselors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius.' By false reports they aroused suspicion in minds easily led to suspect. But for many years the powers of evil were held in check, and the people in Judea had liberty to continue their work."

Are you starting to get the idea that this is about much more than just a construction project or erecting a building?



Ms. White continues,

“While Satan was striving to influence the highest powers in the Medo-Persian kingdom to show disfavor to God’s people, angels worked in behalf of the exiles. ***The controversy was one in which all heaven was interested.*** We are given a glimpse of this mighty struggle between the forces of good and evil through the prophet of Daniel. For three weeks Gabriel wrestled with the powers of darkness, seeking to counteract the influences at work on the mind of Cyrus; and before the contest closed, Christ Himself came to Gabriel’s aid. All that heaven could do on behalf of the people of God was done.”

What an amazing insight into the lengths the God of the universe goes to on our behalf! Well this was a time of wonderful opportunity for the Jews - the highest agencies of heaven were working on the hearts of kings, and they should have spared no effort to restore the temple and its services, and to reestablish themselves in their Judean homes, but even in the day of God’s power many proved unwilling...the opposition of their enemies was strong and determined, and gradually the builders lost heart.

Many of the workmen, discouraged and disheartened, returned to their homes to take up the ordinary pursuits of life. For over a year the temple rebuild was neglected and well-nigh forsaken...but work as they might they did not prosper. The very elements of nature seemed to conspire against them. (has anyone ever felt like that?) Because they had let the temple lie waste, the Lord sent upon their substance a wasting drought...because they had used His bountiful gifts and favor so selfishly, the blessings were removed. God reveals this to His people in Haggai 1:5-12...but what does it mean?

Does it mean that if you don’t do what God wants, He will ruin your plans and prevent you from prospering? Or is this an object lesson?

What does the Temple symbolize? It represents you and me...so then what would the lesson be?

What happens when we spend our energies trying to gain riches, power, have a good time, or whatever, while we neglect the care of our spirit temple?

Can we grow healthier, can we experience God’s blessings in our lives if the spirit temple is neglected? Why?

Is it because God refuses to bless or is it because we, by abusing the spirit temple, close the channel to receive His blessing?

Can we have healing of our spirit temple outside the law of love?

Thus when we focus on selfish advancement we simply cannot prosper!



What about the discouragement caused by comparisons with the previous temple...and were there still some deep misunderstandings about the what the temple really symbolized?

“The house that was about to be rebuilt had been the subject of many prophecies concerning the favor that God desired to show Zion, and all who were present at the laying of the cornerstone should have entered heartily into the spirit of the occasion. Yet mingled with the music and the shouts of praise that were heard on that glad day, was a discordant note. ‘Many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice.’” (Ezra 3:12)

Some of that sadness was natural and appropriate for all the unheeded warnings and missed opportunities to fulfill God’s purpose...but sadness because of past mistakes should have given way to feelings of great joy. However, some failed to discern God’s opening providences, and instead of rejoicing they cherished thoughts of discontent and discouragement. They had seen the glory of Solomon’s temple, and they lamented because of the inferiority of the building now to be erected. The murmuring and complaining, and the unfavorable comparisons had a depressing influence on the minds of many (doesn’t it always?!) and weakened the hands of the builders.

But here’s the real problem...

the magnificence of the first temple, and the imposing rites of its religious services, had been a **source of pride** to Israel before their captivity (why was it a source of pride and is that good or bad?); but their worship had oftentimes been lacking in those qualities which God regards as most essential. The glory of the first temple, the splendor of its service, could not recommend them to God; for that which is alone of value in His sight, they did not offer. They did not bring Him the sacrifice of a humble and contrite spirit. – {PK 565.2}

Really listen to this...

It is when the vital principles of the kingdom of God are lost sight of, that ceremonies become multitudinous and extravagant. **It is when the character building is neglected**, when the **adornment of the soul is lacking** (is that what we are typically concerned about adorning when we go to church?), when the simplicity of godliness is despised, that pride and love of display demand magnificent church edifices, splendid adornings, and imposing ceremonials. But in all this God is not honored. He values His church, not for its external advantages, but for the sincere piety which distinguishes it from the world. **He estimates it according to the growth of its members in the knowledge of Christ, according to their progress in spiritual**



experience. He looks for the principles of love and goodness. Not all the beauty of art can bear comparison with the beauty of temper and character to be revealed in those who are Christ's representatives. – {PK 565.3}

A congregation may be the poorest in the land. It may be without the attractions of any outward show; but **if the members possess the principles of the character of Christ, angels will unite with them in their worship.** The praise and thanksgiving from grateful hearts will ascend to God as a sweet oblation. As soon as Israel decided to obey, the words of reproof in Haggai 1 were followed by a message of encouragement. "Then spake Haggai ... unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the Lord. And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel" and of Joshua, and "of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God." Verses 13, 14. – {PK 575.3}

In less than a month after the work on the temple was resumed, the builders received another comforting message. "Be strong, O Zerubbabel," the Lord Himself urged through His prophet; "be strong, O Joshua; ... and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts."

"But the steady advancement made by the builders of the temple greatly discomfited and alarmed the hosts of evil. Satan determined to put forth still further effort to weaken and discourage God's people by holding before them their imperfections of character."

Now...does that ever sound familiar? And do you think even if the Israelites didn't, that Satan fully understood the significance and symbolism of the temple as the God's dwelling place, and why this temple would be even more glorious than the first?

"Because Israel had been chosen to preserve the knowledge of God in the earth, they had ever been the special objects of Satan's enmity; he was determined to cause their destruction."

Why?

In another book, *Desire of Ages*, Ms. White says this,

"What does the Temple at Jerusalem symbolize? In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was God's purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin,



humanity ceased to be a temple for God...God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every soul.” DA 161

So back to Satan being determined to destroy Israel...and boy didn't he come awfully close a few times?

“While they were obedient, he could do them no harm; therefore he had bent all his power and cunning to entice them into sin.” Chapter 47 of Prophets and Kings goes into glorious detail about Joshua's vision of him standing before the Angel of the Lord, entreating God's mercy on behalf of His afflicted people.” Ms. White says, “Through an impressive illustration of the work of Satan and the work of Christ, He showed the power of their Mediator to vanquish the accuser of His people.” PK 583.1

The details of that story are also in the notes, but going along with our theme of making sense and learning from history, she concludes the chapter this way:

“As Satan accused Joshua and his people, so in all ages he accuses those who seek the mercy and favor of God. He is “the accuser of our brethren, ... which accused them before our God day and night.” Revelation 12:10. Over every soul that is rescued from the power of evil, and whose name is registered in the Lamb's book of life, the controversy is repeated. Never is one received into the family of God without exciting the determined resistance of the enemy. But He who was the hope of Israel then, their defense, their justification and redemption, is the hope of the church today. **Satan's accusations against those who seek the Lord are not prompted by displeasure at their sins. He exults in their defective characters; for he knows that only through their transgression of God's law can he obtain power over them.** His accusations arise solely from his enmity to Christ. Through the plan of salvation, Jesus is breaking Satan's hold upon the human family and rescuing souls from his power. All the hatred and malignity of the archrebel is stirred as he beholds the evidences of Christ's supremacy; and with fiendish power and cunning he works to wrest from Him the children of men who have accepted salvation. He leads men into skepticism, causing them to lose confidence in God and to separate from His love; he tempts them to break the law and then claims them as his captives, contesting Christ's right to take them from him. Satan knows that those who ask God for pardon and grace will obtain it; therefore he presents their sins before them to discourage them. Against those who are trying to obey God, he is constantly seeking occasion for complaint. Even their best and most acceptable service he seeks to make appear corrupt. By countless devices, the most subtle and the most cruel, he endeavors to secure their condemnation. In his own strength, man cannot meet the charges of the enemy. In sin-stained garments, confessing his guilt, he stands before God. But Jesus, our Advocate, presents an



effectual plea in behalf of all who by repentance and faith have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. He pleads their cause (who is He pleading to?), and by the mighty arguments of Calvary, vanquishes their accuser (what are the mighty arguments of Calvary, and how do they vanquish Satan?). His perfect obedience to God's law has given Him all power in heaven and in earth, and He claims from His Father mercy and reconciliation for guilty man. To the accuser of His people He declares: "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. These are the purchase of My blood, brands plucked from the burning." And to those who rely on Him in faith, He gives the assurance, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." Zechariah 3:4. All who have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness will stand before Him as chosen and faithful and true (what does it mean to put on the robe of Christ's righteousness?). Satan has no power to pluck them out of the hand of the Saviour. Not one soul who in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power. The promise given to Joshua is given to all: Angels of God will walk on either side of them, even in this world, and they will stand at last among the angels that surround the throne of God. today.

In vision the prophet beholds "Joshua the high priest," "clothed with filthy garments" (Zechariah 3:1, 3), standing before the Angel of the Lord, entreating God's mercy in behalf of His afflicted people. As he pleads for the fulfillment of God's promises, Satan stands up boldly to resist him. He points to the transgressions of Israel as a reason why they should not be restored to the favor of God. He claims them as his prey, and demands that they be given into his hands. – {PK 583.2}

The high priest cannot defend himself or his people from Satan's accusations. He does not claim that Israel is free from fault. In filthy garments, symbolizing the sins of the people, which he bears as their representative, he stands before the Angel, confessing their guilt, yet pointing to their repentance and humiliation, and relying upon the mercy of a sin-pardoning Redeemer. In faith he claims the promises of God. – {PK 583.3}

Then the Angel, who is Christ Himself, the Saviour of sinners, puts to silence the accuser of His people, declaring, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Verse 2. Long had Israel remained in the furnace of affliction. Because of their sins they had been well-nigh consumed in the flame kindled by Satan and his agents for their destruction, but God had now set His hand to bring them forth. – {PK 584.1}

As the intercession of Joshua is accepted, the command is given, "Take away the filthy garments from him;" and to Joshua the Angel says, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to



pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.” “So they set a fair miter upon his head, and clothed him with garments.” Verses 4, 5. His own sins and those of his people were pardoned. Israel was clothed with “change of raiment”—the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. The miter placed upon Joshua’s head was such as was worn by the priests, and bore the inscription, “Holiness to the Lord” (Exodus 28:36), signifying that notwithstanding his former transgressions, he was now qualified to minister before God in His sanctuary. – {PK 584.2}

The Angel now declared to Joshua: “Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou shalt also judge My house, and shalt also keep My courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.” Zechariah 3:7. If obedient, he should be honored as the judge, or ruler, over the temple and all its services; he should walk among attending angels, even in this life; and at last he should join the glorified throng around the throne of God. – {PK 584.3} “Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth My Servant the Branch.” Verse 8. In the Branch, the Deliverer to come, lay the hope of Israel. It was by faith in the coming Saviour that Joshua and his people had received pardon. Through faith in Christ they had been restored to God’s favor. By virtue of His merits, if they walked in His ways and kept His statutes, they would be “men wondered at,” honored as the chosen of Heaven among the nations of the earth. – {PK 585.1}

As Satan accused Joshua and his people, so in all ages he accuses those who seek the mercy and favor of God. He is “the accuser of our brethren, ... which accused them before our God day and night.” Revelation 12:10. Over every soul that is rescued from the power of evil, and whose name is registered in the Lamb’s book of life, the controversy is repeated. Never is one received into the family of God without exciting the determined resistance of the enemy. But He who was the hope of Israel then, their defense, their justification and redemption, is the hope of the church today. – {PK 585.2}

Satan’s accusations against those who seek the Lord are not prompted by displeasure at their sins. He exults in their defective characters; for he knows that only through their transgression of God’s law can he obtain power over them. His accusations arise solely from his enmity to Christ. Through the plan of salvation, Jesus is breaking Satan’s hold upon the human family and rescuing souls from his power. All the hatred and malignity of the archrebel is stirred as he beholds the evidences of Christ’s supremacy; and with fiendish power and cunning he works to wrest from Him the children of men who have accepted salvation. He leads men into skepticism, causing them to lose confidence in God and to separate from His love; he tempts



them to break the law and then claims them as his captives, contesting Christ's right to take them from him. – {PK 585.3}

Satan knows that those who ask God for pardon and grace will obtain it; therefore he presents their sins before them to discourage them. Against those who are trying to obey God, he is constantly seeking occasion for complaint. Even their best and most acceptable service he seeks to make appear corrupt. By countless devices, the most subtle and the most cruel, he endeavors to secure their condemnation. – {PK 586.1}

In his own strength, man cannot meet the charges of the enemy. In sin-stained garments, confessing his guilt, he stands before God. But Jesus, our Advocate, presents an effectual plea in behalf of all who by repentance and faith have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. He pleads their cause, and by the mighty arguments of Calvary, vanquishes their accuser. His perfect obedience to God's law has given Him all power in heaven and in earth, and He claims from His Father mercy and reconciliation for guilty man. To the accuser of His people He declares: "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. These are the purchase of My blood, brands plucked from the burning." And to those who rely on Him in faith, He gives the assurance, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." Zechariah 3:4. – {PK 586.2}

All who have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness will stand before Him as chosen and faithful and true. Satan has no power to pluck them out of the hand of the Saviour. Not one soul who in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power. His word is pledged: "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me." Isaiah 27:5. The promise given to Joshua is given to all: "If thou wilt keep My charge, ... I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by." Zechariah 3:7. Angels of God will walk on either side of them, even in this world, and they will stand at last among the angels that surround the throne of God. – {PK 587.1}

Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing scenes of the great day of atonement. The remnant church will then be brought into great trial and distress. Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus will feel the ire of the dragon and his hosts. Satan numbers the world as his subjects; he has gained control even of many professing Christians. But here is a little company who are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete. As he influenced the heathen nations to destroy Israel, so in the near future he will stir up the wicked powers of earth to destroy the people of God. Men will be required to render obedience to human edicts in violation of the divine law. – {PK 587.2}



Those who are true to God will be menaced, denounced, proscribed. They will be “betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends,” even unto death. Luke 21:16. Their only hope is in the mercy of God; their only defense will be prayer. As Joshua pleaded before the Angel, so the remnant church, with brokenness of heart and unfaltering faith, will plead for pardon and deliverance through Jesus, their Advocate. They are fully conscious of the sinfulness of their lives, they see their weakness and unworthiness; and they are ready to despair. – {PK 588.1}

The tempter stands by to accuse them, as he stood by to resist Joshua. He points to their filthy garments, their defective characters. He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonored their Redeemer. He endeavors to affright them with the thought that their case is hopeless, that the stain of their defilement will never be washed away. He hopes so to destroy their faith that they will yield to his temptations, and turn from their allegiance to God. – {PK 588.2}

Satan has an accurate knowledge of the sins that he has tempted God’s people to commit, and he urges his accusations against them, declaring, that by their sins they have forfeited divine protection, and claiming that he has the right to destroy them. He pronounces them just as deserving as himself of exclusion from the favor of God. “Are these,” he says, “the people who are to take my place in heaven, and the place of the angels who united with me? They profess to obey the law of God; but have they kept its precepts? Have they not been lovers of self more than lovers of God? Have they not placed their own interests above His service? Have they not loved the things of the world? Look at the sins that have marked their lives. Behold their selfishness, their malice, their hatred of one another. Will God banish me and my angels from His presence, and yet reward those who have been guilty of the same sins? Thou canst not do this, O Lord, in justice. Justice demands that sentence be pronounced against them.” – {PK 588.3}

But while the followers of Christ have sinned, they have not given themselves up to be controlled by the satanic agencies. They have repented of their sins and have sought the Lord in humility and contrition, and the divine Advocate pleads in their behalf. He who has been most abused by their ingratitude, who knows their sin and also their penitence, declares: “The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. I gave My life for these souls. They are graven upon the palms of My hands. They may have imperfections of character; they may have failed in their endeavors; but they have repented, and I have forgiven and accepted them.” – {PK 589.1}



The assaults of Satan are strong, his delusions are subtle; but the Lord's eye is upon His people. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but Jesus will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. Their earthliness will be removed, that through them the image of Christ may be perfectly revealed. – {PK 589.2}

At times the Lord may seem to have forgotten the perils of His church and the injury done her by her enemies. But God has not forgotten. Nothing in this world is so dear to the heart of God as His church. It is not His will that worldly policy shall corrupt her record. He does not leave His people to be overcome by Satan's temptations. He will punish those who misrepresent Him, but He will be gracious to all who sincerely repent. To those who call upon Him for strength for the development of Christian character, He will give all needed help. – {PK 590.1}

In the time of the end the people of God will sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land. With tears they will warn the wicked of their danger in trampling upon the divine law, and with unutterable sorrow they will humble themselves before the Lord in penitence. The wicked will mock their sorrow and ridicule their solemn appeals. But the anguish and humiliation of God's people is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin. It is because they are drawing nearer to Christ, because their eyes are fixed on His perfect purity, that they discern so clearly the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Meekness and lowliness are the conditions of success and victory. A crown of glory awaits those who bow at the foot of the cross. – {PK 590.2}

God's faithful, praying ones are, as it were, shut in with Him. They themselves know not how securely they are shielded. Urged on by Satan, the rulers of this world are seeking to destroy them; but could the eyes of God's children be opened as were the eyes of Elisha's servant at Dothan, they would see angels of God encamped about them, holding in check the hosts of darkness. – {PK 590.3}

As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, "Take away the filthy garments," and the encouraging words are spoken, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." Zechariah 3:4. The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin. A "fair miter" is set upon their heads. – {PK 591.1}



While Satan has been urging his accusations, holy angels, unseen, have been passing to and fro, placing upon the faithful ones the seal of the living God. These are they that stand upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having the Father's name written in their foreheads. They sing the new song before the throne, that song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Revelation 14:4, 5. – {PK 591.2}

Now is reached the complete fulfillment of the words of the Angel: "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth My Servant the Branch." Zechariah 3:8. Christ is revealed as the Redeemer and Deliverer of His people. Now indeed are the remnant "men wondered at," as the tears and humiliation of their pilgrimage give place to joy and honor in the presence of God and the Lamb. "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even everyone that is written among the living in Jerusalem."



2019 Q4 Ezra and Nehemiah: Lesson 2

Nehemiah

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

The memory verse describes how Nehemiah fasted and prayed asking for God to intervene.

Do we fast and pray asking for God to intervene in human history?

- Do we really want the final events that usher in the second coming of Christ to occur?
- Do we ever pray “come quickly Lord Jesus” but then turn around and pray to hold back all the strife?
- Do we realize that before the Jesus returns difficult events transpire on earth?
- What would you do if an angel knocked on your door tonight and said, “Grab a backpack and come with me, you must flee your home and hide in the mountains.” This is what Lot faced—what would you do?
- We speak about believing in the second coming of Christ—but are we prepared to act, to move, to leave, to suffer, to speak, to stand up, to face trials for God’s cause?

What is the purpose of fasting and praying? Is it to get God to do something He would not otherwise do?

Or, is fasting a praying a means of focusing us and connecting us with God so we can become more attuned to God’s purposes? Could it be God is waiting to act because He needs His people to be ready to fulfill His purposes?

Did God need someone like Nehemiah? What kind of people does God need today?

Read first two paragraphs, “To date, two groups of captives...” What lessons are there in this history?

Do we recognize only the historical events or do we realize that what God had recorded in Scripture is also revealing truths about the larger controversy and the plan of salvation? In other words, are there, in addition to historical events, object lessons in them?

For instance, Israel was taken captive by Babylon—why? Because of unfaithfulness to the Lord. Is there an object lesson in this? If we are unfaithful to the Lord will our hearts and minds become captive to evil and selfishness?

Does Babylon represent something beyond an ancient kingdom in the Bible?

A system of confusion—a system that we are called to come out of, to be set free of.



As Israel went into captivity to ancient Babylon because of unfaithfulness, Christianity because of rejecting the truth about God's law, because of accepting Satan's lie that God's law functions like human law—imposed rules requiring God to inflict imposed punishments, is in the captivity of religious superstition and myths. The minds of people are held captive.

We are called out—just as Israel was called out—but interestingly for ancient Israel there were three groups that came out, or three times people came out, before Jerusalem was actually rebuilt—before the walls were repaired.

Are we called to be repairers of the breach of God's law? Are there three callings out that occur for us before the breach is repaired? I would suggest the possibility that we, this generation with this message about God's design law, are the third and last group to be called out, the ones who will finish the repairing of the breach in God's law.

The first calling out, the Loud Cry, began in the early 19th Century with William Miller and the Great Disappointment of 1844.

The second calling was 1888 with the Righteousness by Faith message, but it also didn't result in the repair to the breach in God's law

What is the breach in God's law? That God's law functions like human law, with all the imperial distortion to God's character and the plan of salvation. We are calling people back to worship Him who made the heavens, earth, and fountains of water. This is Creator worship—and the repair to the breach is to reject the human law construct and return to design law and all that it entails.

This is the message of Revelation 18, the message that is to be repeated to lighten the world for Christ's return.

There are lessons we can learn from Israel, Nehemiah met opposition, we have and will continue to meet opposition. But Nehemiah was a man of prayer and a man of faith—we need to pray and move forward in faith, in trust of God taking this message forward—to free minds from the imperial lies about God, repairing the breach in God's law.

Consider this quote from *The Great Controversy*:

The prophet thus points out the ordinance which has been forsaken: "Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and **call the Sabbath a delight**, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and **shalt honor Him**, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord." Verses 12-14. **This prophecy also applies in our time.** The **breach was made in the law** of God *when* the Sabbath was changed by the Roman power. But the time has come for that divine institution to be restored.



The breach is to be repaired and the foundation of many generations to be raised up. {GC 452.4}

Do you hear this through imposed law lenses, as an arbitrary day to go to church upon—or do you hear a battle between design law and imposed law?

How was it possible for the church to change the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday? Why isn't there one church, given the state of our world, that has voted that their members are immune from environmental toxins, or air pollution etc.? Because human beings have no power to change design laws!

So, what does it mean that the church did change the day of worship? That Christians no longer see God's law as design law, but merely as imposed rules. This is the breach, this is the change.

Note the quote said, "The breach was made in the law of God *when* the Sabbath was changed by the Roman power." It didn't say the breach IS the change in the Sabbath!

The Sabbath change was the *evidence* of the breach, but in and of itself was not the breach—the true breach, which changes our fundamental understanding of God—in other words changes the God we worship—is when we believe God's law functions like human law. This idea corrupts everything and makes us view God like a dictator and the source of inflicted pain and death. This is paganism and this is what we are called out of.

The SDA church has come into existence and reclaimed the right day of worship—but it has not yet fully repaired the breach because it hasn't rejected imperial/imposed law with its penal legal lie about the plan of salvation.

Notice the Isaiah quote we repair the breach when we call the Sabbath a delight—can delight in something be legislated? No!

The only way for the Sabbath to be a delight is for a change to occur in the heart—and what makes the Sabbath a delight? The truth about its purpose and what it reveals!

The Sabbath reveals the character of God—truth, presented in love, leaving us free! It is a gift of God to us revealing His love, kindness, mercy, truth, and methods! Is it a delight to be free, to have true liberty? This is what the Sabbath guarantees—why and how?

Because God, in the context of a war by Satan against His right to rule, after giving evidence of His Creatorship on days 1-6, gives evidence of His character on day 7. Day 1-6 we learn God is powerful—day 7, we see God step back and stop using power, establishing a day in which intelligent beings are left free to think for themselves.

If God were an imperial dictator like Satan alleges, there would be no Sabbath; the Sabbath proves Satan lied.



When we realize this, that the Sabbath was created for humanity; it is a gift to us a blessing to us, but also an evidence to the entire universe of God's methods and character. Like an engagement ring is a gift to the woman, but is also evidence to the entire world of her engagement. The Sabbath was made human beings, but is evidence for the entire universe.

It is not a rule we are obliged to keep, but a space in time we are invited to embrace and enjoy, then we delight in the Sabbath.

So, how do we repair the breach—by rejecting the imposed law lie and worshipping our Creator by embracing Him and His design laws for life.

From *Prophets and Kings*:

The spiritual restoration of which the work carried forward in Nehemiah's day was a symbol, is outlined in the words of Isaiah: "They shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities." "They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." Isaiah 61:4; 58:12. {PK 677.2}

The prophet here describes a people who, in a time of general departure from truth and righteousness, are seeking to restore the *principles* that are the foundation of the kingdom of God. They are repairers of a breach that has been made in God's law--the wall that He has placed around His chosen ones for their protection, and obedience to whose precepts of justice, truth, and purity is to be their perpetual safeguard. {PK 677.3}

In words of unmistakable meaning the prophet points out the specific work of this remnant people who build the wall. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 58:13, 14. {PK 678.1}

In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. **The breach made in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired.** God's remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show **that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform** [why? Because it is the law of life, the principles upon which life is established and operates. One cannot have health in violations of the laws of health] and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as **a memorial of creation**, a constant reminder of the power of God. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to



co-operate with Him in building up the waste places. They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in. See verse 12. {PK 678.2}

What was the breach made in the law **when** the Sabbath was changed? It was not the mere change of the day of worship—the breach was the idea that God’s law is imposed law—this is the breach we are to repair.

SUNDAY

Nehemiah receives bad news that the walls of Jerusalem have not been repaired. What is the application, the object lesson for us in this story?

Well the walls represent the law, which is a hedge of protection to the righteous. But the law, wall has been breached by believing a lie about the law, that it functions like human rules and thus all types of destructive beliefs and practices have entered Christianity through this lie.

Examples of the lies that entered because of the imposed law view:

- Salvation is achieved through legal means, not healing of hearts
- The church has legal authority over souls
- Sins must be punished
- If sins are not fully accounted for on earth they must be punished in purgatory before going to heaven
- Sins can be removed by payment of gold or works to the church (indulgences)
- If someone dies and isn’t given last rights by the church they don’t go to heaven
- If someone isn’t baptized by the church they can’t go to heaven
- Relics hold power
- Jesus died to pay our legal debt and to keep God from killing us
- God is required by justice to use His power to inflict punishment upon sinners
- Jesus is in heaven pleading His blood to the Father to pay our sin debt and to get the Father to legally pardon us and remove the Father’s wrath

Do you see how the breach in the law, accepting the lie that God’s law functions like human law, opened the church, the minds of people up to all kinds of lies about God which leads to a form of godliness with no power?

Do you see why reformation is needed, why the message of Revelation 18 is needed, why we need to repair the breach to God’s law, to call people out of this confused system of legal appeasement theology and back to Creator worship?

And in repairing the breach to the law—leading people to reject the imposed law view and understand and embrace design law what happen?



Consider what Isaiah has to say about the walls and see if you see a connection to removing the imperial law lie and restoring design law truth?

No longer will violence be heard in your land,
nor ruin or destruction within your borders,
but you will **call your walls Salvation**
and your gates Praise.
¹⁹ The sun will no more be your light by day,
nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you,
for the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.
Your sun will never set again,
and your moon will wane no more;
the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your days of sorrow will end.
²¹ **Then will all your people be righteous**
and they will possess the land forever.
They are the shoot I have planted,
the work of my hands,
for the display of my splendor. Isa 60:18-21

What is being described? The earth made new and the walls are called salvation and the people will be righteous—is there a relationship to the walls of salvation and repairing the breach in the wall—the lie about God’s law?

Here is another quote from Isaiah:

In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

We have a strong city;
**God makes salvation
its walls and ramparts.**
²Open the gates
that **the righteous nation may enter**,
the nation that keeps faith.
³You will keep in perfect peace
him whose mind is steadfast,
because he trusts in you. Isa 26:1-3

Is there a connection between repairing the breach in God’s law and salvation and becoming righteous and our earth made new?

The righteous are the ones who trust God—they trust the Creator; they understand His design laws, which all reveal His trustworthy character of love.



But the imposed legal lie leads to theologies that don't trust God instead people trust in:

- the blood payment made by Jesus to assuage the Father's wrath
- the robe of righteousness to hide them from the Father
- the blood erasing the historical record of their sins so the Father won't know about it in the judgment
- Jesus to stand as their advocate to plead the Father in their behalf

Notice how the imposed law legal view leads to doctrine after doctrine which is designed to hide us or protect us from God, because those who hold those views don't actually trust God.

We are to be repairers of the breach! Repairers of the truth, of God's plan of salvation, which is repairers in God's law and thereby reveal God's true character restoring people to trust in God!

There is a false gospel—a form of godliness with no power, but we are called to repair the breach, to restore the walls, which are the walls of salvation, which means we must present the truth about God's law and character of love, the nature and character of sin and God's solution—which is Christ in you the hope of glory.

In other words, we must present the healing gospel and expose the penal/legal gospel as the fraud and call people out of that confused legal system of Babylon.

Have you experienced in your life, as you have come to know and embrace God's character of love AND His design laws, that knowing and embracing His design laws have become a wall of protection for you?

MONDAY

The lesson examines Nehemiah's prayer and identifies a structure, read first section: "1. God, You are..."

The lesson points out this prayer has a special structure—what do you think of this?

Is this a Bible guide to prayer? Is this a special code, a form of a proper incantation, a spell we can use to get God to act the way we want Him to?

In other words, is this special structure a formula that works in getting our prayers heard and processed by God? Or, is this merely the prayer of a very sincere person whose heart loved God and wanted to see God's plan move forward and he reached out and asked God to use him in His plan?

"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." James 5:16 NIV84

Is it about the right formula or the right heart, motive?



Jesus said:

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. John 14:13,14, NIV84

What does this mean? Is this a different formula, a different incantation? Do we need to add the words “in the name of Jesus” at the end of our prayers?

Or will that not work because Jesus is Greek and not His true name we need to say “in the name of Joshua”? Is that the secret to effective prayer?

Or, does “name” in the Bible mean character and Jesus is saying, when you pray with my character reproduced within you, then you will pray with the right motive, asking for the right actions, and seeking the right goals and purposes in harmony with me and my Father and of course I will be eager to do it?

So, from *The Remedy*:

And I will do whatever you ask—that is in harmony with my character, methods, and principles—so that the Son may bring honor and glory to the Father by revealing the healing and life-giving power of his methods You may ask me for anything in harmony with my character and methods, and I will do it. John 14:13,14 *The Remedy*

Which makes more sense—pray for anything and add the tag line at the end “in the name of Jesus” and then Jesus in heaven is obliged to dispense His power to make your prayer happen, OR, pray for things in harmony with God’s character, methods, principles and purposes and God will eagerly work to bring about His will, of which your prayer was in harmony?

So, for what was Nehemiah praying—for the fulfillment of God’s plan, God’s purposes, in harmony with God’s methods and principles and goals.

This is the secret to effective prayer!

The lesson points out that while Nehemiah reminds God of what God has already promised to do, that God actually doesn’t need reminding, as the lesson states, “it is not that God doesn’t know or remember His promises. Instead, God takes pleasure in our willingness to claim His promises.”

Is that it, or is there another element? I agree that God does take pleasure when we seek Him, when we trust Him, when we claim His promises, absolutely so—but is that what God is waiting for—for Him to be pleased, for His pleasure? Could it be that God is waiting for people who actually trust Him and are *willing* to cooperate with Him, to go and do what God would have done, to be His vessels, His agents, the conduits through whom God can act in humanity? Does God delight in people who do not



merely claim a promise, but are willing to invest themselves on God's team to cooperate with God in fulfilling His purposes?

So, when you claim a promise, do you also say to God, "And if I can be of any use to your cause, please use me!"

Here is a quote I love from the book *Christ's Object Lessons*:

As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings.
COL 333.1

TUESDAY

Do we see the quote from COL above fulfilled in the life of Nehemiah? Was Nehemiah empowered to speak out, to be successful in his mission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem?

What about us today? Do we cooperate with God to speak out for the rebuilding of the walls—the rebuilding of the truth about God's law and His salvation found in Jesus?

What do you think of the following historical facts:

- Captives—essentially defeated slaves—Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël and Azariah—become advisors to Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon and also to Darius and Persia
- Captive—Nehemiah becomes advisor to Artaxerxes I
- Slave—Joseph becomes advisor to Pharaoh and ruler in Egypt

What are the lessons from this?

Certainly, God can bring good out of difficult circumstances—no doubt about that—but what is the human side of this equation?

Did these human beings have a role—did God need human beings that despite adversity, hardship, betrayal, enslavement who maintained their trust in Him?

Consider the implications, do you think any of the people above were tempted with feelings of anger, hurt, resentment, bitterness toward their captors? Do you think they were tempted with feelings to rebel?

Do we see in any of these individuals that the temptations took root and they began to practice methods of violence, deceit, hostility, or warfare against their captors?

While they were being abused and having their rights violated, to whom did these people seek deliverance?



Will we as a church fulfill God's end-time mission by using human governments to pass laws to mandate our moral principles?

One of our online class members, Gwynnith Roberts-Baxter sent me an email last week with the following quote:

"Law reflects but in no sense determines the moral worth of a society. The values of a reasonably just society will reflect themselves in a reasonable law. the better the society the the less law there will be. In Heaven there will be no law, and the lion will lie down with the lamb. The values of an unjust society will reflect themselves in an unjust law. the worse the society the more laws there will be. In Hell there will be nothing but law and due process will be meticulously observed" Prof Grant Gilmore, Yale University, retired 1978

When we experience mistreatment do we turn to God for deliverance trusting Him and His purposes beyond our ability to immediately see? Do we consider we may be being placed in a situation to do a great work for God's kingdom—IF we trust Him and don't resort to worldly methods!

WEDNESDAY/THURSDAY

Nehemiah is sent to rebuild Jerusalem with a royal authorization and letters, a decree from the king—did that mean there was no opposition?

When we get permission or authorization from whatever government or ruler to proceed with an endeavor for God's kingdom (perhaps a building permit for a new hospital or school or church) does that mean there will be no obstacles, no opposition, to problems seeking to derail or frustrate the endeavor?

What are wise ways to proceed in moving a project forward when opposition is likely to try and obstruct the project?

In Thursday's lesson it lists several leadership lessons:

1. Don't publicize your plans—keep your activities private until the must go public.
Is keeping things private, is not disclosing information the same as lying?

Why do you think that Nehemiah didn't publicize his plans to the Jewish leaders as well as the enemies? An old WWII saying, "loose lips sink ships" meaning that information can get to enemies innocently once it is out there.

2. Make plans before starting to build—organize, have a vision, determine the steps necessary to succeed, anticipate obstacles and have plans to eliminate or avoid them.



3. Present the task with a vision for its success and its divine authority and local permission. In other words, remove from people potential objections—like it isn't what God would have us do. Or, we don't want to get in trouble with the king etc.

Any other steps you would take?

FRIDAY

Read question 1—what about Jonah, did Jonah face outside opposition or only from himself?

Read and discuss question 3—how and when should we cooperate with pagan or human authorities for the fulfillment of God's cause?

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

PODCAST: Come and Reason with Dr. Tim Jennings weekly Podcast is now broadcasting, please follow us.

The Remedy Psalms is complete and online and will soon be updated to the free app.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

November 15-17, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Norwegian SDA Health Worker's Retreat in Oslo, Norway.

November 24, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Aachen Germany.

January 17-19, 2020: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly. Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport). See events.comeandreason.com for more details and to sign up.



2019 Q4 Ezra and Nehemiah: Lesson 3

God's Call

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

Read memory verse, "Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, who has put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem" (Ezra 7:27 NKJV).

Do we take this literally—God put this in his heart, or do we take this as the Bible writer attributing to God whatever happens good or bad?

If we believe God put it in the king's heart, do we believe it in a general sense, in other words, God influencing people to do good in general and providing good motives of love in general, or do we believe God put this specific desire in the king's heart?

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; Gen 3:15 NIV84

What does this mean enmity between the woman and the serpent?

Here is one Bible commentator's view, do you agree?

The Lord says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." **The enmity does not exist as a natural fact.** As soon as Adam sinned, he was in harmony with the first great apostate, and at war with God; and if God had not interfered in man's behalf, **Satan and man would have formed a confederacy against heaven**, and carried on united opposition against the God of hosts. **There is no natural enmity between evil angels and evil men;** both are evil through transgression of the law of God, and evil will always league against good. Fallen men and fallen angels enter into a desperate companionship. {ST, July 11, 1895 par. 5}

So, do we see God putting this good thing in the king's heart as a general interference on behalf of all humanity—or do we see God doing more than that, going beyond the desire for good in all hearts and specifically inspiring the king to bless Israel?

What evidence do we turn have that would support that God put this in the king's heart?

In Daniel chapter 10 Daniel prays and 21 days later Gabriel comes to him with a message, starting in verse 12 Gabriel says:

Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. ¹³ But the prince of the



Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.

Then later Gabriel tells him the prince of Greece was coming to fight against them.

What is going on?

It is coming to the end of the 70-year captivity prophesied for Israel's. Daniel has been praying for the fulfillment of the promise and the release of Israel. Gabriel comes to influence the king with truth and love from the heavenly courts—but the prince of Persia and Greece oppose him.

Who are these princes? Jesus refers to Satan as the prince of this world John 12:31—so if Satan is the prince of this world, who would the regional princes be? Some of the fallen angel leaders in Satan's host.

In verse 21 Gabriel tells Daniel that there is none to help him fight against these princes of Satan except Michael.

Now the Bible says only 1/3 of the angels fell out of heaven. How is it that if the good angels have twice as many angels as the evil host do, that there are no other angels available to help Gabriel except Michael?

It all goes to your understanding of what is transpiring—what kind of warfare is going on here?

Satan is the father of lies—we war against lies and selfishness with truth and love.

Gabriel is now the angel who stands closest to the throne of God. No other angel in heaven has more knowledge of God, God's methods, character, the truths of heaven than Gabriel. Thus, there is no other angel that can bring greater amount of love and truth to bear than Gabriel.

One mightier than Gabriel is needed. One who is able to enter into infinity, one who is equal with God and in fact, is God and has life original, unborrowed, underived. Jesus is needed, and Jesus in His pre-incarnate form was Michael—Jesus was NOT an angel. Jesus did manifest in the form of an angel when Jesus left infinity to interact with His created beings prior to His incarnation. Now He has taken humanity upon Himself and lives in a human body. See Exodus 3, the angel of the Lord speaks to Moses from the bush—but it is God. Jesus said His voice raises the dead (John 5:25), Paul says it is the voice of the archangel (1Thes 4:16), and it was Michael who raised Moses according to Jude (vs 9).

So, this is why Michael was the only one available to help Gabriel because no created being could bring more truth and love to bear than Gabriel.

Did God force the king to do what He wanted Him to do? Or did God foreknow that with the influence of truth and love that the king would freely choose to restore Israel?



SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “We could say...” Then read Ezra 7:10:

For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel. (NIV84)

Was Ezra chosen of God? For what was Ezra chosen? Why was Ezra chosen?

Did Ezra need to possess certain qualities, abilities, attitudes, dispositions, skills, in order to be suitable for the calling the Lord chose him for?

Was Ezra free to refuse the calling?

What about Jonah—was Jonah called for the same reasons (not purpose, reasons, i.e. his qualities, abilities, attitudes, disposition, skills that were best suited for the mission that Jonah was called)?

Was Jonah free to refuse the calling?

Does God have foreknowledge? Yes, so was it a surprise to God that Jonah ran like he did?

Then, could God have called Jonah to go to Nineveh because of Jonah’s attitude and knowing Jonah would initially resist, but would ultimately choose to go? And in the resistance Jonah would allow God to enhance the impact of Jonah’s message—how? The Ninevites worshipped Dagon, the fish god, so might Jonah, having arrived delivered by a fish, to those who worship the fish-god, be taken more seriously?

So, when God calls a person for a task, a duty, a mission—that means they have the qualities that God desires for His agent to have and if they don’t possess the specific skills necessary the God will gift skills needed to complete the task.

Is there a difference between qualities of character and gifts or skills?

Is there a difference between fruits of the Spirit and gifts of the Spirit?

Can God give people new character without their participation, their choosing? Can God give people abilities or skills without their choosing?

Examples of God gifting skills for tasks:

- Bezalel, Oholiab—skilled with ability to build sanctuary
- Gift of languages to NT church
- Gifts of the Spirit



- Solomon's wisdom
- Samson's strength

When God provides gifts, does God control the use of those gifts?

Can a person use a gift from God for purposes that are not in harmony with God's purposes, plans, or designs?

What does this mean? What does it reveal?

That we are not robots, that even when God give supernatural gifts, skills, abilities, we retain our freedom—why? Because God is love and God operates upon design law and God will not violate His design for life—for His design is perfect and there is no improving upon perfection.

Love only exists in an atmosphere of freedom and God wants our love, trust, loyalty and devotion. This can only be achieved if we are free.

Thus God controls what God controls and God controls Himself and the laws upon which reality operates—one of those laws being the law of liberty. This is why the problem of evil is taking so long to resolve—because God cannot win this war with Satan by might and power—"not by might nor by power but by the Spirit says the Lord."

God in eliminating sin is doing it while sustaining His government, His design laws, His methods. Satan wants to make things so bad that God will eventually step in and use Satan's methods, so that Satan can then claim he was right about God all along.

Sadly, many Christians teach that God does use Satan's methods—and many of those will be deceived when Satan impersonates Christ.

It says Ezra was one who devoted himself to studying and applying God's law. What do you think this means?

Do you think it means he was serious about wanting to understand God, God's methods, designs, purposes and principles? Or, do you think it means he only wanted to memorize a rulebook—to be the best umpire for the Israel's societal "baseball league"—to know a list of rules to follow?

I am frequently asked when I describe design law versus imposed law: Did the people in Old Testament times know about design law?

When God spoke to Adam and Eve and said, "you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." (Gen 2:17 NIV84) what law is being described?

Does God say He will kill them, or that they will die—what kind of law would cause someone to die as a result of the act?



When David wrote the Psalms about meditating upon God's law what was David writing about?

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. (Ps 19:7–8 NIV84).

What do you hear in this Psalm? Is David describing rules or a law upon which life is built? A law which has inherent consequence?

What about what Jeremiah wrote—what kind of law is referred to here:

“The time is coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. “**This is the covenant** I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “**I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.** I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. (Je 31:31–34 NIV84).

- What kind of law can be written into the heart?
- What is the heart? The character, the deep identity and wellsprings of motive, value, methods and affections.
- Is the heart part of a living being?
- Is God's law living principles or dead rules?
- Does the law of love operate on stone, on parchment, or is the law of love a living principle upon which life is based?
- Does lifeless rock love? It doesn't give or receive
- This is the law given at Sinai and this is the old covenant a list of rules, a diagnostic code, a tool to expose the actual sick condition of hearts to lead people to the New Covenant—which is restoring the living law of love into the living being.

Was the knowledge of design law in the Old Testament—yes!

MONDAY/TUESDAY

70 weeks and the 2300 Day Prophecies

Why does the prophecy of Daniel come up when studying the book of Ezra?



Because Daniel 9:24,25 reads:

“Seventy weeks are decreed for your people and your holy city: to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. **Know therefore and understand: from the time that the word went out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the time of an anointed prince**, there shall be seven weeks; and for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with streets and moat, but in a troubled time. (NRSV

So, Daniel tells us this time prophecy begins with the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem and we have that decree recorded in Ezra.

But Ezra records three decrees:

- the first in the first year of Cyrus, about 537 b.c. (Ezra 1:1–4)
- the second in the reign of Darius I, soon after 520 b.c. (Ezra 6:1–12)
- the third in the 7th year of Artaxerxes, 458/457 b.c. (Ezra 7:1–26)

Which one would we pick of these three to start our time prophecy and why?

The angel said to Daniel to start the time with the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem—the first two decrees gave authority to rebuild, but the third also restored the civil government of Israel from Jerusalem—the first two did not. So it would be Artaxerxes decree that fulfills the prophecy of Daniel.

And in Bible prophecy a day symbolizes a year:

- “After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, [even] forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, [even] forty years” Numbers 14:34
- “I have appointed thee each day for a year.” Ezekiel 4:6.

So we start our calculations at 457 b.c. and the first segment is 69 weeks, or 483 years which takes us to 27 AD, and the 70 weeks ends in 34 AD.

In the middle of the last week, or 7-year period, between 27 AD and 34 AD, an end to the sacrificial system occurs.

So, the prophecy tells Daniel that in 483 years from Artaxerxes decree the Messiah will be anointed to bring an end to transgression, and in the middle of that last 7-year period of the 70 weeks, He will bring an end to the sacrificial system by fulfilling what it was pointing toward. He will become the Remedy to our sinful condition.

But this 70-week period is cut off from a larger time prophecy, which is the 2300-year prophecy already mentioned in Daniel 8:14. Thus, the 457 year is also the starting point for the 2300-year prophecy, which ends in 1844.

Daniel 8:14 prophesies that it will be 2300 years until the sanctuary is cleansed.



What is this referring to? What is happening? What is God telling Daniel about?

William Miller, a Baptist preacher, believed the sanctuary here referred to the earth and the cleansing would result in the second coming of Christ. He began to preach this and a huge revival occurred, resulting in the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844.

In the aftermath of the disappointment sincere followers of Christ reexamined Scripture and found that the Bible does not refer to the earth as the sanctuary and found that the Bible refers to a heavenly sanctuary and this led to the doctrine of the Investigative Judgment.

But, as with every Christian doctrine, it can be taught through the lens of human imposed law or God's design law.

Through the lens of human law this is what is taught:

- sin is a legal problem—breaking God's law
- breaking God's law requires God to inflict just punishments
- God sent Jesus to be our substitute, placed all sins of all time on Him and God punished and executed Jesus in our place
- Jesus in heaven now acts as our High Priest, or legal defense attorney in the heavenly courts pleading our case by presenting His merits (blood) to the heavenly judge.
- We must confess our sins and claim the legal payment of Jesus to our account and in heaven Jesus goes through the legal records and erases from the records the historical deeds
- We are legally accounted to be righteous, even though we are not righteous
- If we forget a sin, or don't ask it to be forgiven or removed, God is required by justice to exclude us from heaven, inflict suffering and kill us which God will do for all those who don't get Jesus' legal payment made to their heavenly account and their sins erased from the books

Does any of this sound wrong to you? Because it is wrong—it is all twisted to represent God through Satan's lies about God that God's law functions like human law and God is the source of inflicted pain and death, and God needs something done to Him in order to not kill us.

When Adam and Eve sinned—did God get changed? Did God's law get changed? Did the condition of humanity get changed? Then where must the work of God take place if human beings are going to be saved? Does God need changing, does God's law need changing, does the condition of human beings need changing?

What kind of war is being waged between Christ and Satan?

- Rev 12 war in heaven—the word war is polemo from which we get polemic, which is a war of word, ideas, beliefs.
- Satan is the father of lies—lies believed break the circle of love and trust.
- Satan lies about God, undermining trust in God and inciting rebellion and infecting hearts with fear and selfishness
- Jesus said the truth will set you free—truth destroys lies and wins to trust



So what kind of war? Thus Paul says:

For though we live in the world, we do not **wage war** as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the **knowledge of God**, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2Cor 10:3-5 NIV84)

What kind of war? Where is it being fought?

Consider Daniel 7:21,22:

As I watched, this horn was **waging war** against the saints and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and **pronounced judgment** in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. (NIV84)

Do you hear the imperial law view in the translation? The phrase “pronounced judgment makes it sound like a judicial magistrate hears testimony and then pronounces a ruling.

But, what is described in the text, the little horn power waging war against the saints and defeating them—what kind of war? A war of ideas, a war of lies and false beliefs about God. What is it the saints need in order for their minds to be freed—a ruling by a judge or the ability to discern and make a judgment to see through the lies and comprehend the truth?

So, notice the same passage from the KJV:

Until the Ancient of days came, and **judgment was given to the saints** of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Daniel 7:22

The Hebrew word translated “pronounced” actually means “to give” or “to impart” and therefore the KJV is more accurate in this context. Why do the saints of God need judgment (another word for discernment) imparted to them? The Daniel text tells us the horn warred against the saints and was defeating them.

What kind of warfare was going on?

A war of ideas—and where is the battleground? Our hearts and minds—and what is another Bible description of our hearts and minds? The Spirit Temple—or the sanctuary. So, could this be suggesting that after Christ’s successful mission to earth that Satan counter-attacks and defiles the Spirit Temple and that the Spirit Temple needs to be cleansed?

Consider Paul’s words and the connection to the cleansing of the Temple; do you see the connection to our minds:



Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and **the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.** He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, **so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.** 2Thes 2:1-4

What temple is Paul referring to here?

Paul is describing the exact same events as Daniel 7 in which evil powers war against the saints and oppose God. In the aftermath of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, did this man of lawlessness ride into heaven overthrow God, set himself up in God's temple in heaven, and proclaim himself to be God? No, where did this happen? In the Spirit Temple! In our minds!

And how did Satan get himself set up as God in the minds, beliefs, of people around the world?

By getting them to reject design law and accept the lie that God's law is imposed rules, which is the type of laws that created beings make. Thus, God is worshipped as a dictator rather than the Creator.

The cleansing of the sanctuary, which was to begin in 1844, includes freeing the minds of people from lies about God, particularly God as dictator thus:

Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of **his** judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water." Rev 14:7 NIV84

The time has come in human history for people to be giving judgment, discernment, to make a right judgment about God and to reject the imperial Satanic view of God and worship Him who made the heavens, earth, sea and fountains of water!

Therefore, the cleansing of the temple, as described in the Bible, is the cleansing of our minds from the lies about God, which wins us back to trust and results in our cleansing from sin.

All of this is confirmed for us by the other text describing the same event as Daniel 8:14, Malachi 3:1-3:

Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; **he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.**



The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of Days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by Malachi, are descriptions of the same event; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25. {GC 426.1}

What is getting cleansed? The Levites. And who are the Levites? The Priesthood of believers (1Pet 2:5,9).

God is cleansing His people from what? 1) the lies about Him which keep us from trusting Him and 2) when we are won back to trust, He cleanses us from sin. God writes His law of love into our hearts. He restores His character of righteousness in us. This is one part of what is happening during the Investigative Judgment.

But what about the records in heaven? Well, what do we believe is recorded in the records that are being cleansed?

Remember, **your character is being daguerreotyped [photographed] by the great Master Artist in the record books of heaven**, as minutely as the face is reproduced upon the polished plate of the artist. What do the books of heaven say in your case? Are you conforming your character to the Pattern, Jesus Christ? Are you washing your robes of character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb? "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" [Revelation 22:12]. . . . {TSB 62.1}

What is recorded in the heavenly records? Our characters—individualities, the Bible says “names” well in the Bible the name is symbolic for what? Character—so our unique personhoods, our characters are being recorded there.

So, what would it mean to cleanse the records in heaven? What needs cleansing—history or hearts and minds of people?

So, what would need cleansing?

In 1844, Christ began the final cleansing of the data sets of all who died trusting Him and removing from them any residual defects that they had not yet fully overcome prior to death, so that when they arise at the resurrection of the righteous they arise with perfect, sinless, purified hearts. The thief on the cross does not arise with a heart of a thief. Martin Luther doesn't arise with hatred of the Jews. These defects are removed from the “records”—their individualities—which are written or stored in the Lamb's book of life.



WEDNESDAY

God's election—the lesson does a very good job of describing the difference of God electing or choosing all humanity for salvation and choosing specific individuals for tasks or missions.

Read last paragraph, “In Romans 9...” Many people get confused on this point when they read about God's predetermination or election of people and they confuse mission/tasks with salvation.

God chose to provide salvation to the species human, it is available to all human beings; however God does select some individuals for specific missions that He doesn't choose others for.

How do we understand passages like God hardened Pharaoh's heart? Does it mean God was the causal agent, it was God's decision or choice for Pharaoh's heart to harden?

No—God controls what God controls and God controls Himself and His laws. One of those the law of liberty another the law of truth—God presented truth to Pharaoh and Pharaoh had to decide his own response to the truth—if Pharaoh accepts it and applies it Pharaoh is transformed, but if Pharaoh rejects it he is hardened. Thus the Bible is right that God hardened Pharaoh's heart by presented the truth AND sustaining His laws of truth and liberty—but Pharaoh hardened his own heart by refusing the truth.

God will not change His laws to meet sinners in sin, thus He sent Jesus to transform humanity from sinfulness back to righteousness—harmony with His law!

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “If we are called by God...” Has God called every human being in history to be saved? Will every person be saved? Why not?

Because of God's design laws—love requires freedom—God's power cannot force trust, loyalty, devotion, love—it can only be won and must be freely given. And some will actually prefer death to living in God's presence.

Can God force, with greater displays of might and power, love and trust?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Multi-Languages: Check out our multi-language section, it is growing every month.

PODCAST: Come and Reason with Dr. Tim Jennings weekly Podcast is now broadcasting, please follow us.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!! January 17-19, 2020, in Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport) we will have a Come and Reason Ministries: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly.

The Remedy Psalms is complete and online and will soon be updated to the free app.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

November 15-17, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Norwegian SDA Health Worker's Retreat in Oslo, Norway.

November 24, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Aachen Germany.

January 17-19, 2020: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly. Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport). See events.comeandreason.com for more details and to sign up.

2019 4 Ezra and Nehemiah: Lesson 4

Facing Opposition

by Wendell Moses

Preamble: A text without the context is a pretext.

Feb 27, 2017 - Ben Witherington III, one of my favourite New Testament scholars, states “A text without a context is just a pretext for what we want it to mean...”

The full quote, which Dr. Carson ascribes to his father, a Canadian minister, was
"A text without a context is a pretext for a proof text." A "proof text" was originally a neutral term for the scriptural text that proved (or was seen to prove) a particular doctrine.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote:

“The heretics were never dishonest men; they were mistaken men. They should not be thought of as men who were deliberately setting out to go wrong and to teach something that is wrong; they have been some of the most sincere men that the Church has ever known. What was the matter with them? Their trouble was this: they evolved a theory and they were rather pleased with it; then they went back with this theory to the Bible, and they seemed to find it everywhere.”

Famous Quotes about Opposition:

“I do not know what to think of my friends, they think opposition is so negative.”

“Opposition: Are you for it or against it.”

“Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds.” — Albert Einstein

“When people try to bury you, remind yourself you are a seed.” — Matshona Dhliwayo

“It is true that we live in the world, but we do not fight from worldly motives. The weapons we use in our fight are not the world's weapons but God's powerful weapons, which we use to destroy strongholds. We destroy false arguments; we pull down every proud obstacle that is raised against the knowledge of God; we take every thought captive and make it obey Christ.”
2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (GNT)

Memory Text:

“But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, so that they could not make them cease till a report could go to Darius. Then a written answer was returned concerning this matter.” Ezra 5:5 (NKJV)



Opposition

Real

Open

Passive - Aggressive

Imagined

Infighting

Directional Incongruence

Someone or something is taking an organization / entity in a different direction than desired or designed.

Inactivity of team members

Ever try to haul something heavier than yourself?

“Walking in mud”

Opposition in the Bible

Christ

Moses & Pharaoh

Joseph

at home

in Egypt

Potiphar's wife

In Jail

Paul opposed Peter Galatians 2:11 -14

SABBATH

Read first paragraph

Read third paragraph: “Resistance to the work of God is . . .” This describes opposition to building of the second Jewish temple.

Was building of the temple necessary?

Could Christ's mission have been possible without a physical temple for worship to occur?

Was the first temple (tent sanctuary) necessary for worship of the Children of Israel to occur?

Humans crave a physical entity to worship and focus their attentions to God. Throughout history, mankind has had a predilection to revere certain places, things, relics, unusual objects and unusual people.

Mayan temple artifacts:

- created clubfoot deformities.
- All aspects of the temple said something about God and the reality of the universe.
 - Most aspects of the sanctuary service pointed directly to Christ.



What was the purpose of building the temple and the restoring the wall of Jerusalem?

- It provided a focus for worship
- It helped to purify the **worship** of the true God
- It prepared the **hearts** of the builders.

In 2019 - Do we have a temple at the present time?

Do people believe that the current temple can be purified?

Is there current opposition to purification / restoration of the current temple?

Jesus Studied Natural Train of Thought—The beneficent operations of nature are not accomplished by abrupt and startling interpositions; men are not permitted to take her work into their own hands. God works through the calm, regular operation of His appointed laws. So it is in spiritual things. Satan is constantly seeking to produce effects by rude and violent thrusts; but Jesus found access to minds by the pathway of their most familiar associations. He disturbed as little as possible their accustomed train of thought, by abrupt actions or prescribed rules. He honored man with His confidence, and thus placed him on his honor. He introduced old truths in a new and precious light. Thus, when only twelve years old, He astonished the doctors of the law by His questions in the temple. {Ev 139.5}

What would have happened if Christ fed the disciples veggieburgers and fruit salad on the beach instead of fish)? What would the take home message have been?

What is the take home message people have when they come to an Adventist potluck?

SUNDAY

Opposition Begins

Ezra 4:1 - 5 - refusal to let the neighbors help build the temple

- Who were these people?
 - 2 Kings 17:24 - 41
- Who / what did they worship?
- What was their status in times of Christ?
 - Why?
 - Who told them (the Jews) to do what they were doing?
 - Do we (as Seventh-day Adventists Christians) have anything equivalent today?
 - A people group that we blame for many ills.
 - A movement or organization that is characterized by negative descriptives.
 - A group or organization that is described as apostatizing, that has combined worship of God with pagan practices, different worship practices from our own?



“Do not try to work together as equals with unbelievers, for it cannot be done. How can right and wrong be partners? How can light and darkness live together? How can Christ and the Devil agree? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? How can God's temple come to terms with pagan idols? For we are the temple of the living God!” 2 Corinthians 6:14-16 (GNT)

How did Christ treat the Samaritan people?

Traveling and came to a Samaritan village that wouldn't accept him due to his destination.

- Went to another village
- Sent his disciples to preach two by two, but not to the Samaritan villages.
- The Good Samaritan
- The ten lepers
- Woman at the Samaritan village well

Jesus assumed humanity, that He might meet humanity. He brings men under the transforming power of truth by meeting them where they are. He gains access to the heart by securing sympathy and confidence, making all feel that His identification with their nature and interest is complete. The truth came from His lips beautiful in its simplicity, yet clothed with dignity and power. What a teacher was our Lord Jesus Christ! How tenderly did He treat every honest enquirer after truth, that He might gain admission to the sympathies, and find a home in the heart.—Manuscript 44, 1894. {Ev 140.1}

MONDAY

Prophets Encourage

Read the first paragraph...Why did the Jews who had returned to Palestine stop working on the temple

How do you know that you are doing what you are supposed to be doing?

- Loma Linda University Merger
 - 1967 - voted to merge two campuses
 - 1990 - voted to separate La Sierra & Loma Linda campuses programs.
- White Memorial move

“At that time two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo, began to speak in the name of the God of Israel to the Jews who lived in Judah and Jerusalem. When Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Joshua son of Jehozadak heard their messages, they began to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem, and the two prophets helped them.” Ezra 4:24 - 5:2 (GNT)

Read the 3rd paragraph: “The Jews had stopped building . . .” I am intrigued by the statement: “Human opposition doesn't stop God”

If nothing stops God, why should I be worried or stressed by fulfilling God's word / instructions to



me?

Is it possible to slow the “work of God”?

Is it possible to cause a delay in His coming?

“Since all these things will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people should you be? Your lives should be holy and dedicated to God, as you wait for the Day of God and **do your best to make it come soon—the** Day when the heavens will burn up and be destroyed, and the heavenly bodies will be melted by the heat. But we wait for what God has promised: new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness will be at home.” 2 Peter 3:11-13 (GNT)

Who loses if I stop cooperating with God? What was Haggai’s message?

Haggai 1 (GNT with Deuterocanon):

During the second year that Darius was emperor of Persia, on the first day of the sixth month, the Lord spoke through the prophet Haggai. The message was for the governor of Judah, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and for the High Priest, Joshua son of Jehozadak.

The Lord Almighty said to Haggai, "These people say that this is not the right time to rebuild the Temple." The Lord then gave this message to the people through the prophet Haggai: "My people, why should you be living in well-built houses while my Temple lies in ruins? Don't you see what is happening to you? You have planted much grain, but have harvested very little. You have food to eat, but not enough to make you full. You have wine to drink, but not enough to get drunk on! You have clothing, but not enough to keep you warm. And workers cannot earn enough to live on. Can't you see why this has happened? Now go up into the hills, get lumber, and rebuild the Temple; then I will be pleased and will be worshiped as I should be.

"You hoped for large harvests, but they turned out to be small. And when you brought the harvest home, I blew it away. Why did I do that? Because my Temple lies in ruins while every one of you is busy working on your own house. That is why there is no rain and nothing can grow. I have brought drought on the land—on its hills, grainfields, vineyards, and olive orchards—on every crop the ground produces, on people and animals, on everything you try to grow."

The People Obey the Lord's Command

Then Zerubbabel and Joshua and all the people who had returned from the exile in Babylonia, did what the Lord their God told them to do. They were afraid and obeyed the prophet Haggai, the Lord's messenger. Then Haggai gave the Lord's message to the people: "I will be with you—that is my promise." The Lord inspired everyone to work on the Temple: Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah; Joshua, the High Priest, and all the people who had returned from the exile.



They began working on the Temple of the Lord Almighty, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month of the second year that Darius was emperor.

TUESDAY

Work Stoppage

Read 3rd paragraph: “It is apparent that . . .” Were they supposed to keep working when the federal government showed up with an army to stop them?

Are we to question our understandings when issues arise that make it difficult to accomplish something we think we are to be doing?

The enemies of the Jews wrote letters

Read the letter to Emperor Artaxerxes: Ezra 4:11 – 16. Read the 2nd paragraph and the 3rd paragraph

Was what was in the letters correct?

Was this reason to stop work on the temple?

When Satan presents your faults and failings to you, is he telling the truth?

- Only part of the truth
 - He is telling the truth about your failings and faults
 - He is not telling the truth that you are actually a victor in Christ Jesus and that it is useful to try to follow Christ.
 - What words do you have in your head?
 - What do you hear over and over?

Bible Word Study: Read Biblical Passages on Victory

- John 16:31 - 33
- Romans 8:31 - 39
- 1 Corinthians 15:56 - 58
- **2 Corinthians 2:14**
- Philippians 1:27 - 30
- 2 Timothy 4:6 - 8
- 1 John 5:1 - 5
- Revelation 2:25 - 28
- Revelation 3:5
- Revelation 15:2 - 4
- Revelation 21:6, 7



WEDNESDAY

Nehemiah Takes Action (444 B.C.)

Read Nehemiah 4:16, 17, 18, 21, 23 Why was Nehemiah having to work so hard? Wasn't he doing God's work?

It looks like he was having to strategize and plan an awful lot.

"Trust the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths smooth." Proverbs 3:5-6 (GW)

The angel told me to give Zerubbabel this message from the Lord: "You will succeed, not by military might or by your own strength, but by my spirit. Obstacles as great as mountains will disappear before you. You will rebuild the Temple, and as you put the last stone in place, the people will shout, 'Beautiful, beautiful!'" Zechariah 4:6-7 (GNT with Deuterocanon) "

"To conclude: you must all have the same attitude and the same feelings; love one another, and be kind and humble with one another. Do not pay back evil with evil or cursing with cursing; instead, pay back with a blessing, because a blessing is what God promised to give you when he called you. As the scripture says, "If you want to enjoy life and wish to see good times, you must keep from speaking evil and stop telling lies. You must turn away from evil and do good; you must strive for peace with all your heart. For the Lord watches over the righteous and listens to their prayers; but he opposes those who do evil." Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you should suffer for doing what is right, how happy you are! Do not be afraid of anyone, and do not worry. But have reverence for Christ in your hearts, and honor him as Lord. Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you, but do it with gentleness and respect. Keep your conscience clear, so that when you are insulted, those who speak evil of your good conduct as followers of Christ will become ashamed of what they say. 1 Peter 3:8 - 16 (GNT)

Read the question section at the bottom of the page.

"The Lord says, "I will instruct you. I will teach you the way that you should go. I will advise you as my eyes watch over you." Psalms 32:8 (GW)

"Don't be stubborn like a horse or mule. They need a bit and bridle in their mouth to restrain them, or they will not come near you." Psalms 32:9 (GW)

Integrative, Evidence-based approach

- Scripture
- Science
- Experience

It wasn't until the priests carrying the ark got their feet wet that the River Jordan stopped and allowed



the Children of Israel to pass over in flood stage.

Lets play “Pretend”:

- How would you have felt if you were one of the priests.
- You probably couldn’t swim
- The river was flowing over its banks.

THURSDAY

Doing a “Great Work” (Nehemiah 6)

How Missionary Service May Be Restricted—In sending missionaries to distant countries, those men should be selected who know how to economize, who have not large families, and who, realizing the shortness of time and the great work to be accomplished, will not fill their hands and houses with children, but will keep themselves as free as possible from everything that will divert their minds from their one great work. The wife, if devoted and left free to do so, can, by standing by the side of her husband, accomplish as much as he. God has blessed woman with talents to be used to His glory in bringing many sons and daughters to God; but many who might be efficient laborers are kept at home to care for their little ones. {AH 165.3}

“Train,” Not “Tell”—To parents is committed the great work of educating and training their children for the future, immortal life. Many fathers and mothers seem to think that if they feed and clothe their little ones, and educate them according to the standard of the world, they have done their duty. They are too much occupied with business or pleasure to make the education of their children the study of their lives. They do not seek to train them so that they will employ their talents for the honor of their Redeemer. Solomon did not say, “Tell a child the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” But, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”²⁴ {CG 38.2}

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding” [Proverbs 9:10.] The great work of life is character-building; and a knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education. To impart this knowledge, and to mould the character in harmony with it, should be the object of the teacher’s work. The law of God is a reflection of his character. Hence the psalmist says, “All thy commandments are righteousness;” [Psalm 119:172.] and “through thy precepts I get understanding.” [Psalm 119:104.] God has revealed himself to us in his word and in the works of creation. Through the volume of inspiration and the book of nature, we are to obtain a knowledge of God. {CE 64.3}

It is not the Lord’s purpose that ministers should be left to do the greatest part of the work of sowing the seeds of truth. Men who are not called to the ministry are to be encouraged to labor for the Master according to their several ability. Hundreds of men and women now idle could do acceptable service. By carrying the truth into the homes of their friends and neighbors, they could do a great work for the Master.—Testimonies for the Church 7:21. {ChS 67.2}



The Samaritan woman who talked with Jesus at Jacob's well had no sooner found the Saviour than she brought others to Him. She proved herself a more effective missionary than His own disciples. The disciples saw nothing in Samaria to indicate that it was an encouraging field. Their thoughts were fixed upon a great work to be done in the future. They did not see that right around them was a harvest to be gathered. But through the woman whom they despised a whole city full were brought to hear Jesus. She carried the light at once to her countrymen. This woman represents the working of a practical faith in Christ.—The Ministry of Healing, 102. {ChS 97.2}

There is a great work to be done, and every effort possible must be made to reveal Christ as the sin-pardoning Saviour, Christ as the Sin Bearer, Christ as the bright and morning Star; and the Lord will give us favor before the world until our work is done.—Testimonies for the Church 6:20, 21 (1900). {CM 11.3}

“The striking feature of divine operations is the accomplishment of the greatest work that can be done in our world by very simple means. It is God's plan that every part of His government shall depend on every other part, the whole as a wheel within a wheel, working with entire harmony. He moves upon human forces, causing His Spirit to touch invisible cords, and the vibration rings to the extremity of the universe.” {Ms22-1897.18}

As Christ presented these truths to minds, He broke up their accustomed train of thought as little as possible. Nevertheless a new and transforming economy of truth must be woven into their experience. He, therefore, aroused their minds by presenting truth through the agency of their most familiar associations. He used illustrations in His teaching which called into activity their most hallowed recollections and sympathies, that He might reach the inner temple of the soul. Identifying Himself with their interests, He drew His illustrations from the great book of nature, using objects with which they were familiar. The lily of the field, the seed sown by the sower, the springing up of the seed, and the harvesting of the grain, the birds of the air,—all these figures He used from which to present divine truth; for those would remind them of His lessons whenever they should afterward look upon them.—Manuscript 25, 1890, 4-6. (Untitled Ms, n. d.) {1MR 22.2}

FRIDAY

The Builders on the Wall, A Rebuke Against Extortion, Heathen Plots

Read Biblical Passages on Victory

Then his disciples said to him, "Now you are speaking plainly, without using figures of speech. We know now that you know everything; you do not need to have someone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God." Jesus answered them, "Do you believe now? The time is coming, and is already here, when all of you will be scattered, each of you to your own home, and I will be left all alone. But I am not really alone, because the Father is with me. I have told you this so that you will have peace by being united to me. The world will make you suffer. But be brave! I have defeated the world!" John 16:29-33 (GNT with Deuterocanon)



“In view of all this, what can we say? If God is for us, who can be against us? Certainly not God, who did not even keep back his own Son, but offered him for us all! He gave us his Son—will he not also freely give us all things? Who will accuse God's chosen people? God himself declares them not guilty! Who, then, will condemn them? Not Christ Jesus, who died, or rather, who was raised to life and is at the right side of God, pleading with him for us! Who, then, can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble do it, or hardship or persecution or hunger or poverty or danger or death? As the scripture says, "For your sake we are in danger of death at all times; we are treated like sheep that are going to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below—there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:31-39 (GNT)

Death gets its power to hurt from sin, and sin gets its power from the Law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! So then, my dear friends, stand firm and steady. Keep busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know that nothing you do in the Lord's service is ever useless. 1 Corinthians 15:56-58 (GNT with Deuterocanon)

“But thanks be to God! For in union with Christ we are always led by God as prisoners in Christ's victory procession. God uses us to make the knowledge about Christ spread everywhere like a sweet fragrance. For we are like a sweet-smelling incense offered by Christ to God, which spreads among those who are being saved and those who are being lost. For those who are being lost, it is a deadly stench that kills; but for those who are being saved, it is a fragrance that brings life. Who, then, is capable for such a task? We are not like so many others, who handle God's message as if it were cheap merchandise; but because God has sent us, we speak with sincerity in his presence, as servants of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 2:14-17 (GNT)

“Now, the important thing is that your way of life should be as the gospel of Christ requires, so that, whether or not I am able to go and see you, I will hear that you are standing firm with one common purpose and that with only one desire you are fighting together for the faith of the gospel. Don't be afraid of your enemies; always be courageous, and this will prove to them that they will lose and that you will win, because it is God who gives you the victory. For you have been given the privilege of serving Christ, not only by believing in him, but also by suffering for him. Now you can take part with me in the battle. It is the same battle you saw me fighting in the past, and as you hear, the one I am fighting still.” Philippians 1:27-30 (GNT)

“As for me, the hour has come for me to be sacrificed; the time is here for me to leave this life. I have done my best in the race, I have run the full distance, and I have kept the faith. And now there is waiting for me the victory prize of being put right with God, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day—and not only to me, but to all those who wait with love for him to appear.” 2 Timothy 4:6 - 8 2 Timothy 4:6-8 (GNT)



“Whoever believes that Jesus is the Messiah is a child of God; and whoever loves a father loves his child also. This is how we know that we love God’s children: it is by loving God and obeying his commands. For our love for God means that we obey his commands. And his commands are not too hard for us, because every child of God is able to defeat the world. And we win the victory over the world by means of our faith. Who can defeat the world? Only the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” 1 John 5:1 - 5 1 John 5:1-5 (GNT)

“But until I come, you must hold firmly to what you have. To those who win the victory, who continue to the end to do what I want, I will give the same authority that I received from my Father: I will give them authority over the nations, to rule them with an iron rod and to break them to pieces like clay pots. I will also give them the morning star.” Revelation 2:25-28 (GNT)

“Those who win the victory will be clothed like this in white, and I will not remove their names from the book of the living. In the presence of my Father and of his angels I will declare openly that they belong to me.” Revelation 3:5 Revelation 3:5 (GNT)

“Then I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire. I also saw those who had won the victory over the beast and its image and over the one whose name is represented by a number. They were standing by the sea of glass, holding harps that God had given them and singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb:

"Lord God Almighty,
how great and wonderful are your deeds!
King of the nations,
how right and true are your ways!
Who will not stand in awe of you, Lord?
Who will refuse to declare your greatness?
You alone are holy.
All the nations will come
and worship you,
because your just actions are seen by all."

Revelation 15:2-4 (GNT with Deuterocanon)

“Then the one who sits on the throne said, "And now I make all things new!" He also said to me, "Write this, because these words are true and can be trusted." And he said, "It is done! I am the first and the last, the beginning and the end. To anyone who is thirsty I will give the right to drink from the spring of the water of life without paying for it. Those who win the victory will receive this from me: I will be their God, and they will be my children.” Revelation 21:5-7 (GNT)



2019 Q4 Ezra and Nehemiah: Lesson 5

Violating the Spirit of the Law

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

What does the title of the lesson bring to mind? Any examples jump out at you from either Scripture or from your own life experience?

I think of the example of the church-school teacher I write about in chapter seven of *The God-Shaped Heart* whose husband physically abused her, and after years of suffering, after going to the pastor for help, she finally moved out and filed for divorce. The husband went to the conference officials and complained that she was divorcing him without Biblical grounds as he had not had sex with another person and therefore she was unfit to teach in a Christian school—and the conference fired her from her job.

Why do violations of the spirit of the law occur?

- Because of rule-keeping—it has to do with immaturity and not actually understanding God's law. It is because people believe the lie that God's law functions like human law—rules imposed and have not yet come to understand and practice design law.
- Rule keeping—level four and below—doesn't lead to change of heart, thus selfishness reigns in the heart. The legal system of religion allows a person to maintain selfishness while appearing righteous by keeping their rules. Look at the Pharisees and how they kept rules but hurt people.
 - Corban—rather than caring for parents
 - Refusal to associate with non-Jews
 - Willingness to stone woman caught in adultery rather than try and save her
 - Rejection of Jesus and wanting Him off the cross to keep the Sabbath

The seven levels of moral development:

1. Reward and Punishment
2. Marketplace Exchange
3. Social Conformity
4. Law and Order
5. Love for Others
6. Principled-based Living
7. Understanding Friend of God

Violations of the spirit of the law occur by those operating at level four and below because the motive remains selfish. Only those at level five and above, those who have been reborn to love God and others more than self will live in harmony with the spirit of the law.



And those who live in harmony with the spirit of the law will often find themselves violating rules of their religious organization—examples:

- Jesus healing on Sabbath
- Jesus touching lepers
- Jesus talking to women
- Jesus talking to and socializing with non-Jews, tax collectors, prostitutes
- Disciples not ritually washing hands before eating
- Disciples plucking grain on Sabbath

And don't forget the story of the Good Samaritan...

Any examples in our world today?

Read first paragraph, "To this day..." Do we all agree that as Christians, as people who love God and Jesus and who want to represent God's kingdom of love, we are to love other people and seek to help those who need help? So we agree we all want to help the poor?

Okay—we all agree on the goal—does that mean we all agree on the method, on the best way, the specific action to take in helping the poor?

There is generally no disagreement on helping people who are incapacitated or disabled, or in providing assistance to people without disability but have suffered in catastrophic circumstances: natural disaster (Katrina), house fire, healthcare issue with medical bills beyond ability to pay, downsizing of company and loss of job etc.

But, what about people who are able to care for themselves, but instead of doing so refuse to work?

There are two philosophies: Paternalism versus Autonomy

Both philosophies will have as their goal the good of others, but their methods diverge.

Paternalism takes the position that the person in authority—doctor in medical setting, politician in governmental setting—knows better than the individual (patient or citizen) and that the person in authority functions like a parent and will make decisions for the individual which the individual **must** follow—**irrespective of that person's ability to make their own decisions**. The idea is that the person in authority knows better than the individual.

Autonomy takes the position that those in authority utilize their abilities to promote the autonomy of others and respect their decision-making, even if it is detrimental to their own health or wellbeing—assuming they have the ability to understand their choices—an adult who chooses to smoke for example.

In our society we have a mixture of both approaches going on simultaneously.



- Marijuana—illegality is a form of paternalism, recreational legality is a form of autonomy
- In communist and socialist countries paternalism is predominant
- In our country autonomy is predominant—but is under assault by social progressives who believe in a paternalistic approach of state-run programs for all people

What method is most Christlike?

- Every person should be fully convinced in his own mind. Rom 14:5
- Not by might nor by power but by the Spirit says the Lord Zech 4:6
- “Instead, speaking the **truth in love**, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.” Eph 4:15

Presenting truth in love with various options while leaving people free is God’s method—thus autonomy—why is this God’s method?

Because of the design law of liberty—love only exists in atmosphere of freedom. God wants our love, trust, loyalty, devotion—and that we become understanding friends (John 15:15). As the Ephesians text above says, He wants us to grow up into mature people, which requires we think for ourselves and make choices for ourselves. Why?

Because of the design law of exertion—strength comes by exercise, not just physical strength but strength of character. People must exercise their own individuality to make decisions for themselves in order to grow and develop. The mature are those who have developed *by practice* the ability to discern the right from the wrong (Heb 5:14).

If we take the paternalistic approach and provide everything for everyone, then we:

- obstruct freedom, which damages love and incites rebellion
- infantilize and undermine development.
 - Some people in the political sphere want this because when people become infantilized they are dependent on the source of their sustenance, thus they become a predictable voting bloc. But such an approach is not in harmony with God’s design.

In Bible times the widows and poor had mechanisms to get food for free, what was the mechanism? Gleaning in the fields.

What is the difference upon the poor who are getting the help between gleaning and staying at home and having someone else bring you groceries or giving you money to buy groceries? Again, we are talking about people who are capable, not the paralytic, the demented, the psychotic.

The goal of the Christian is to assist every person to develop their God-given abilities to the fullest. Thus, we do not deny people opportunity, we create opportunity and there are multiple ways to do this. But there are also multiple ways to deny opportunity. The obvious evil ways are:



- discrimination based on sex, race, religion etc.
- slavery
- refusing education (which occurs to women in some Muslim countries today)

But there are other ways to deny opportunity:

- giving handouts to those capable of work but provide no avenue for employment or autonomy
- providing a motorized wheelchair in the home of a person capable of walking
- doing for someone what they are able to do for themselves

SUNDAY

Read Nehemiah 5:1-5:

Now the men and their wives raised a great outcry against their Jewish brothers. ² Some were saying, “We and our sons and daughters are numerous; in order for us to eat and stay alive, we must get grain.”

³ Others were saying, “We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our homes to get grain during the famine.”

⁴ Still others were saying, “We have had to borrow money to pay the king’s tax on our fields and vineyards. ⁵ Although we are of the same flesh and blood as our countrymen and though our sons are as good as theirs, yet we have to subject our sons and daughters to slavery. Some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but we are powerless, because our fields and our vineyards belong to others.”

The lesson points out that the rich and empowered were using the poor for their own gain.

Do we agree that exploiting people is wrong—that we should not exploit others for our own gain?

In every culture of the world, evil is defined, at its root, as exploiting another person, or even animals, for our own selfish gain.

M. Scott Peck wrote a book called *People of the Lie* in it he described human evil, not the evil all can see like the child molester, rapist, murderer, that evil is easy to see. He described the evil that masquerades as righteousness.

If we look at this definition—people in power exploiting those without power for their own gain, do we see that in societies today?

- In the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba, did/do people in power exploit those without it? (Communism)
- In Nazi Germany did people in power exploit those without it? (Socialism)
- In England and US did people in power exploit people without it—railroad barons, mining corporations etc.? (Capitalism)



Is there any human government that is immune from exploitation of others?

What about today in America? Are there ways people are exploited under the guise of doing them good?

What about programs that are framed as providing for the poor, but prevent the poor from becoming autonomous?

What about programs that send food to third world countries to help prevent malnutrition?

According to the Foundation for Economic Education:

Economists Nathan Nunn and Nancy Qian published research in the American Economic Review examining the causal effect of US food aid on conflict within poor countries. On average, “An increase in US food aid increases the incidence and duration of civil conflicts.”

Nunn and Qian suggest this is due to the fact that food aid can be easily stolen by armed groups or corrupt governments and used to prolong their struggles against each other.¹

If we love others, do we need to evaluate the impact our actions have on them?

Do we need to ask if our actions are causing harm, enabling dysfunction and dependency under the guise of compassion or are we helping people grow to the fullest stature of children of God possible?

From the same article as the quote above on the Foundation for Economic Education website:

Too often, policies are judged on their own terms — “X tons of food aid were delivered, therefore mission accomplished!” — and how they make us feel, rather than on a sober analysis of their overall effect. But Milton Friedman’s observation is as valid today as when he first said it: the results of a given policy do not depend on the intentions of its creators. Friedman’s insight should lead us to embrace a more skeptical view of the state and its ability to solve every social problem.

Is having a good intention enough, or do we need to consider the impact and reevaluate the specific action?

The lesson in the second paragraph states, “They had already lost their land, and now they had to send someone from the family, usually children, to be in the service of the creditor in order to work off the debt.”

¹ <https://fee.org/articles/3-policies-with-good-intentions-and-tragic-results/>



What do you think about this? Is such an arrangement evil—always?

Could such an arrangement—becoming indebted and then working for the creditor to pay off the debt—actually be good?

I was the recipient of a Health Professions Scholarship Program scholarship from the US Army. The US government paid my way through medical school and I became indebted to the government for this. Afterward, I was required to serve in the US Army a number of years to pay back my debt. Was this evil?

What would make working to pay off debt wrong or evil? Would it be forcing a person to work against their will, rather than a willful arrangement like I had?

Would it be the terms of the arrangement?

Would it be when children are involved?

MONDAY

In the second paragraph it points out that for Israel lending money was permitted but charging interest was not allowed.

What do you think of this rule?

Do you think if this was the law in our society—banks and lending institutions could lend money, but they could not charge interest—that the poor would be better off? Why or why not?

What would likely happen in our society if interest was outlawed?

Would there be more “loan sharks” making illegal loans at exorbitant rates and threats of violence if one didn’t pay?

The lesson points out that Nehemiah took a stand for the spirit of the law even though the law was not technically broken.

Are there any lessons for us today?

Is it good to loan a person money, even without interest, if that person is unlikely to be able to pay it back? What would be better than a loan and why?

TUESDAY

Read third paragraph, “Nehemiah’s initial argument centers...” So it was wrong to buy and sell their own people—does that mean it was right to buy and sell other people?



In Bible times some people chose to be slaves—they would have their ears pierced and a ring put in them to mark them as voluntary slaves to a particular house for life.

“If a fellow-Israelite sells himself or herself to you as a slave, you are to release them after they have served you for six years. When the seventh year comes, you must let them go free. When you set them free, do not send them away empty-handed. Give to them generously from what the LORD has blessed you with—sheep, corn, and wine. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God set you free; that is why I am now giving you this command.

16 “But your slave may not want to leave; he may love you and your family and be content to stay. Then take him to the door of your house and there pierce his ear; he will then be your slave for life. Treat your female slave in the same way. Do not be resentful when you set a slave free; after all, the slave has served you for six years at half the cost of a hired servant. Do this, and the LORD your God will bless you in all that you do. DT 15:12-18 GNB

Why would people choose this?

In the last paragraph it states that Nehemiah loaned money but didn’t charge interest.

- Did people still go into debt?
- What do you think Nehemiah did for those who didn’t repay the debt?
- Do you think he continued to loan to those who didn’t repay?
- What happens in the heart/mind of the person who borrows but makes no attempt to repay? Would it “help” such a person to continue to loan them money?
- Do you think Nehemiah would loan to those who could work but refused?

In other words, even if one doesn’t charge interest are there still other standards or criteria one uses to determine to whom one loans, or does one loan to whomever asks?

What would be the criteria if we use God’s principles?

- What happens to a person who borrows money but does not pay it back?
- What would happen if we continued to loan to such a person—to them?
- Does increasing debt bring greater peace and wellbeing?
- Does failure to repay a debt increase one’s sense of integrity?

So is it helpful to loan to a person with a history of failure to repay? What would be helpful?

WEDNESDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “Even though...” What do you think about these interventions?

Why did Jesus say make no oaths, let your yes be yes and no be no?



What about the curse—why pronounce a curse?

Does this entire event reveal something about the maturity of those with whom Nehemiah was dealing?

Public oaths are more likely to be needed on selfish people, who will be held accountable by the peer and social pressures and their own selfish need to maintain their reputation.

Mature people who are like Christ don't need that extra pressure, if they say they will do it, they will.

The curse also is a therapeutic intervention for the immature, like a parent who threatens a spanking for playing in the street. The mature adult doesn't need a threat from their parent, they know the dangers and won't play in the street. But the child needs the additional threat.

In this case, the threat was further evidence of how immature the people were that it was necessary to give them the added help for them to follow through on their promises.

Now, what happens to a child who plays in the street, what is the danger, what is the worst outcome?

What happens to the person who makes a promise and doesn't keep it?

What happens to a person who does evil—exploits others?

This is design law, so there is a curse, but it is the natural result of violating God's design life.

THURSDAY

Read Nehemiah 5:14-18,

14 During all the twelve years that I was governor of the land of Judah, from the twentieth year that Artaxerxes was emperor until his 32nd year, neither my relatives nor I ate the food I was entitled to have as governor. ¹⁵Every governor who had been in office before me had been a burden to the people and had demanded 40 silver coins a day for food and wine. Even their servants had oppressed the people. But I acted differently, because I honoured God. ¹⁶I put all my energy into rebuilding the wall and did not acquire any property. Everyone who worked for me joined in the rebuilding. ¹⁷I regularly fed at my table 150 of the Jewish people and their leaders, besides all the people who came to me from the surrounding nations. ¹⁸Every day I served one ox, six of the best sheep, and many chickens, and every ten days I provided a fresh supply of wine. But I knew what heavy burdens the people had to bear, so I did not claim the allowance that the governor is entitled to.

What is demonstrated? Did Nehemiah have a vision for the success of the country, the people, and not for himself?



Do you know of any modern leaders who refused their entitled pay and focuses on making their country better?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

November 15-17, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Norwegian SDA Health Worker's Retreat in Oslo, Norway.

November 24, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Aachen Germany.

January 17-19, 2020: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly. Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport). See events.comeandreason.com for more details and to sign up.



2019 Q4 Ezra and Nehemiah: Lesson 6

The Reading of the Word

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “The Jerusalem wall...” We believe the Bible records real people who did real things—in other words real historical events. But we also believe that Israel was not only real people doing real things, but what is recorded in Scripture serves as lessons for us teaching us a larger reality.

- The OT Sacrificial system—they really built it, they really sacrificed animals in it, but it was all theater, an object lesson to teach a larger reality
- The seven miracles births, real historical events, but all pointed to Jesus
- Joseph sold as slave by his brothers to rise and become ruler—real historical event, but object lesson of Jesus our Savior
- The children of Israel historically crossed the Red Sea and Paul teaches it was an object lesson for baptism going from the land of sinfulness, captivity, to the land of promise the land of freedom through the water.
- Jerusalem a historic real city—but an object lesson for the New Jerusalem

What is the object lesson that is taught through the real historic events of the captivity of Israel, their being set free and the rebuilding of the walls—and then the reading of the Word?

- Why did they go into captivity?
 - Because of rejection of God and choosing false gods. This resulted in God withdrawing His protective hand and enemies taking them into captivity.
 - What happens to us, our hearts and minds, when we reject the truth about God and prefer the methods and ways of the sinful world? Does God give us the freedom to do this? And do we go into the captivity of sinfulness, fear, selfishness, addictions?
- When Israel was taken captive was the temple defiled and destroyed?
 - When we go into captivity of sin is the Spirit temple defiled and if not cleansed eventually destroyed?
 - Jesus came to earth as a human and told them “destroy this temple and in three days I will rebuild it.” Did Jesus rebuild the Spirit temple eliminate sin and restore God’s perfection and God’s design law into the species human?
 - But, after the Christ’s victory did Satan counterattack the truth Jesus revealed and set himself up in God’s temple proclaiming himself to be god? How? By getting people to reject the truth of God’s design law and God’s character of love and instead embrace imposed law and see God as a dictator—the source of inflicted pain and suffering. Thus the Spirit temple became defiled—the hearts and minds of men—and humanity was again held captive by lies about God.
- Did God’s Spirit move upon the king to set Israel free?
 - Does God’s Spirit move upon our hearts seeking to get us to repent, to surrender to Him, in order to set us free?



- Is Holy Spirit moving upon people today with an end time message designed to teach people the truth about God's design law in order to free people from the captivity of believing lies about God and His law?
- Did the people of Israel once set free begin rebuilding the temple and the walls around the city?
 - Since 1844 has a message about God as Creator and His law as design law, that when accepted cleanses the mind from the imposed law lies and thus restores us to trust for the Spirit to cleanse our hearts—the spirit temple—been going forward? And has this message been repairing the breach in the law?

Consider this quote from a book called *Prophets and Kings*:

The spiritual restoration of which the work carried forward in Nehemiah's day was a symbol, is outlined in the words of Isaiah: "They shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities." "They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." Isaiah 61:4; 58:12. {PK 677.2}

The prophet here describes a people who, in a time of general departure from truth and righteousness, are seeking to restore the *principles* that are the foundation of the kingdom of God. They are repairers of a breach that has been made in God's law--the wall that He has placed around His chosen ones for their protection, and obedience to whose precepts of justice, truth, and purity is to be their perpetual safeguard. {PK 677.3}

In words of unmistakable meaning the prophet points out the specific work of this remnant people who build the wall. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 58:13, 14. {PK 678.1}

In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. **The breach made in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired.** God's remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show **that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform** [why? Because it is the law of life, the principles upon which life is established and operates. One cannot have health in violations of the laws of health] and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as **a memorial of creation, a constant reminder of the power of God.** [What do you hear when you hear this? Do you think might and power? If so, why does Zechariah say not by might nor by power but by the Spirit says the Lord? What power did God display on the 7th day of creation week? Is the Sabbath a memorial to physical power of to another power—the power of truth and love, the power of God's character, the power of design law. What did Paul say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew,



then for the Gentile.” Romans 1:16 NIV84. What kind of power is the gospel? What kind of war has Satan waged? A war of ideas, words, not a war of power. Then what kind of power is necessary to defeat Satan? The power of truth and love. Do we see the Sabbath as a memorial of truth, love and freedom? Or do we misrepresent it by promoting the idea of imperialism and force?] In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to co-operate with Him in building up the waste places. They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in. See verse 12. {PK 678.2}

What was the breach made in the law **when** the Sabbath was changed? It was not the mere change of the day of worship—the breach was the idea that God’s law is imposed law—this is the breach we are to repair.

Isaiah not only prophesies that God’s people will be repairers of the breach but also **raise up the foundations of many generations**. What does this mean, the foundations of many generations?

What are the foundations of God’s government that Satan has torn down in the minds and hearts of people that we are to raise up?

What is the foundation of any government? It is the law upon which it is built. So, would the foundation of God’s government be God’s law? And what type of law would that be, design law or imposed law? And how has Satan torn down the foundation and how do we raise it up?

Consider these historic quotes from one of the founders of the SDA church:

The law of love is the foundation of God's government, and the service of love the only service acceptable to heaven. *ST* December 15, 1914, par. 1

Love must be the principle of action. Love is the underlying principle of God's government in heaven and earth, and **it must be the foundation** of the Christian's character. This alone can make and keep him steadfast. This alone can enable him to withstand trial and temptation. *COL* 49.1

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. [why? Because happiness is a by-product of healthiness in all domains, and healthiness is only possible in harmony with the laws of health—the laws upon which life is constructed to operate. So again, this statement reveals that God’s law is design law, not imposed rules like humans make.] God desires from all His creatures the service of love—homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character. **He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service.** [What kind of law forces and compels? Imposed law!] *GC* 493.2



What is the foundation that we are to raise up? It is the same as the repairing of the breach, which is restoring the truth about God's design laws, which are all expressions of God's character of love.

Do you see the issue in the war has always been over God's character and Satan has always attacked God's character by attacking how we conceive of law, either design law or imposed law.

So the object lesson truth is that we are to repair the breach, to raise up the foundations, which means we are to restore the truth that God's laws are design laws and are always expressions of love.

We will not repair the breach by getting every person in the world to go to church on Saturday while teaching that God's law is imposed and God in order to be just must inflict punishment upon sinners.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "When the Jews finally..." What is the object lesson for us in this?

The annual feast days teach what? They teach the plan of salvation from the fall of Adam to the earth restored:

- **Passover** – as soon as man fell into sin God passed over their sins "he left the sins committed beforehand unpunished." Rom 3:25
 - Christ was the lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. Rev 13:8
 - Time covered by the Passover—From Adam's sin until Jesus victory at the cross
- **Unleavened bread** – immediately God began dispensing truth unmixed with error to nurture and save, but it was internalized by those in sin, represented by the bitter herbs.
 - This also represents the time from Adam's fall until Christ's victory
 - Eating the unleavened bread symbolizes the internalization of Jesus
- **Feast of First Fruits**—The first fruits of the victory over death
 - The Wave Sheaf represents Jesus who is the ultimate first fruit, who was buried and rose again in sinless perfection
 - Those who arose with him on resurrection morning to everlasting life
- **Feast of Weeks** (Pentecost) The pouring out of the Holy Spirit to apply what Christ achieved and bring forth a harvest of healed souls
 - This occurred after Christ's death on the Cross as the benefits of His achievement were dispensed into trusting humans
 - This feast symbolically spans the time from Pentecost AD 33 until the Loud Cry
- **Trumpets** – a special message for the end time
 - The Loud Cry—awake, prepare, get ready it is time to be reconciled and brought back into unity, at-one-ment with God again!
 - Late 18th and early 19th Century – the Great Awakening in Christianity



- **Atonement** – reunification with God, oneness with God
 - The healing and restoration of Christlike character within; settling into the truth that one cannot be moved
 - From mid 19th Century until the second coming of Christ
- **Tabernacles**—After we have been restored to at-one-ment in heart, mind, character Christ returns and we *Tabernacle* with Him again in the earth made new—our Eden Garden home for eternity!

So, the Jews finished building the walls at the time of the Feast of Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacles—do you see the object lesson application?

Satan's lies about God's law took Christianity captive and defiled the Spirit temple and the world went into an age of darkness. But, the Great Awakening trumpeted the message of Christ's soon return and brought a message about God's law of love, His design for life calling people back to Creator worship, to become at-one with God and experience cleansing the Spirit temple to prepare to meet the Creator and to prepare us to live in His presence in an earth made new.

So, where are we in this process today?

- Did ancient Israel, when set free, when given authority to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple meet opposition?
- Have we met opposition in presenting this message?
- Did the opposition come only from those outside Israel?
- Does our opposition come only from non-Christians?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Ezra 'brought the Law'..." What did Ezra read to them? Was it just the 10 Commandments or the five books of Moses?

How does this apply to us today?

Do we read the OT and take the instructions as literal instructions for our application today, or do we read them through both the design law lens and the theatrical understanding—they were acting out a larger reality. In other words, do we interpret the metaphor to its reality-based truth, or stay stuck on the metaphor?

There are four types of laws in the OT:

- Ceremonial
 - Sacrificial system, laws regulating which animals to sacrifice, clothing for priest, practices of ceremony etc.



- Civil
 - Laws regulating disputes between people of various kinds both civil and criminal
- Health
 - Laws regulating food choices, eating blood, washing, touching dead bodies, keeping things clean—these were given as rules, but were all based on the laws of health
- Moral
 - Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and soul and neighbor as yourself and all its various applications

All were applicable to Israel, which of these OT laws are applicable to us today?

When we read in Scripture things like:

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul.

The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart.

The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. Ps 19:7,8

What do you hear? What is being described?

Is the Psalmist saying that the Bible is a rulebook with a perfect list of rules that we are to identify and keep? Are we to look to the OT rules for Israel in order to find the list of rules for our lives today?

Many people use the OT in this way, find a proclamation, rule, directive given to Israel and then apply it directly to us today—this is a terrible way to use the Bible. And anyone who does this only does so on the rules that they like.

I read this week an article by a very reputable Bible scholar on current politics in America and he used texts from the OT for Israel's treatment of aliens in their land to condemn border control or immigration enforcement in this country.

Now, I am not here to promote or defend any policy of the US government or any earthly government. I am speaking of using the Bible in this way. This well-known scholar cherry picked texts to support an ideology making it appear that we should follow God's instruction to Israel in how we treat non-citizens today.

But interestingly, this same author didn't quote from the very same set of instructions how they were to kill all the non-Jews, men, women and children, from multiple other ethnic groups, how they were given instructions on slaves and how to treat their slaves etc.

No, the Bible is not a code book and David was not speaking of a list of rules we are to memorize and follow. David was speaking about God's design law.



Here is how I rendered it in *The Remedy*:

The design law of God is perfect, restoring one's life.
The principles of the Lord are constant, imparting wisdom to those without it.
The prescriptions of the Lord are right, bringing happiness to the life.
The protocols of God are brilliant, enlightening the mind.

This is design law, how reality works and David understood this.

Sometimes I get questions of whether the OT writers understood design law. Consider this from the Proverbs:

For these **commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light**, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life, keeping you from the immoral woman, from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife. Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes, for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread, and **the adulteress preys upon your very life. Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? So is he who sleeps with another man's wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished.** Proverbs 6:23-29 NIV84

Do you hear design law? Is there a punishment for walking on hot coals or scooping fire into your lap? From where does it come? Is there a punishment for committing adultery? From where does it come?

Did OT writers understand design law? Yes!

The lesson asks how do we relate to the Word of God?

How do you understand Scripture?

- A code book of deeds to be done and sins to be shunned?
- A revelation from God that is to be taken exactly as it reads without reasoning through it: "God said it, I believe it, that settles it"?
- A revelation of God in which God tells us **we are to reason through it?**
- Or one of three revelations of truth that God has given to us and, in fact, Scripture is the last of the three revelations given to humanity—what are the first two?
 - Science and nature (Romans 1:20)
 - "But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? (Job 12:7-9 NIV84)
 - The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. (Psalms 19:1 NIV84)
 - Experience—they walked in the cool of the day and had personal experience with God
 - Taste and see that the LORD is good; (Psalms 34:8 NIV84)



- Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” (John 20:27 NIV84)
- How did the Patriarchs, such as Noah, know the truth? Through his personal experience with God, not through Scripture.
- Scripture came much later

One of the founders of the SDA church wrote:

The great storehouse of truth is the word of God—the written word, the book of nature, and the book of experience in God’s dealing with human life.— {COL 125.2}

Jesus followed the divine plan of education. The schools of His time, with their magnifying of things small and their belittling of things great, He did not seek. **His education was gained directly from the Heaven-appointed sources; from useful work, from the study of the Scriptures and of nature, and from the experiences of life--God's lesson books,** full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart. {Ed 77.2}

The only trustworthy way to study Scripture is humbly asking for the Holy Spirit to enlighten, but then to reason through it harmonizing it with science and experience, how reality actually works—requiring Scripture to harmonize with itself, but also with science and experience. This is called the Integrative Evidence-based Approach.

What do you say to those who say we shouldn’t reason through Scripture, or that to actually reason things out we elevate human reason above Scripture?

- Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. (Romans 14:5 NKJV)
- But solid food is for the mature, for those whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil. (Hebrews 5:15 NRSV)
- Come now, let us reason together,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. (Isaiah 1:18 NIV84)
- I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. (John 15:15 NIV84)
- Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. (1Peter 3:15 NIV84)



- “Merely to hear or to read the word is not enough. He who desires to be profited by the Scriptures must meditate upon the truth that has been presented to him. By earnest attention and prayerful thought he must **learn the meaning of the words of truth**, and drink deep of the spirit of the holy oracles.” {COL 59.5}
- **God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith.** His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that **appeals to our reason**; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. **Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration.** Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith. {SC 105.2}

TUESDAY

The lesson points out that Nehemiah describes 13 people standing with Ezra when the Scripture was read?

Any significance to the number? Many Bible students believe 13 represents rebellion against God:

- The dragon is mentioned 13 times in the book of Revelation
- Nimrod was the 13th generation of Ham
- The Valley of Hinnon, which always references some evil practice, is mentioned 13 times in Scripture
- Solomon spent only 7 years building God’s temple (1 Kings 6:38) but he spent 13 years building a palace for himself (1 King 7:1).

So, what do you think about this? This is one of those places where misunderstanding can be accidentally introduced:

There were 13 men standing **with** Ezra—thus it was 14, not 13, and 14 in the Bible signifies salvation, perfection, healing as it is a multiple of seven.

Read last paragraph, “As Protestants...” Have you ever met people who won’t enter into discussion because someone in church authority warned them not to?

Or, if they do enter into discussion they say something like, “Well my church teaches,” or “my pastor says,” or “my mother always taught...”?

What do such comments reveal?

Why must people think for themselves—as Romans 14:5 says?

Is knowing the “right answer” the same thing as know *why* it is the right answer?



Is knowing the answer to a math question the same as knowing how to do math?

Consider this quote from a pioneer of the SDA church, do you agree or disagree? Do you see design law involved, the law of exertion?

If we mistake the wisdom of man for the wisdom of God we are led astray by the foolishness of man's wisdom. Here is the great danger of many in ----- . They have **not an experience for themselves**. They have not been in the habit of prayerfully **considering for themselves**, with unprejudiced, unbiased judgment, questions and subjects that are new and that are ever liable to arise. **They wait to see what others will think**. If these dissent, that is all that is needed to convince them that the subject under consideration is of no account whatever. **Although this class is large**, it does not change the fact that **they are inexperienced and weak-minded** through long yielding to the enemy, and **will always be as sickly as babes, walking by others' light, living on others' experience, feeling as others feel, and acting as others act. They act as though they had not an individuality. Their identity is submerged in others; they are merely shadows of those whom they think about right**. Unless these become sensible of their wavering character and correct it, **they will all fail of everlasting life**; they will be unable to cope with the perils of the last days. **They will possess no stamina to resist the devil, for they do not know that it is he. Someone must be at their side to inform them whether a foe or a friend is approaching**. They are not spiritual, therefore spiritual things are not discerned. They are not wise in those things which relate to the kingdom of God. **Neither young nor old are excusable in trusting to another to have an experience for them**. Said the angel: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." A noble self-reliance is needed in the Christian experience and warfare. 2T 129.2

Do we see this problem of allowing others to think for us as a problem only in religion, or do we see it in society in general?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "When Ezra..." What do you think about them lifting their hands toward heaven?

May my prayer be set before you like incense;
may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice. Ps 141:2

What would this signify? Could it signify surrender to God? Present yourself as a living sacrifice holy and pleasing to God...Romans 12:2

I remember an evangelist once addressing a congregation that was quite uncomfortable with lifting of hands and he asked them, what do you do if someone points a gun at you—you hold up your hands—



why? You surrender, you are not fighting or opposing—and he asked, will you lift your hands and surrender to God?

But the response of the people to hearing the law is what? One of surrender and desire to return to God and live in harmony with His will.

What does that mean for us today?

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, “Notice that in Nehemiah...” The study guide says they learned their lesson about disobedience—did they?

Well, they never went back into image worship, which is what they had repeatedly done prior to the captivity—but did they learn the lesson about disobedience?

When Jesus came, were they worshipping idols or foreign gods? No, were they, from all outward appearance, keeping the rule-book, following the script?

And how did they treat Jesus?

So what is the lesson? That people can keep all the rules but not experience a change of heart and still be God’s enemies.

What does this tell us about God’s law, the problem of sin, the plan of salvation?

That God’s law is design law, sin is a condition of being, a heart defect in which fear and selfishness have displaced love and trust, thus sin is not a legal problem but a state of being out of harmony with God’s design for life. Therefore, the plan of salvation is not legal but remedial, actually fixing the damage sin has done to humanity and restoring us back to God’s design.

In fact, when we misunderstand God’s law to be imposed law like humans, we misdiagnose the problem as legal, we create legal rules-based solutions and then become God’s enemies, like those who crucified Jesus.

- But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being {fell} upon Him, and by His scourging we are **healed**. (Isaiah 53:5 NAS)
- He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were **healed**. (1 Peter 2:24-25 NAS)



- Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be **transformed by the renewing of your mind.** (Romans 12:2 NIV84)
- Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, **circumcise your hearts**, you men of Judah and people of Jerusalem... (Jeremiah 4:4 NIV84)
- No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is **circumcision of the heart**, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God. (Romans 2:29 NIV84)
- This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. **I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.** (Hebrews 8:10 NIV84)
- **I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them;** I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a **heart of flesh.** (Ezekiel 11:19 NIV84)
- Create in me a **pure heart**, O God, and renew a **steadfast spirit within me.** (Psalms 51:10 NIV84)
- **God's healing power runs all through nature.** If a tree is cut, if a human being is wounded or breaks a bone, nature begins at once to repair the injury. **Even before the need exists, the healing agencies are in readiness;** and as soon as a part is wounded, every energy is bent to the work of restoration. **So it is in the spiritual realm. Before sin created the need, God had provided the remedy.** Every soul that yields to temptation is wounded, bruised, by the adversary; but whenever there is sin, there is the Saviour. It is Christ's work "to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, ... to set at liberty them that are bruised." Luke 4:18. Ed 113.1

In this work we are to co - operate. "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ... restore such an one." Galatians 6:1. **The word here translated "restore" means to put in joint, as a dislocated bone. How suggestive the figure! He who falls into error or sin is thrown out of relation to everything about him.** He may realize his error, and be filled with remorse; but he cannot recover himself. He is in confusion and perplexity, worsted and helpless. **He is to be reclaimed, healed, re - established.** "Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one." **Only the love that flows from the heart of Christ can heal.** Only he in whom that love flows, even as the sap in the tree or the blood in the body, **can restore the wounded soul.** Ed 113.2

Love's agencies have wonderful power, for they are divine. The soft answer that "turneth away wrath," the love that "suffereth long, and is kind," the charity that "covereth a multitude of sins" (Proverbs 15:1; 1 Corinthians 13:4, R.V.; 1 Peter 4:8, R.V.) - **would we learn the lesson, with what power for healing would our lives be gifted! How life would be transformed, and the earth become a very likeness and foretaste of heaven!**" Ed 114.1



- The atonement of Christ is **not** a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; it is a **divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health**. It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the **righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters** (Letter 406, 1906). {6BC 1074.2}

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Questions: If you have questions please email them either at requests@comeandreason.com or topics@comeandreason.com. If you post on Facebook it is likely they will not be answered as I often miss questions posted on Facebook.

The New Paradigm about the Heavenly Sanctuary and Investigative Judgment Has been Changed: Thanks to your feedback, I have rewritten portions of this document making it friendlier and less likely to cause offense. The new title is *Heavenly Sanctuary and Investigative Judgment for the Modern World*. It has a new cover, new introduction, the call to action section has been removed and other edits to clarify potential misunderstandings have been made throughout. It is already up on our website and print versions will be available November 14. **Please throw away any of the first edition you may still have in your possession and use this version going forward.**

PODCAST: Come and Reason with Dr. Tim Jennings weekly Podcast is now broadcasting, please follow us.

The Remedy Psalms is complete and online and will soon be updated to the free app.

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January 17-19, 2020: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly. Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport). See events.comeandreason.com for more details and to sign up.

2019 Q4 Ezra and Nehemiah: Lesson 7

Our Forgiving God

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

The title of the lesson is: Our Forgiving God...

What is forgiveness—how would you define it?

Is God ever unforgiving?

Are we saved by forgiveness?

Can anyone be saved without forgiveness?

Did God forgive before or after Jesus died for us?

Was Jesus' death necessary for God to forgive us?

Is there a difference between God forgiving and our being forgiven?

What is the difference?

Consider those who crucified Christ—did Jesus forgive them? Were they forgiven or did they remain unforgiven despite being forgiven by Jesus?

What law lens are you thinking through?

If the law lens is like human law, then if a judge pardons the accused is no longer under the legal condemnation of the law, the state has no authority to punish they are forgiven and free.

But, if the law is design law is something required beyond being forgiven by the Creator of the universe?

If your child disobeys your rules and plays in the street and gets hit by a car, or drinks some toxin you said not to touch—and they are on the ground injured and dying—will you forgive them? Will your forgiveness save them? Is something more needed?

Does the sinner, in addition to being forgiven by God, also need to be healed, transformed, renewed, recreated, reborn, set-right (which means justified) in heart?



So would this mean the sinner not only needs to be forgiven by God but they need to open their hearts and experience that forgiveness which leads them to repentance and surrender to God for healing and regeneration in righteousness?

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will **forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.** (1John 1:9 NIV84)

Consider this historic quote

But **forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose.** When God gives the promise that He “will abundantly pardon,” He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:7-9. **[What might this be referring to? What are our ways? What methods or laws do we use? But God is Creator, His laws are not imposed rules require legal enforcement like ours. So what might follow in this quote?]** **God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart.** David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, “**Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.**” Psalm 51:10. And again he says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” Psalm 103:12. EG White *Prayer* 298.1

Bible forgiveness must be understood through the lens of design law—fixing what is actually broken. God’s personal heart-attitude is always forgiving—the sacrifice of Christ was NOT designed to induce forgiveness in God, or to make a legal loophole for God to be able to forgive, but to be the method whereby God’s love and forgiveness could enter back into the heart of human beings to heal and restore.

Consider this next quote and see if you can unpack the theological language for those who would like to use it to say it is not only God’s love and forgiveness but a legal payment was also necessary and legal accounting is required:

The atonement of Christ was not made in order to induce God to love those whom he otherwise hated; it was not made to produce a love that was not in existence; but it was made as a manifestation of the love that was already in God's heart, an exponent of the divine favor in the sight of heavenly intelligences, in the sight of worlds unfallen, and in the sight of a fallen race. “**For God so loved the world,** that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” **We are not to entertain the idea that God loves us because Christ has died for us, but that he so loved us that he gave his only-begotten Son to die for us. The death of Christ was expedient in order that mercy might reach us with its full pardoning power,** and at the same time that **justice might be satisfied in the righteous substitute.** The glory of God was revealed in the rich mercy that he poured out upon a race of rebels, who through repentance and faith might be pardoned through the **merits of Christ, for God will by no means clear the guilty who refuse to acknowledge**



the merit of a crucified and risen Saviour. It is only through faith in Christ that sinners may have the righteousness of **Christ imputed unto them**, and that they may be “made the righteousness of God in him.” **Our sins were laid on Christ, punished in Christ, put away by Christ, in order that his righteousness might be imputed to us, who walk not after the flesh,** but after the Spirit. Although sin was charged to his account on our behalf, yet he remained perfectly sinless. ST May 30, 1895, par. 6

What do you hear? Do you think through human law or design law?

Quote like this one are constantly used by those who are still struggling under Satan’s lie that God’s law functions like human law, just a system of rules that require infliction of punishment by the ruling authority. But, let’s think through design law for a minute and see the truth of what is actually happening.

- Is there a punishment for sin? –yes
- What is that punishment? –pain, guilt, shame, heartache, separation from God and ultimately death
- From where does that punishment come?
 - The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23)
 - Sin when full grown brings forth death (James 1:5)
 - Those who sow to the carnal nature **from that nature reap destruction** (Gal 6:8)
- What is the power to inflict that punishment?
 - the power of sin is the law (1Corinthians 15:56, NIV84)
 - What does this mean? Where does the power to kill someone that jumps off the empire state building come from?
 - Where does the power to ruin health and ultimately kill someone who smokes come from?
 - Where does the power to kill someone who jumps in the ocean with weights tied to their feet come from?
 - **How is God reconciled to man?—By the work and merit of Jesus Christ, who ...** put aside everything that would interpose between man and **God's pardoning love. The law that man has transgressed is not changed to meet the sinner in his fallen condition, [Why? Because it is the law of life, the protocols life is constructed to operate upon. The law of respiration cannot be changed to meet the drowning person, the person must be put back in harmony with the law]** but is made manifest as the transcript of Jehovah's character,—the exponent of His holy will,**[Which is what? Love—the laws of God are for our health, happiness, good this is God's will]** —and is exalted and magnified in the life and character of Jesus Christ. Yet a way of salvation is provided; for the spotless Lamb of God is revealed as the One **who taketh away the sin of the world. [Not the punishment, but the sin is taken away]** Jesus stands in the sinner's place, and takes the guilt of the transgressor upon Himself. Looking upon the sinner's Substitute and Surety, the Lord Jehovah can be **just, and yet be the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. [If your child disobeyed and drank poison and was dying,**



what is the just or right action for you as their parent to take? Inflict punishment for their disobedience, or provide remedy to heal and save?] SD 239.2

- How were our sins punished in Christ?
 - Those who sow to the carnal nature **from that nature reap destruction** (Gal 6:8)
 - Did Jesus take our nature upon Himself? “God made him who had no sin **to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**” (2Cor 5:21 niv84)
 - Did Jesus suffer in His humanity? From where did the suffering come—from God or from the human nature He assumed and from evil people and angels?
 - Why did God separate from Jesus? (Why did Jesus stay away from Lazarus until after Lazarus died?)
 - Could Jesus die still connected to His Father?
 - Could Jesus fix the sin problem, purge the infection of fear and selfishness, fully restore God’s design of love into the humanity He assumed without dying? So, was God’s withdrawal, God’s hiding of Himself, God’s “forsaking” of Jesus, an expression of God being upset with Jesus, God being mad with Jesus, or was it God cooperating with Jesus as they worked together to accomplish their joint mission of saving humanity?
 - Jesus took upon Himself our terminal condition—was tempted in every way just like we are (Heb 2:14) but without sin. Thus, He “destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light (2Tim 1:10) by developing a perfect sinless human character and destroying the infection of fear and selfishness.
 - Thus, once made perfect he became the source of salvation for all who obey him (Heb 5:8)
 - Wasn’t He always perfect—no, he was always sinless
 - Bible perfection is perfect mature character
 - Character cannot be created it must be developed
 - Christ came as the second Adam and as a human developed a perfect sinless human character—the cure and remedy freely given to all who trust God
- So there is a punishment—and it is separation from God resulting in ruin and death—did Christ experience this? Yes, but because Christ, as a human lived a sinless life Christ’s separation from the Father was the means of curing the condition. Whereas, the wicked in the end who reject Christ when they are separated completely from God die of their terminal sin-condition.
- What are the merits of Christ? The perfect human character He developed as a human being on earth.
- Why will God not clear the guilty? It would be like saying “The doctor will by no means say the sick are healthy...They either accept the remedy and are actually cured back to health, or they reject the remedy and remain terminal. But the physician will not clear the terminal, the infected, the sick declaring them to be healthy when they are not.

What about the “imputed” righteousness of Christ? Many still struggling under the false human legal model view imputed as something legally assigned but not actually experience. In other words, imputed righteousness is said to be what we are legally accounted with in the books of heaven, but imparted righteousness is what we experience within us that transforms and heals us.

What do you say to that?



Consider these quotes from the same author above:

He [the Father] would have us comprehend something of His love in giving His Son to die that He might counteract evil, **remove the defiling stains of sin from the workmanship of God, and reinstate the lost, elevating and ennobling the soul to its original purity through Christ's imputed righteousness.** TMK 206

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us boldness to approach the throne of grace. **By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him.** The image of Christ is cherished, and it captivates the whole being. {AG 96.4}

Abundant grace has been provided that the believing soul may be kept free from sin; for all heaven, with its limitless resources, has been placed at our command. We are to draw from the well of salvation. . . . In ourselves we are sinners; but in Christ we are righteous. **Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just.** He looks upon us as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds. {AG 181.4}

We aim too low. The mark is much higher. Our minds need expansion, that we may comprehend the significance of the provision of God. We are to reflect the highest attributes of the character of God. . . . **The law of God is the exalted standard to which we are to attain through the imputed righteousness of Christ.** {OHC 364.2}

Do you notice if we understand design law and we read widely—that reality becomes clear and Satan's legal lie is exposed and we see that God was in the Son reconciling the world to Himself and that Christ achieved the cure, the remedy, and provides it freely to us—as something we actually experience when we trust Him and open our hearts to Him. This is not legal accounting in a book declaring something to be one way when it is actually another way; No! It is the actual healing, restoring, regenerating, recreating us back to God's perfect sinless ideal—writing His law in our hearts and minds!

Do we have a forgiving God—Absolutely!!! But we have a God who does so much more than have a forgiving attitude—He provides the remedy to heal and restore us to righteousness.

But have you heard the idea, popular in some circles, that forgiveness costs the person who forgives? That God had to pay a price to forgive us? That while His forgiveness is free to us, it was not free to God?



This idea is also a distortion of reality based on accepting the imposed law lie. If God's law functions like human law, then sin requires a punishment be inflicted in order for justice to occur and God could not be just without inflicting the punishment; therefore, God in order to forgive had to provide an innocent and punish Him and thus God's forgiveness cost Him the life of His Son.

No—this is not true. God's forgiveness was free—but His personal forgiveness, did not provide the remedy to our condition. It wasn't God's forgiveness that cost God—it was because "God so loved the world" and God forgave the world and chose to save the world that His chose to fix the damage, solve the problem, heal the condition that sin caused and **providing the remedy** to sin cost God a price we can never fully comprehend.

In order to resolve the sin problem God had to not only be forgiving—which He was—but also had to provide the solution, the cure and the cure has two elements: truth and a perfect character of love.

Jesus came as a human to reveal the truth in order to destroy lies and win us to trust and also to develop a perfect human character built upon God's design law of love. This cost Jesus because there was no way to do this other than be tempted in all ways like we are yet choose to love perfectly—thereby revealing the truth of God's character, exposing Satan as a murderer and fraud, and curing the condition.

SUNDAY

Nehemiah 9:1-3 describes how the Israelites humbled themselves and repented with sackcloth and ashes and separated themselves from all foreigners...why? What is going on? What is the purpose? What is the object lesson that applies to us?

We are to humble ourselves and confess our sinfulness for healing and to separate ourselves from all attachments to sin, selfishness and people who are foreign to God's kingdom.

Does this mean we don't minister to people to try and bring them into God's kingdom? No, it means we don't bond with them and make them part of the "tribe" the "family" the trusted ones. We don't allow those who are not reborn to be on God's team—but we continue to recruit them seeking to bring them into a trust relationship with God to be renewed in heart and thereby join God's team.

Why did God have them build a wall?

Was it cruel and uncaring for them to build a wall? Weren't there people outside the wall who could have benefited from being within the city gates? Was it a lack of human compassion, a violation of human rights to build a wall?

What was the purpose of the wall? Was it to allow God's agents to organize, reconstitute as an effective team, gather resources, produce disciples, grow in godliness, become a bastion of godly success—in order to minister to those not of Israel God's blessings and thus help people?



Would as many people be helped by Israel if they didn't build a wall? Why not? Is there a lesson for us in this today?

First rule of care-giving is the health of the care-giver.

- If a farmer refuses to eat any food so he can donate all the food from his farm to the hungry—how many does he feed?
- If the doctors at Pearl Harbor donated their blood to save some of the dying soldiers, each doctor giving 3-4 pints of their blood to save a hemorrhaging soldier—what would have happened? Would more or less be saved? Were the doctors selfish for refusing to donate their own blood on that day?
- What of a nation that establishes border walls today—could this be done out of selfishness, because the people or leadership of that nation don't care about suffering people who are not of their nation? But could it also be done by caring people who realize they have a responsibility to help the less fortunate in the world and want to establish a sustainable health of the nation in order to help as many people as possible?
- When God had Israel build a wall was God doing this so Israel could hide behind the wall and ignore all the other people in the world, or in order to rebuild His team to go out into the world and evangelize and thus bless the world?

And, during Nehemiah's time could people who were not of genetic descent of Abraham become part of Israel or were they forbidden?

What was required to become part of Israel? They had to assimilate.

So, was God saying they should keep out all foreigners or keep out only those who refused to become part of Israel? Why?

Was Israel called into existence by God to be a model for how earthly governments should be run? Or was Israel called into existence to be an avenue for Messiah and conduits of God's saving truth, principles and methods taught and acted out in illustration?

Do we err by taking the lessons God intends for our spiritual renewal and try to apply them to human governments?

In other words, can the Christian achieve God's goals by trying to merge the church and state in order to reform the state to apply God's methods?

What do you think of this commentator's thoughts on the subject, from the book *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*:

When men indulge this accusing spirit, they are not satisfied with pointing out what they suppose to be a defect in their brother. If milder means fail of making him do what they think ought to be done, **they will resort to compulsion.** Just as far as lies in their power they will force men to



comply with their ideas of what is right. This is what the Jews did in the days of Christ and **what the church has done ever since whenever she has lost the grace of Christ. Finding herself destitute of the power of love, she has reached out for the strong arm of the state to enforce her dogmas and execute her decrees. Here is the secret of all religious laws that have ever been enacted, and the secret of all persecution** from the days of Abel to our own time. MB 126.2

Christ does not drive but draws men unto Him. The only compulsion which He employs is the constraint of love. **When the church begins to seek for the support of secular power, it is evident that she is devoid of the power of Christ—the constraint of divine love.** MB 127.1

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “In the first part...” What do we mean when we refer to the “name” of God?

Do we mean certain syllables, or do we mean attributes—character?

What if we take the name Christian but don’t reveal Christ in how we treat others?

What if we take the name Christian but want to take control of governments in order to pass our laws to compel others to live by our religious beliefs?

Did Christ give us freedom to reject Him? Should we leave people free in society to reject our religious views?

Does that mean we don’t have any laws in our society—we just leave everyone free to do whatever they want? No! God has ordained that earthly governments establish order over the selfish, to provide structure, to prevent rampant chaos and anarchy, and to allow the gospel message to go forward to change hearts. But, we must remember all human governments run on imposed law and do NOT represent heaven or function the way God’s kingdom does. God’s kingdom “is within you” in other words human governments use compulsion to control behavior with external force. God’s kingdom is truth and love and works to transform you from within so you live in harmony with God and His design laws for life. When this happens, no external monitoring or force is needed.

Why is it so important to know the truth about God’s character? What law is involved—the law of worship—by beholding we are changed.

Read bottom pink section—“Why is the doctrine...” Why is it important to remember God as Creator? What kind of law does a Creator use to build reality?

First—because we remember God’s laws are design laws, not imposed rules and are the protocols our life and health are built upon. Only harmony with them brings health and happiness, breaking them is damaging.



Second—the Sabbath—what is its purpose? It is a gift to humanity; the Sabbath was made for man not man for the Sabbath—to assist us in holiness—how?

By helping us to remember the truth about God’s character of love and His design laws—so that we choose to honor God by remembering all week what the Sabbath represents and then practicing our trust in Him and His methods by not seeking to advance ourselves every seventh day. In other words, we choose to resist the selfish drive and practice love for God and others, trusting God with our lives.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “The prayer transitions...” Why is it good to remember history?

We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history. Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 196

Is recounting the failings of the past the same as being responsible for the failings of previous generations?

Are we responsible for the sins of past generations? Are we to make amends for past generations, bear the guilt, and required to repent for previous generations?

The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him. (Ezekiel 18:20 NIV84)

What about movements that try to make people pay for the crimes of their ancestors—is this Godly or not?

Read third paragraph, “Of course, here is where the gospel...” How do you understand this—through what law lens?

What is the punishment for sin—from where does it come? How is it possible to remit the punishment? By healing the disease, how is this done? By trust we receive the indwelling Spirit and Christ’s perfection is reproduced in us.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “The next section...” What is the object lesson for us?

They entered Canaan and possessed a land ready to be possessed...



“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.” (John 14:1-3 NIV84)

When we enter heaven, Jesus has already prepared a place for us!

Fat is a metaphor or symbol of selfishness—this is why in the sacrificial system the fat from the internal organs was removed and burned. It symbolized the victory of Christ destroying the internal carnal drive of fear and selfishness and why in the Bible the burning of the fat is described as sweet aroma to the Lord. Why? Because of the reality to which it points; it is sweet to the Lord to destroy fear and selfishness and restore trust and love, and this was symbolized by the burning of the fat—the fat of fear and selfishness is burned out by the fire of the Spirit of truth and love.

Read second paragraph, “The people might...” Review from last week:

- From where does happiness come? From healthiness in all domains
- And from where does healthiness come? From living in harmony with God’s design laws
- And from where does the ability to live in harmony with God’s design laws come? From Jesus’ victory and the work of the Holy Spirit
- And what is the Bible term for being restored to perfect godly healthiness, for living in harmony with God’s design laws? Holiness!

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Once again...” What is the covenant?

Is the covenant with Israel different from the covenant with all of humanity or is it the fulfillment of the covenant to all humanity?

The bottom of the lesson asks us to read Romans 5:6-8 and asks “How do these texts reflect what the Israelites were asking of God?”

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (NIV84)

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Questions: If you have questions please email them either at requests@comeandreason.com or topics@comeandreason.com. If you post on Facebook it is likely they will not be answered as I often miss questions posted on Facebook.

The New Paradigm about the Heavenly Sanctuary and Investigative Judgment Has been Changed: Thanks to your feedback I have rewritten portions of this document making it friendlier and less likely to cause offense. The new title is *The Heavenly Sanctuary and Investigative Judgment for the Modern World*. It has a new cover, new introduction, the call to action section has been removed and other edits to clarify potential misunderstandings have been made throughout. It is already up on our website and print versions will be available November 14. **Please throw away any of the first edition you may still have in your possession and use this version going forward.**

The Remedy Psalms is complete and online and will soon be updated to the free app.

November 15-17, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Norwegian SDA Health Worker's Retreat in Oslo, Norway.

November 24, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Aachen Germany.

January 17-19, 2020: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly. Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport). See events.comeandreason.com for more details and to sign up.

March 27,28, 2020: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at an AACC River Conference at Plano, TX. More info at <http://theriverconference.com/>

April 17,18, 2020: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Lakewood SDA church in Lakewood OH.



2019 Q4 Ezra and Nehemiah: Lesson 8

God and the Covenant

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

Before we get to the lesson I received an email this week from an online listener in Australia, Stephen Gurban. He writes:

Hello Come and Reason ministries

I have a question regarding the [Bible] study of Nehemiah and Ezra for this quarter.

Did the leaders (Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah) needlessly invite conflict?

In Ezra 4:2 the Israelites who never went into exile claim to worship the same God yet their help is refused by Zerubbabel.

Ezra exhorts the exiles to follow the Torah and then tells the Israelite men in inter-racial marriages to separate from their families (but in Malachi 2:13-16 God says marriage is a covenant that should not be broken).

Nehemiah tells the people who aren't Israelite that they have no part in the rebuilding of the wall.

It seems from reading these two books that while the leaders were dedicated to God they were being exclusive on the basis of race. This has mixed results with some greater commitment but also greater opposition. By the end of Nehemiah people are still ignoring the Sabbath so he threatens them.

Do these two books teach indirectly that being partial and coercive will not lead to a change of heart? Their approach seems to be the opposite Jesus' methods and God's call for Israel to be a light to other nations. Wouldn't it have been more effective to accept these folk and teach them the truth of God's love through words and actions? Truth, love and freedom to choose.

I would be very grateful to hear your perspective on the lessons we can take from these situations.

Thank you for your ministry. It throws new light on God's love and mercy.

What are your thoughts? How would you answer his questions?

What law lens do you answer through? And how does the law lens help with these questions?



The law lens sets the context of what is happening. Is the problem God is dealing with in the OT times a judicial legal one or the condition of humanity being sinful and in need of healing?

Could the human race be saved without Jesus becoming human and fulfilling His mission? No!

So, do we understand, that much of what is recorded in the OT is a record of God's work to provide our Savior while Satan is working to obstruct God's plan?

If we understand that framework then we get insight into things like the flood, God keeping open the avenue for the Messiah.

Then after the flood Satan doesn't have to destroy the entire human race to stop Messiah because he knows Messiah is coming through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so if he can just destroy this branch of the human family he can obstruct God's plan.

With that in mind, is there insight into why Satan would want to infiltrate Israel with non-believers, not just as neighbors, but to marry into their families?

Was it effective—was marrying non-believers into Israel families effective in undermining their mission and calling?

- Did Samson have a problem with this?
- Did Solomon have a problem with this?
- Could marrying non-believers undermine the ability to fulfill God's cause?

Yes! So, do we see one aspect of the instruction to divorce the non-believing spouses was God working to keep open avenue for Messiah and not trying to exclude the non-believers. In fact, the actions in this case were because God was working to save the entire species and Satan was working to undermine God's team.

Further, God directed this not just for the purpose of the Messiah—which is mission essential—but also to be a blessing to the nations around—meaning other races.

The first rule of care-giving is the health of the caregiver, because if the caregiver goes down, then no care is given.

Israel, was to not only be the avenue for Messiah, they were to be welfare agents for God teaching the world principles of healthy living physically as well as spiritually. But Israel could not do this if they rejected God and embraced false gods.

So, were God's instructions to get rid of their foreign wives about race or about heart devotion to God?

Evidence it was not about race—who did Moses marry? An Ethiopian. Who were Rahab and Ruth?



So, why were these non-Jewish women allowed into Israel, and two of them became progenitors of Jesus, and yet in Ezra's day they are making Jewish men divorce their non-Jewish wives?

Because Zipporah, Rahab and Ruth all *assimilated* meaning they all converted and became part of the tribe giving their hearts to Yahweh and living in accordance with Jewish law and custom.

The wives Ezra was having them put away were not on God's team, they were not part of Israel in heart, they were not working for God's kingdom, and in fact were undermining God's plan.

So, is God being racist? No! Are Ezra and Nehemiah being divisive? No!

The last paragraph in SUNDAY's lesson reads:

"Unfortunately, the world embraced evil more than it did God, and the lineage of the faithful became very small, creating a real possibility of eliminating any family through whom God could fulfill His Word by sending the promised Seed to save humans. At that point, God intervened with the Flood."

Wow—I am so happy to see this idea expressed in the quarterly. This is exactly correct, seeing the larger reality of what was transpiring in OT is a key to understanding the meaning. And this is based on design law.

Second point to understand the questions is to understand that the Bible records real people who did real things and is historically accurate, yet those real lives not only record their history, but are object lessons to a larger reality.

And this gives insight into some of the other questions. Why would Nehemiah not allow non-Israelites to participate in building the wall?

- Could those who were not of Israel be trusted? So in its most immediate sense those not of Israel would be more likely to sabotage and undermine the mission.
- But, in object lesson, what does the wall represent? It represents the law of God—and we are to be repairers of the breach. Can we have people join our team to repair the breach who don't agree with us on God's law being design law, who continue to teach that God's law is imperial/imposed and God is the source of inflicted pain and suffering for law breaking? Why not? Because they are perpetuating the breach—the lie that God's law functions like human law. So, in the object lesson aspect it makes sense that only those who are on God's team are actually capable of doing God's work.

What about the threatenings to keep the Sabbath and other laws? It is an evidence of the level of maturity of the people. A loving parent or God will intervene with artificial threats to protect children from injuring themselves (parent threatening punishment for playing in the street), longing for them to grow up and no longer need the threat.



There is also revelation of how reality works as well—that threats, the use of might and power, don't actually achieve what God wants.

- Flood didn't result in holiness of humanity but building tower of Babel
- 10 Plagues of Egypt and Red Sea didn't result in holiness but worshipping a golden calf
- Miracles of taking Canaan (Jericho, sun standing still) didn't result in holiness but more idolatry
- Fire at Carmel didn't result in holiness but more rebellion

Such interventions *did* work to keep open the avenue for the Messiah, which was required in order to save humankind. And, these interventions also revealed that God cannot win the war with might and power, but only by the way the Spirit works.

Thus, once Jesus arrives as a human being, God doesn't need to use might and power to keep open the avenue for Messiah any more. Might and power was used by Jesus to heal, feed, deliver, and restore but not to overthrow the Romans—as the Jews wanted.

How many Christians today want to use might and power or teach that when Christ returns He returns to use might and power and force His way?

Do you see how design law view puts everything into perspective?

SABBATH

Memory text:

And because of all this, we make a sure covenant and write it; our leaders, our Levites, and our priests seal it. We will not neglect the house of our God. (Nehemiah 9:38 and 10:39 NKJV)

What is the covenant?

The lesson in the first paragraph says it is a “legal establishment of a relationship between God and His people.”

What are your thoughts on this?

If it is a legal establishment then:

- In what court do we find legal redress?
- What are the legal consequences for breaking the covenant? Is it an infliction of punishment from the court?
- What binds one to the covenant—is it external threat of being sued, of being punished? If so, what happens to love when one is threatened?
- How is the covenant enforced?
- If it is a legal contract with the judge, then wouldn't the judge have to recuse Himself from any disputes over the contract?



I see the idea that the covenant is a legal establishment as evidence of the imperial/imposed law paradigm. My view is that the covenant is the covenant of grace and is an expression of God's character and methods of love and has nothing to do with legalities.

People who want it to be legal do so because in our fallen world the law makes them feel safe:

- No one is above the law
- The law is a neutral standard
- The law gives protections and rights
- So, if the covenant is a legal establishment then it makes the immature feel safe

This is also why many get upset when we suggest salvation is not legal, because they feel we are throwing out the rules. To many it would be like saying we are playing baseball but with no rules, no fair or foul lines, no direction established in which to run bases, no balls or strikes just do what you want. Some people try and hit bats with gloves and catch gloves with balls. It is total chaos.

This is how those who don't understand design law hear what we are saying. They fail to realize that baseball is a made-up construct, thus rules are necessary.

But, not so in God's kingdom. God builds reality and His laws are the constants upon which reality operates.

So, there is only one covenant and it is God's love to us, God's promise to be true to Himself and never waiver; it is what God covenanted to do—it is the covenant of grace, yet God has manifested this covenant various ways at various times for various circumstances.

For instance—a parent has a child, if the parent is a godly parent, will the parent love the child? Does the parent have a covenant with that child? How would you describe it? Could you say the loving parent has a covenant of grace to do what is best for the child? How might that be manifested? Could the actions of such a loving parent be manifested by:

- discipline if the child is unruly?
- hugs to a hurting or frightened child?
- promises to reassure a doubting child?
- sacrifice to provide remedy for a dying child?

Is the parent giving different covenants through the child's life or merely communicating and demonstrating the same covenant—love and welfare for the child but in different ways as the situation dictates?

Go to **MONDAY's** lesson and at the top the lesson states: "The Bible identifies seven major covenants that God has made with people:



- First Covenant—Adam (*Genesis 1-3*)
- Second Covenant—Noah (*Genesis 6-9*)
- Third Covenant—Abraham (*Genesis 12:1-3*)
- Fourth Covenant—Moses and the Israelite nation (*known as the Sinaitic or Mosaic Covenant; Exodus 19-24*)
- Fifth Covenant—Phinehas (*Numbers 25:10-13*)
- Sixth Covenant—David (*2Samuel 7:5-16*)
- Seventh Covenant—New Covenant (*Jeremiah 31:31-34*)

Are these seven different covenants or one covenant communicated to different people, at different times and in different ways?

Are they not all manifestations of the same covenant of love and grace?

God promised to Adam the covenant of grace, that the seed of the woman will crush the serpent's head. That a Savior, from God is promised. That Adam, though now out of harmony with God's design for life and thus suffering with a terminal sin-condition, can be saved by trusting God to provide the remedy. This is the covenant of grace.

This same covenant was given to Noah—a worldwide flood is coming and all who trust me can be saved. The purpose of the flood was for the fulfilling of the covenant of grace, of keeping open the avenue for the Messiah. God's promise that He would not again destroy the world with water was also an expression of the covenant of grace. It wouldn't be needed and He will provide remedy.

The same covenant is expressed to Abraham that the Seed, meaning Jesus, will provide the remedy to our terminal sin-condition and we can be healed/saved if we trust God, which Abraham did.

The fourth covenant—from God's side was the same—delivered His people from slavery (metaphor from delivering from bondage of sin), reveals His glory, provides His law, gives the instruction for the temple and sacrifices all designed to teach them of the plan of salvation—the grace of God, that God is providing remedy and deliverance and we merely need to trust and choose to live in harmony with God and follow His instructions.

But the fourth covenant was perverted by the people—so instead of accepting in on faith and trusting God to heal and restore, the people took upon themselves the responsibility to fix the problem by their obedience or law-keeping. Thus, this covenant was not a trust faith covenant as God intended, but a **legal transaction** or contract in which the people said, “We’ve got a deal God. We will keep your rules and you will bless us with health and wealth.”

This is often referred to as the old covenant or the first covenant and was powerless to heal because it was not entered into by trusting God to provide remedy, but by trusting themselves to keep the rules and then **holding God legally accountable to fulfill the agreement**.



This is the problem with penal/legal theologies today. They also claim to be based on faith, but in fact are legal constructs in which the adherents hold God legally accountable and this is the source of their security. In other words, they trust the binding requirements of the law upon God because they don't trust God.

The fifth covenant was when Phinehas stood up for God and God chose the Levites to be His priests and thus the object lesson that God will work through those who trust Him and follow His instructions. God will provide the remedy and the priests will share that remedy to bring healing to others—and we, of course, are the priesthood of believers to share God's remedy to heal hearts and minds.

The sixth covenant, again the covenant of grace, expressing to David that the Messiah will come through David's family tree to bring remedy and cure and eliminate all sin and rule for all eternity.

The seventh or new covenant is the fulfillment of the covenant of grace promised to Adam and communicated throughout history. Jesus coming and curing the condition and providing a free remedy to all who trust Him.

So how many covenants do we have? Two—one true the covenant of grace and one false covenant of legality. The true covenant is an agreement with God that we enter into by faith or trust and thus Hebrews reads:

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Heb 11:1
NKJV

The Greek for substance is *hypostasis*, the first half *hypo*, as in *hypoglycemic* or *hypotensive* means low or under and the last half *stasis* means standing, was translated into the Latin as *substance* the first half, *sub*, as in *subway*, *submarine*, *subterranean* means under and the last half *stance* means standing.

Translated into modern English faith is our *understanding* and this has two meanings, both of which apply. Our faith is our comprehension of reality, the reality of God's character, methods, design laws, what sin is, our terminal condition, our inability to save our selves etc. and with that understanding we enter into an *understanding* with God an *agreement*, which is the covenant of grace. We *understand* God is love, that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son to provide the remedy to cure our condition, we *understand* that we cannot save or heal ourselves, so, we enter into an *understanding* with God that says, “God I trust you and surrender myself to you and you will heal me and I will honor you by cooperating and following your instructions.”

One of the founders of the SDA church wrote the following:

The spirit of bondage is engendered by seeking to live in accordance with legal religion, through striving to fulfill the claims of the law in our own strength. There is hope for us only as we come under the **Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus.** The gospel preached to Abraham, through which he had hope, was the same gospel that is



preached to us today, through which we have hope. Abraham looked unto Jesus, who is also the Author and the Finisher of our faith (The Youth's Instructor, September 22, 1892). 6BC 1077.7

As the Bible presents two laws, one changeless and eternal, the other provisional and temporary, [what law is temporary? What law was added because of sin?] so there are two covenants. The covenant of grace was first made with man in Eden, when after the Fall, there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. To all men this covenant offered pardon, and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God's law. [why? Because the law is the protocol life is built upon] Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation. {FLB 77.2}

This same covenant was renewed to Abraham in the promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. 22:18. This promise pointed to Christ. So Abraham understood it, and he trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness. The covenant with Abraham also maintained the authority of God's law. [meaning that the Messiah would fix broken humanity by restoring God's design law into the human species] The Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." The testimony of God concerning His faithful servant was, "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." Gen. 17:1; 26:5. . . . {FLB 77.3}

The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, [meaning it was accomplished. Before Christ died it was a promise of what Christ would achieve, but at the Cross Christ actually achieved the remedy to sin and thus the promise was fulfilled or God ratified His covenant] and it is called the "second," or "new," covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant. {FLB 77.4}

The covenant of grace is not a new truth, for it existed in the mind of God from all eternity. This is why it is called the everlasting covenant. {FLB 77.5}

There is hope for us only as we come under the **Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus.** The gospel preached to Abraham, through which he had hope, was the same gospel that is preached to us today. . . . Abraham looked unto Jesus, who is also the author and the finisher of our faith. FLB77

This is important today because Satan is the author of imposed law, legal/penal and works oriented religious schemes.

It is commonly believed in Christianity that the genetic descendants of Abraham operated under a different covenant than we do—that is a lie. God so loved the WORLD that He gave His only begotten son. Abraham is the father of “many” nations.



In other words, there is this idea that the covenant of grace is for everyone but the Jews and they were saved by the works of animal sacrifices and one day in the future Christians will leave the earth and the Jews will again return to the OT covenant of sacrifices in order to find salvation. This is all fraudulent.

God is Creator, His laws are the laws upon which life is built. Adam deviated from God's design and corrupted his being and became terminal (dead in trespass and sin) and all humanity is descended from Adam—one human species, terminal. We all have the same condition and need the same cure and that cure comes through what Jesus accomplished for us. There is no other way than being restored to harmony with God and His design laws for life.

SUNDAY

At the end of the third paragraph the lesson states, “Sin is the antithesis of creation, bringing de-creation (death) instead.”

This is well said—and why is this true?

What kind of law is the basis for this truth?

What does God have to do?

If this is true then how has God been using His power through history?

God has been holding back death and destruction—God left the sins committed before unpunished (Romans 3:25)

But, how has God's use of power been portrayed? As holding back death and destruction or as the cause of death and destruction?

This is the distortion we get when we replace God's design law with human imposed law.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Bible scholars...” What do you think of the idea that God communicated with people in ways they could understand, according to their culture and expectations etc.?

Would this include the use of law—including the 10 Commandments?

In other words, were the 10 Commandments in existence in their written form and with the specific language recorded in the Bible prior to God writing them at Sinai?

- **It [the law] was added** because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. (Galatians 3:19 NIV84)

Here are a few historic quotes from one of the founders of the SDA church—see whether you agree or disagree and why?

- The law of God existed before the creation of man or else Adam could not have sinned. **After the transgression of Adam the principles of the law were not changed, but were definitely arranged and expressed to meet man in his fallen condition.** EG White *Selected Messages* vol. 1 p. 230.1
- **The law of God existed before man was created.** The angels were governed by it. Satan fell because he transgressed the principles of God's government. After Adam and Eve were created, God made known to them His law. **It was not then written,** but was rehearsed to them by Jehovah. EG White *The Story of Redemption* 145.1
- The law of Jehovah, dating back to creation, was comprised in the **two great principles**, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." These **two great principles** embrace the first four commandments, showing the duty of man to God, and the last six, showing the duty of man to his fellow-man. **The principles were more explicitly stated to man after the fall, and worded to meet the case of fallen intelligences. This was necessary in consequence of the minds of men being blinded by transgression.** EG White *Review and Herald*, May 6, 1875 par. 13

Why was it necessary to give the written law? Does the written law establish it or codify and communicate it? What type of law is God's law?

When Isaac Newton wrote down the law of gravity—did that establish it?

WEDNESDAY

The people made the following pledges:

- 1.No mixed marriages (no marriages to an individual who could lead one to idolatry.
- 2.True Sabbath observance (no business transactions)
- 3.Debt cancelation
- 4.Financially supporting the temple

Why? What was the purpose of these pledges?



What is God trying to achieve? Salvation of humanity which requires the Messiah to come.

Are any of these four actions connected to God's purpose in providing Messiah to save humanity?

Any object lesson applications to us today?

1. No mixed marriages (no marriages to an individual who could lead one to idolatry).
 - Marriage to unbelievers undermine usefulness
 - Marriage to believer enhances usefulness
 - Consider any team with players not united toward the same goal
2. True Sabbath observance (no business transactions)
 - What is the purpose of the Sabbath?
 - It was made for man as a gift from God to assist in God's treatment in restoring us to holiness
 - Thus the Sabbath was part of God's healing plan and the holier people are the more effective in God's cause
3. Debt cancelation
 - Does being in debt obstruct ability to engage in any mission?
 - So would debt cancellation enhance people's ability to work for God? Both have more time to volunteer for God's cause and have more free resources to give to God's cause.
4. Financially supporting the temple
 - The Temple is the object lesson, the stage, the lesson book, as well as a wonder of the world. It would draw people from around the world to it and be a source of truth enlightening the world to God's plan to save and heal.

Do we see that these actions were in fact, all directly connected to God's plan to save the world and have Israel be His helpers in reaching the entire human family with the truth of salvation through the coming Messiah?

THURSDAY

The lesson asks why the Temple was so important for the faith as a whole?

Was the Temple and its services necessary for salvation?

Were the people during this time in history saved by observing the Temple service?

What was its purpose? It was theater, object lesson, teaching tool—to teach what?

Let's unpack some of the symbolism—I am not going to repeat all the lessons in our DVD on the sanctuary but try to bring out some other elements not in that presentation.



The Laver:

- The washing of the HS and Truth
 - Only the Priests and High Priest washed in the laver
 - The laver was made out of solid bronze with no wood and filled with water. The water is symbolic of God the Holy Spirit, which fills the laver. The laver represents the Word of God. The laver was constructed out of the mirrors the women brought out of Egypt (Ex 38:8). This aptly represents the purpose of God's Word to expose our defects and diagnose our condition. (James 1:22-25)
 - Titus 3:4-7 "But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. **He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit**, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life." Individual sacrifice
 - Eph 5:25-27 "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, **cleansing her by the washing with water through the word**, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless." Corporate sacrifice

We find this theme of washing with the word of God to cleanse our characters carried over by Jesus in the foot washing service.

- Our feet symbolize our journey through life
- Naked feet symbolize revealing truthfully our life journey to our brothers and sisters in Christ
- Washing by another symbolizes others, directed by the Holy Spirit, using God's Word, methods and principles to help us clean up our journey, removing the impure practices from our lives and to experience cleansing of character
- Washing other's feet reveals our willingness to help others who reveal their life journey and share how they have gotten themselves dirty with sin, clean up their lives and characters by the application of Gods' Word, methods and principles

The Covering of the Sanctuary

- Goats hair curtain
 - Symbolic of human sinfulness, fallen human nature
 - Goats were often symbols of deception (Rebekah used a goat to deceive Isaac. David's wife Michal used goat's hair pillows to deceive Saul's messengers. In the judgment metaphor the wicked are describes as goats. Christ who became sin though He knew no sin was represented on the Day of Atonement as a goat, but the other days as a lamb)
 - It was made of eleven curtains sewed together into two groupings, one of six and one of five (eleven in Bible numerology represents chaos of sin)
 - The one of six (six is the number of fallen man) was doubled and hung over the opening to be seen from the court – symbolic of our sinful nature in constant and daily



need of Christ's healing presence. It is to remind us that on this earth we are still in our fallen "tent" and in daily need of the renewing of God's grace.

- The one of five (five is the number of grace) is symbolic of Christ who took our fallen condition upon Himself in order to cure and overcome. In eleven instances goats were used as sin offerings, thus symbolizing Christ taking our sinful condition upon Himself to cure it.
- The combination of the five curtains (grace) and the six curtains (man), make eleven which is symbolic of the chaos of sin overcome by the grace of God through Christ
- Rams skin dyed red
 - Rams were the animals offered to consecrate the priesthood
 - Jesus is, of course, our High Priest who brings the healing solution.
 - The Rams skins were died red, symbolic of the perfect life of Christ, which He surrendered in order to become our remedy to sin. This red rams skin covered the goats hair curtain, symbolic of Christ's righteousness which will become our character and overwrite our sinfulness, when He writes His law on our hearts and minds—the New Covenant!
- Badger skin
 - A tough, durable, impenetrable covering which withstood all that nature could throw against it, heat of the sun, rain, storms. Thus representative of Christ our righteousness and our shield of faith which withstands the attacks of the enemy. No matter what the prince of this world throws at Christ He withstood it, and no matter what Satan throws at us, when we are surrendered to Christ His victory will sustain us.

The Boards in the sanctuary:

- Consider the symbolism and lesson: to make boards for the sanctuary, trees had to be cut down, severed from their roots in the earth and stripped of all their branches, i.e. earthly fruits. The board represent the saved who become part of God's sanctuary, the building blocks of it (analogous to the stones in the temple, the living stones). They must be cut away from their roots in the sinfulness of this world, and stop producing fruits of sin.
- The boards, representing the believers who compose the sanctuary, are wood, earthly, but covered in gold symbolizing being purified by Christ. We must be purified by Christ, have our roots in this world severed, and cut away our self-righteousness then be renewed in Christ's perfect character, in order to dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
- There were 10 boards on each side of the sanctuary, symbolic of completion. On one end were six boards, with two corner boards. Six symbolic of man, two symbolic of unity with Christ, equals eight, the number 8 is symbolic of New Beginning. Thus, man (6) is united in Christ (2) has a new beginning (8). The other end had two corner boards, representative of unity with Christ.
- The boards were to stand upright, which is symbolic of those renewed in Christ to stand upright for God's kingdom.



- Each soldier when registered had to give a half shekel of silver to the temple (regardless of whether the soldier was rich or poor). Silver is symbolic of at-one-ment. Being united back with God.
- It took 3000 shekels to make one talent, which was the weight of the sockets into which the board stood. Each board stood upon two sockets, which was the atonement money of 12,000 soldiers. Symbolically, that atonement, bringing us together again and unites us to God cost God greatly. And we are only able to stand upright as we are anchored in what Christ has done for us.
- The boards were then held together with five bars made of shittim wood covered in gold. Symbolic of Christ's dual nature, human/divine. The five bars symbolized grace.
- The middle bar actually shot through the boards from one end to the other, a fitting representation of "Christ in you the hope of glory."

FRIDAY

read first paragraph and explain through design law

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Questions: If you have questions please email them either at requests@comeandreason.com or topics@comeandreason.com. If you post on Facebook it is likely they will not be answered as I often miss questions posted on Facebook.

The New Paradigm about the Heavenly Sanctuary and Investigative Judgment Has been Changed: Thanks to your feedback I have rewritten portions of this document making it friendlier and less likely to cause offense. The new title is *The Heavenly Sanctuary and Investigative Judgment for the Modern World*. It has a new cover, new introduction, the call to action section has been removed and other edits to clarify potential misunderstandings have been made throughout. It is already up on our website and print versions will be available November 14. **Please throw away any of the first edition you may still have in your possession and use this version going forward.**

PODCAST: Come and Reason with Dr. Tim Jennings weekly Podcast is now broadcasting, please follow us.

November 15-17, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Norwegian SDA Health Worker's Retreat in Oslo, Norway.

November 24, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Aachen Germany.

January 17-19, 2020: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly. Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport). See events.comeandreason.com for more details and to sign up.

March 27,28, 2020: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at an AACC River Conference at Plano, TX. More info at <http://theriverconference.com/>

April 17,18, 2020: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Lakewood SDA church in Lakewood OH.



2019 Q4 Ezra and Nehemiah: Lesson 9

Trials, Tribulations, and Lists

by Lori Atkins

SABBATH

Just like the last time I taught this subject matter, the book *Prophets and Kings* is an amazing resource - chapters 45 to 50-ish.

So any thoughts about this week's lesson?

Did anyone read the recommended chapters in Ezra and Nehemiah? If you did, you went through some lists and lineages of the Babylonian exiles who returned to rebuild Jerusalem.

What do you think about these and other lists of genealogies and ancestries we have in the Bible? We have talked at length about the Bible being not only an accurate account of actual, historical events - real people's lives and stories and experiences, but it also serves much larger purposes and provides many profound object lessons.

So why are *these* particular lineages singled out?

From my count, there are 7 of these lists in scripture

1. Genesis 4-5 - The written account of Adam's family line from Adam to Noah;
2. Genesis 10 - "The Table of Nations" or the account of Noah's sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth and their sons;
3. Numbers 26 - "The 2nd Census/Descendents of the 12 tribes of Israel";
4. Ruth 4 - The Geneology of David;
5. 1 Chronicles 1-14 - Historical Records from Adam to David (including the genealogy of Saul) and including the royal line after the exile.
6. Also repeated in Nehemiah; and
7. Matthew 1 - the Geneology of Jesus the Messiah.

When you are reading/studying the Word, do you typically skip these passages or dig in?

The quarterly suggests the reason they are included is to show that God notices the details, the particulars - He knows all about our families and He cares about them all. Of course that's true, but do you think there might be a more significant reason why these specific lists of ancestry are recorded in scripture - particularly in the Old Testament?

What was transpiring on this planet at that time?
Was there a conflict going on involving more than just human beings?

There was no mystery...right there in the Garden of Eden, God promised a redeemer...a savior was coming...and Satan knew that mankind could not be saved without Jesus coming as a human being. After hearing about the crushed head and the bruised heel, did Satan just sit back as an observer...a spectator, and just wait and watch that happen? Or did he set about trying to thwart any such efforts...in fact, he marshalled all his evil resources and poured all his evil energies into opposing Christ at every point - and ultimately tried to prevent God from fulfilling His plan to save this creation? So how would he do that?

Well, God needed cooperative participants to carry out His plan, right - folks who were willing and had hearts open to the Spirit? Satan knew that Christ would not be born to a woman like Jezebel, so he set about hardening and closing hearts...turning them away from God...and at one point in history came *this close* to succeeding when there was only one righteous man left, a single human being remained on the entire planet who was willing to work with God. Of course, after God mercifully intervened with the flood, the Messiah was promised to Abraham's descendents...so Satan could narrow his focus to the Israelites and the Jews, and again he almost succeeded. Are you seeing any parallels between this back and forth struggle in the great controversy...and the lineage lists we just looked at?

Why do you think there are no more of these lists recorded after the genealogy of Jesus Christ?
What about the trials and tribulations experienced by this group of refugees and their ancestors?

They had been taken captive ~70 years prior, their homes - their promised land had been destroyed and decimated, now they faced a dangerous journey back to Jerusalem...and the monumental tasks of rebuilding the temple, rebuilding the wall, rebuilding their city/government/society. There was joy in the homecoming, but these were some trying times. How many of you here have ever packed up and moved to a new neighborhood? A new city? A new state...even a new country...where maybe you were starting over...everything was unfamiliar. Maybe you moved to a place where you didn't know anyone.

This was a part of the captive's journey that I could totally relate to, because I have done it - a lot...more than 15 times in ~15 years...and it can be an ordeal.

Was there purpose in these trials? Is there a purpose in our trials?
One of the founders of our church wrote,



“This present life is our time of test and trial. God placed Adam and Eve in the beautiful garden of Eden, saying to them, “Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat.” But there was one prohibition. “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:16,17). God wished to test and try the beings He had made, to see if they would be loyal and true to Him. {1SAT 318.4}

Did God not know what they were going to do so He put this tree there to find out?

Was God setting them up to fail?

Why put trials and temptations in our way?

Why not create a home without a tree which would be used to tempt?

Was God giving them an exam to test them and if they pass they live and if they fail – too bad death sentence?

“Our first parents, though created innocent and holy, were not placed beyond the possibility of wrongdoing. . . . They were to enjoy communion with God and with holy angels; but before they could be rendered eternally secure, their loyalty must be tested. At the very beginning of man’s existence a check was placed upon the desire for self-indulgence, the fatal passion that lay at the foundation of Satan’s fall. The tree of knowledge, which stood near the tree of life in the midst of the garden, was to be a test of the obedience, faith, and love of our first parents. While permitted to eat freely of every other tree, they were forbidden to taste of this, on pain of death. They were also to be exposed to the temptations of Satan; but if they endured the trial, they would finally be placed beyond his power, to enjoy perpetual favor with God...” {CC 13.2}

Is there purpose to be gained by our enduring trials?

“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)

Testing has two primary purposes: When a person is sick and goes to the doctor, what does the doctor typically do? Run a bunch of “tests”. Why? To expose the problem, to uncover the defect. Does the doctor do this in order to humiliate, embarrass, ridicule, punish, harass or criticize the patient? Or does the doctor do this in order to help uncover the problem and ultimately heal the patient? The first reason tests come is in order to help us know how sick we are and expose the areas in our lives in which the infection of sin is raging!

When a person “tests their mettle” what does that mean?



When a person has practiced, and studied, and prepared for anything – piano, Olympic competition, biology class, drivers education, auto mechanics, pilots instruction – does there ever come a time when they are to put their training, education, practice to the test? Why? In order for them to fail or in order for them to achieve? To solidify into their character, into their personhood what they have been working toward?

Tests come as a means of helping us overcome defects of character. When a person, who has struggled with addictions, gets into rehab, detoxed, goes to 12 step meetings, avoids places where their substance is used, eventually, in order to be truly free they will one day be faced again with the opportunity to use and will be tested – will they choose to say no, turn away, exercise their power of choice to reach out for help, or will they surrender to the temptation?

God allows tests to come as a means of freeing us from defects of character!

“A refining, purifying process is going on among the people of God, and the Lord of hosts has set His hand to this work. This process is *most trying* to the soul, but it is necessary in order that defilement may be removed. Trials are essential in order that we may be brought close to our heavenly Father, in submission to His will, that we may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. . . The Lord brings His children over the same ground again and again (how many here in this room have been over the same ground again and again and again?), increasing the pressure until perfect humility fills the mind, and the character is transformed; then they are victorious over self, and in harmony with Christ and the Spirit of heaven.”

Are your brains firing? Do any specific texts come to mind that describe this very process?

Consider these verses from Psalm 23, amplified by Dr. Jennings:

“The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want - God is watching out for me and I don’t need to worry about where my support will come from. He will provide all my soul needs. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside the still waters - He will first provide soul nurturance, support, sustenance to strengthen me and prepare me. He restores my soul - He will heal my inner man, cleanse my conscience, and restore my individuality. He leads me in the path of righteousness for his name sake - He will lead me in the path which restores me to righteousness, the path that makes me right inside, like He originally intended, so that He and His ways will be glorified in my life. When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for you are with me - He, then, after providing for me, strengthening me, cleansing my conscience, removing my guilt, restoring my individuality, leads me in the path to ultimate righteousness, the path which is through the valley that feels like I am going to die.



The valley in which self surrenders and is crucified, the valley which frees me from the domination of fear and selfishness. Your rod and staff comfort me - He comforts me with his shepherd's rod and staff, which is used by the shepherd to beat back my attackers, and lift me out of the ditch when I fall."

Isn't this such a beautiful and accurate description of conversion? And is this typically a one-time event...one and done? Or is it an iterative process of growing and maturing?

This is the Lord bringing his children over the same ground again and again! Back to the quote:

"The purification of God's people cannot be accomplished without suffering. . . . He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth. True grace is willing to be tried. If we are loath to be searched by the Lord, our condition is one of peril." {My Life Today 92.2}

"It is in mercy that the Lord reveals to men their hidden defects. He would have them critically examine the complicated emotions and motives of their own hearts, and detect that which is wrong, and modify their dispositions and refine their manners. God would have His servants become acquainted with their own hearts. In order to bring to them a true knowledge of their condition, He permits the fire of affliction to assail them, so that they may be purified. The trials of life are God's workmen to remove the impurities, infirmities, and roughness from our characters, and fit them for the society of pure, heavenly angels in glory. . . . The fire will not consume us, but only remove the dross, and we shall come forth seven times purified, bearing the impress of the Divine. {ML 92.3}

Do you think God was trying to accomplish some of this character development and refining and maturing through these trials the Israelites experienced?

And how many of the trials they (and we) experienced...were of their own making?

It is in this way that trials can lead to growth and overcoming defects of character, as we experience the results of our own choices and learn from them – and that therapy process can be very painful! Remember, once there is brokenness there are no pain-free options...but while it is impossible to avoid pain in this sinful world, being miserable is optional. ☺

SUNDAY

The God of History



Sunday's lesson references Daniel 1:1-2 for the big picture description of Nebuchadnezzar's theft of the temple artifacts, and Ezra 1:9-11 for the detailed inventory of items the captives brought back with them...and then says that "together, these texts show that the Lord is in control."

Any thoughts about that? What is God in control of?

Himself! His design laws.

This quote from *Prophets and Kings* is also in Sunday's lesson...who does this author say is in control?

"The history of nations speaks to us today. To every nation and to every individual God has assigned a place in His great plan. Today men and nations are being tested by the plummet in the hand of Him who makes no mistake. ***All are by their own choice deciding their destiny***, and God is overruling all for the accomplishment of His purposes." (536)

What about Daniel 5 that tells the story of Belshazzar's feast and the writing on the wall...is everyone familiar with that story?

The lesson asks what these texts teach us about the judgment upon Belshazzar...and in the teacher's quarterly it says,

"The listing of the vessels from the temple [the ones being brought back from Babylon] brings us back to the banquet of Belshazzar, who personally offends God by using these sacred items for his feast."?

Who was deciding Belshazzar's destiny that night?

How?

What law lens are you looking through?

What did we just discuss about Satan opposing God's purpose and plan at every juncture throughout the Old Testament?

TUESDAY

Where Are the Priests?

The lesson states, "And one of the big problems was that, despite all the wonderful promises of restoration after exile, many of the Jews did not want to return to the land of their ancestors. That is, they preferred to stay in Babylon. Why would that be?" Thoughts?

What instructions were they given at the time they were taken captive?



Multiple times in Jeremiah, they were told: “It will be a long time. Therefore build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce.” Many likely took that instruction to heart and settled in and put down roots, which made it very difficult to leave.” Is it good that some of the Jews stayed in Babylon? (Esther, Mordecai)

Ezra's main concern is for the priestly lineage because he was a priest and they were critical to the proper function of the temple services. After Ezra gathers the people at the river Ahava to travel to Jerusalem, he is saddened because the Levites didn't come. Those who were to teach the people about God and had the greatest role in restoring the people to “walking with God” did not make the decision to return to the land of Israel. So, Ezra acts. He calls nine leaders and a couple men who are described as “men of understanding” (Ezra 8:16) and gives them the task of going to a man named “Iddo” in Casiphia and requesting that he send them Levites, as well as some Nethinims. Not much is known about Iddo or the place of Casiphia, except that it must have been a densely populated site by the Jews.

Ezra then praises God because Iddo sent 38 Levites and 220 Nethinims, who were appointed to serve the Levites and help in the temple. The priestly group responded to the Holy Spirit's prompting and decided to join the assembly at the Ahava River.

“By now, the Jews who remained in the land of exile had been there for almost a century and a half. Excavations of Nippur have brought to light numerous documents that show that many wealthy Jews lived in that region of Mesopotamia during the reign of Artaxerxes I. Hence, it may have been a difficult task for Ezra and his fellow leaders to convince as many to return as did accompany him. These returning colonists could expect only a hard pioneering life in the old homeland, with far fewer comforts than in Babylonia. In view of these considerations it is surprising to find that Ezra succeeded in persuading almost 2,000 families to cast in their lot with their brethren in the old homeland.” [SDA BC vol 3, p 376]

Interestingly, animals were also counted in the list of exiles who returned from Babylonian exile, specifically 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys.

WEDNESDAY

Humbled Before God

Wednesday's lesson contrasts the different approaches by Ezra and Nehemiah when each of them led a group of captives back to Jerusalem. Both knew how dangerous the journey was...Ezra fasted and humbled himself before God, and felt like asking the king for help and protection would have brought dishonor to the Lord and perhaps shown a lack of trust. Nehemiah did have an escort to protect him, and had no problem asking for that help. The pink box says, “Of course, we are to trust in God for



everything. At the same time, too, what are times we do call upon even those not of our faith for help? In many cases, why is that not wrong - but perhaps even appropriate?" Thoughts?

THURSDAY

In the Holy City

What is going on in Nehemiah 11:1-2: "Now the leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem. The rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of every ten of them to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while the remaining nine were to stay in their own towns. The people commended all who volunteered to live in Jerusalem." Why would they have to cast lots to see who would have to live in Jerusalem as opposed to the other cities?



2019 Q4 Ezra and Nehemiah: Lesson 10

Worshipping the Lord

by Karin Covi

My evolution of understanding of this message started in 1981, as I started med school at LLUSM, then through residency and beyond. I attended Graham Maxwell's SS classes weekly for 10 years, hungry for more understanding of this "larger view" of salvation, WDJHTD [that is, "Why Did Jesus Have To Die?"], etc. Often, Graham spent 5 minutes on the sketch at the top of each SS Lesson in the quarterly. What/Why the author might have been thinking. And here I was, chomping at the bit for meat, and we're chatting about a sketch?

We are so blessed to have Dr. Jennings' energies and abilities as a resource (sometimes an open fire hydrant!) of his material which, I believe, is inspired by the Holy Spirit. And If we have time, I'd like to share with you and to hear from you how we're utilizing the resources from C&R: the SS notes, in particular. Lori last week described the website update, along with all the archived material, regularly updated blogs, stuff you can print (aptly named!). Please take advantage of all the brain power from Tim and Dean and James available there!

SABBATH

Paragraph 3 "This week we will look at how they worshiped the Lord during this time and see things that we, who worship the same Lord, can apply to ourselves"

Perennial problem of studying historical material in the Bible: The historical material is **Descriptive** - it describes what happened from centuries ago. What Nehemiah, Ezra did. But as inspired Scripture, we ascribe some **prescriptive** aspects to it.

Which are which: Descriptive vs. prescriptive?
Which do we apply to our own lives?

Just because something happened then doesn't mean that it's something you're supposed to replicate in your life.

In my archived material, I find in Q4L8 and L6:

"Remember: The Bible records real people who did real things and is historically accurate, yet those real lives not only record their history, but are object lessons to a larger reality."
"We believe the Bible records real people who did real things—in other words real historical events. But we also believe that Israel was not only real people doing real things, but what is recorded in Scripture serves as lessons for us, teaching us a larger reality."

Sound familiar?



Overview:

- 605BC - Neb takes Israelites into Babylonian captivity for 70 years
- 535 BC - 1st group leaves Babylon for Jerusalem (Zerubabel)
- 515BC - sanctuary rebuilt ?start services? Not able, because not secure, I would think... defending from surrounding enemy tribes
- 70 years later, after Ezra, then 13 years later Nehemiah come with 2nd and 3rd groups from Babylon:
- 445BC, the wall is rebuilt (in 52 DAYS?!?!?! Say whaat? Wall 9 feet wide... everyone got involved in the building of the wall.)
- Only THEN did worship services begin!

This overview shows that for more than 150 years of no services, no formal worship, no corporate praising of God.

Why not? They thought: How can we? God isn't "here".

Ps 137: 1-4 describes the sentiment of the Babylonian captives:

- 1 By the rivers of Babylon^p we sat and wept^q when we remembered Zion.^r (Zion = Jerusalem)
2 There on the poplars^s we hung our harps,^t
3 for there our captors^u asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded^v songs of joy;
they said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"^w
4 How can we sing the songs of the Lord^x while in a foreign land?

How do we sing when we're in Babylon? We are slaves of foreign kin in foreign land... in their economy, this means their gods are stronger!

Jeremiah (the prophet left behind, living in Judea) sends a letter to those already in Babylon (captured). I can imagine them gathering in town square and read from scroll; we find it in Jeremiah 29:4:

4This is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel [He has NOT lost His power, is NOT a weaker god], says to all those people [Why are they there?] I sent away from Jerusalem as captives to Babylon*: 5"**Build** houses and settle in the land. **Plant** gardens and eat the food they grow. 6Get **married** and have sons and daughters. Find wives for your sons, and let your daughters be married so they also may have sons and daughters. Have many children in Babylon; don't become fewer in number. 7Also do good things for the city where I sent you as captives. Pray to the Lord for the city where you are living, because if good things happen in the city, good things will happen to you also." 8The Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: "Don't let the prophets among you and the people who do magic fool you. Don't listen to their dreams. 9They are prophesying lies to you, saying that their message is from me. But I did not send them," says the Lord.



10 This is what the Lord says: “Babylon will be powerful for seventy years. After that time I will come to you, and I will keep my promise to bring you back to Jerusalem. 11 **I say this because I know what I am planning for you,” says the Lord. “I have good plans for you, not plans to hurt you. I will give you hope and a good future.** 12 Then you will call my name. You will come to me and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will search for me. And when you search for me with all your heart, you will find me! 14 I will let you find me,” says the Lord. “And I will bring you back from your captivity. I forced you to leave this place, but I will gather you from all the nations, from the places I have sent you as captives,” says the Lord. “And I will bring you back to this place.”

*Why are they in Babylon? Everyone knows why, because Nebuchadnezzar took them there.... No? Jeremiah says, No, the God of the Covenant sent you there.

Why? They did not live up to the covenant!

See Deut. 28 blessing and curses - if you do not obey, you'll go into captivity, lose the promised land. God had redeemed them from slavery in Egypt, so they are an alternative community. But they forgot it, turned religion into exclusive club, forgetting about what it's all about; they oppressed widows and orphans, forgot God. They were not faithful to covenant! [keep reading v. 5ff - 11]

Why are they in Babylon? v. 11: Because I have a plan. Not to be evil, but to give you a future and a hope... AND, I want the Babylonians to be INCLUDED in my kingdom! Because they are my people, as well. (They just don't know it yet!) And you are going to be the tools in bringing them.

Back to this week's lesson: Under Ezra and Nehemiah, the Lord is good, and the people are singing - why now? What has changed? Restored back to Holy City!

They had obeyed Jeremiah's instructions to "build/plant/get married" - in Babylon! For 70 years, meaning they're gonna live and some of you are gonna die in Babylon.

Ah, the people thought, but with no temple? No sacrifices? Then, no worship, no singing. No, Jeremiah says, you can worship in Babylon, as well as in Jerusalem!

God is trying to broaden their horizons. God is not local, only residing in Jerusalem. God is the God of the Babylonians as much as Israelites; He is not restricted to one locale

Ultimately, Christ says in Matt 12: "Where 2 or 3 are gathered in My name, I AM in their midst". The Most Holy Place is now everywhere where the community gets together around Jesus, following Jesus' steps (Matt 25):

- feeding those who are hungry, giving drink, visiting those in shackles,
- in ministry of helping people wherever they are!



SUNDAY

Singing the Songs of the Lord

The singers and musicians were a special class of Levites, professionals - paid for their services

Last half of last paragraph:

What was the purpose of such a professional organization? It served to develop talent and the vision of excellence in worship. Excellence must always be a goal in worship. Praises must come from the heart and be expressed in the best way so that people will be spiritually uplifted. One can assume that those musicians and singers who served in the temple were carefully selected to lead the worship service.

Hamilton Community Church: 1991. Charter member of this new-fangled concept to target "seekers" and "burnt out SDAs" and not simply other Christians in other denominations.

I was "Worship Leader" for 5 years: developed Themes, created programming, coordination of pastor's sermon with drama, music, Scripture reading; all orchestrated and choreographed; then reviewed with team/pastor for effectiveness between/after services to continuously improve effectiveness of message. Goal was excellence. (Unpaid, to be sure.)

OT model: people were groomed (and paid!) to become the quality through which others might be blessed.

Today's challenge: people wanting to participate in worship service who are not "up to par", and thus a distraction to the listeners/worshippers.

Which one of your favorite songs were they singing?
Amazing Grace? How Great Thou Art? Side by Side?

Longest book of the Bible: filled with hymns! Psalms

Music is 100% culture! Each generation needs to supply their own music

Skipping to Tuesday's Lesson to keep with the topic of music and singing: Two Large Thanksgiving Choirs

Next is a description of responsive singing: praising and giving thanks.

Neh 12:24 - 43 (Class reading) I promise I edited out the funky names, but kept the sentiment of the text!

Nehemiah Dedicates the City Wall

²⁷ When the city wall of Jerusalem was dedicated, the Levites were brought in from wherever they were living, so that they could join in celebrating the dedication with songs of thanksgiving and with the music of cymbals and harps. ²⁸ The Levite families of singers



gathered from the area where they had settled around Jerusalem... ³⁰ The priests and the Levites performed ritual purification for themselves, the people, the gates, and the city wall.

³¹ I assembled the leaders of Judah on top of the wall and put them in charge of two large groups to march around the city, giving thanks to God.

The first group went to the right on top of the wall... The following priests, blowing trumpets, marched next...—all of whom carried musical instruments of the kind played by King David, the man of God. Ezra the scholar led this group in the procession. ³⁷ At the Fountain Gate they went up the steps that led to David's City, past David's palace, and back to the wall at the Water Gate, on the east side of the city.

³⁸ The other group of those who gave thanks went to the left along the top of the wall, and I followed with half of the people... We ended our march near the gate to the Temple.

⁴⁰ So both the groups that were giving thanks to God reached the Temple area.

In addition to the leaders who were with me, ⁴¹ my group included the following priests, blowing trumpets...; The singers... sang at the top of their voices.

⁴³ That day many sacrifices were offered, and the people were full of joy because God had made them very happy. The women and the children joined in the celebration, and the noise they all made could be heard for miles.

- a. Nehemiah 12:31 The two groups started somewhere on the southwestern part of the city wall and went in opposite directions until they met in front of the Temple in the northeastern part of the city.
- b. Nehemiah 12:39 Ephraim Gate, Jeshanah Gate; or Ephraim Gate (also called the Old Gate). (GNT)

What are we supposed to learn from this historic account? The temple is rebuilt, worship (sacrifices, prayer, singing, etc) has begun. Joy abounds.

Remember: **it is through these gates, the Messiah is going to come! One day, the glory of THIS temple is going to be greater than the glory of Solomon's temple!**

The people caught the vision...

MONDAY

Purification

Neh 12:20 The priests and the Levites performed ritual purification for themselves, the people, the gates, and the city wall.

How do you purify a wall? Why feel a need to purify the wall and gates, above and beyond the people/themselves?



After 160 years, the people had to relearn laws, history; they realized how far they had gone astray. Babylonian excursion was a result of their forefathers straying from truth. They do NOT want to repeat history, causing God to have to exile us. So they consecrate everything to God... demonstrating that they were serious.

What purification rites do we have now? Baptism; footwashing, the wine in the communion service

Sacrifice of killing a lamb (OT) vs. crushing a grape (wine), footwashing (NT)

Why do we need "purification" (we might use "dedication"?) rites? To commemorate a new chapter? Think Design Law! In this case, the 2nd law of thermodynamics: Entropy; all things tend towards DISorder. Unless you invest in a relationship, it's not going to survive.

God needs to be in the center, constantly pumping the energy into the system in order to defeat entropy.

How do you have a sense of dedication which outwardly expresses an inner reality? Attitude of gratitude, mindfulness, intentionally being aware; given a different perspective, what might seem a negative experience, is not bad -- actually has brought season of growth, of maturity.

God is not the "primary consumer" of our worship; He doesn't need us to tell Him how wonderful He is!

Worship is the intentional turning of the mind to God and seeing and ascribing to God all of the greatness and goodness and glory that belongs to Him. Worship is giving God the place that rightfully belongs to Him. Worship is an atmosphere in which you can learn to live. "I have set the Lord always before me." (Psalm 16:8)

Design law: The law of worship: We are changed neurobiologically and characterologically to become like which we admire, worship, and spend time watching and assimilating.

In contradistinction, a legalist/imposed law perspective: we are changed by trying harder or by divine fiat/decreed

And we, whose minds are not veiled by confusion, and who reveal the truth about the Lord's glorious character, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory which comes from the Lord and is applied in us by the Spirit. 2Cor 3:18 (Rem)

One way of describing worship is to say that it is "orientation" or "reorientation," because so many things in life demand our attention, many of which can be quite trivial. If there is nothing to "reorient" us, we may waste a lot of energy and enthusiasm on them, though their significance and impact on our lives and the community is minimal. (Reminds me of what we're learning in this class about Sabbath:



"Remember the Sabbath day keeping yourself holy" or,
"Remember the Sabbath day in order to stay holy."

"The first duty of all created beings is worship. All else flows from our worship, from who God is. The way you worship depends on your picture of God. Worship is **transformation through adoration.**" (Graham Kendrick) "Worship is responding to all that God is with all that we are."

Bottom of Monday's lesson:

"...what greater revelation of God's character can we have than seeing Jesus on the cross, bearing the punishment for our sins so we don't have to bear that punishment ourselves?"

Does anyone else bristle when they read this?

Of course, I agree that the cross is the greatest revelation of God character! But honestly, when I read this, I felt myself getting stuck: HOW does someone bear a punishment for someone else? How would heavenly society work if its inhabitants simply had had someone else (even Christ!) simply "bear the punishment" for their sins?

I feel mired back in this legal/penal view. Can you help me make sense of this?

(This is why I'm planning on going to Texas to develop my ability to put on a new pair of glasses, a new perspective on a very old subject.)

In my archived excerpts, I find this – from a document from C&R ministry giving a position on various theological issues:

Punishment for Sin: Punishment is the natural consequence that unremedied sin brings upon the sinner in this life and in the Final Judgment, where each person suffers in the end according to his deeds. Christ, in our place, experienced this **mental agony** (punishment) for sin during the fractured unity with His Father ("... why have you forsaken Me?"), prior to His actual death, when He "became sin who knew no sin."

My response: Christ experienced separation from the Father as one with unremedied sin (selfishness!). Not because the law demanded, but because it showed that even facing certain extinction, Christ did not use His power to save Himself -- He demonstrated perfect Love, emanating from His character which was developed in his humanity.

And from another archived excerpt: What does it mean he bore the **guilt and shame**? Christ bore our guilt and shame—i.e. He was not guilty and He was not ashamed:

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
Heb 12:2



Christ scorned or despised the shame of the Cross because He knew who He was and that the shame of the experience was actually upon those who rejected and crucified Him, and not on Him. He said, “Father forgive them they don’t know what they are doing...” they think they are shaming me – but it is actually shame on them.

Christ, when he was lifted up — drew all unto Himself, thus He knew His act was an act of supreme glory and not an act of shame.

THURSDAY

The Priests and Levites as Part of the Worship

First paragraph: “The intercession of Christ in man’s behalf in the sanctuary above **is as essential** to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven. We must by faith enter within the veil, ‘whither the forerunner is for us entered.’ Hebrews 6:20.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 489

As someone who has been asking the question, "Why did Jesus have to die" since she was 8 years old, this is BIG! If Christ's intercession in the heavenly sanctuary is "**as essential**" as the cross, I oughta get brushed up on what is going on up there!

How? Review Heavenly Sanctuary document?

In Summary:

The specifications for worship in the Old Testament are quite unlike the way we worship today. This shows that the specifics are not the most important aspect, but rather it is the intentions and the desire to praise God that should be uppermost when we worship. Many arguments have centered on music, form of service, the right posture for prayer etc.

Looking at what happened in the Old Testament, such as here in Ezra and Nehemiah, should help us not to be dogmatic about worship style. As God repeatedly makes clear, he is looking for the attitude of mind and sincerity, for conviction and dedication, far more than the details.

That said there were rituals to be observed that God himself had instituted, as teaching mechanisms for a people very different to us in their background and experience. In fact God went into great detail as to what needed to be done, so that the worshipers could learn lessons. Tragically it all degenerated into formalism and hypocrisy, much to God’s grief and that of the later prophets.

So what do we learn about how to worship today? Much of the answers will relate to our picture of God, and what we think he “wants” from us. All too often worship is really seen in a similar way as those pagan rituals that sought to appease their deity, to make sure he/she was not offended in any way, and that the requirements of the divine-human contract has been properly observed. So when you look at such practices it’s all about serving a capricious, often malevolent god who takes delight in causing suffering.



We need to take any trace of these ideas out of our worship. We do indeed come to church to worship, but going through the service without thought is not worship.

Additionally, worship is not just a church service. We can worship in our homes when we talk, read the Bible, and sing—and when we're doing the washing-up if our minds are tuned towards God. Yes, even this SS discussion we're having right now can be identified as worship as our minds engage with God, as we think of spiritual things and how we relate to our loving Lord.

Most of all our whole lives can be worship, as we put God first and foremost in our daily experience, thinking of all he does and the kind of being he is. By looking at Jesus we see the truth of God, and the way he wins us back to love and trust, to be healed from the damage sin has caused. This too is worship, because we are recognizing the value of God, "worth-ship," which is the basis for the word worship.



2019 Q4 Ezra and Nehemiah: Lesson 11

Backslidden People

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

Read memory text: “And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should go and guard the gates, to sanctify the Sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Your mercy!” Neh 13:22 NKJV

In Bible symbolism, who do the Levites represent? The priesthood of believers.

What would cleansing themselves represent? The transformation of character and healing of heart when we are washed by the Holy Spirit.

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. Titus 3:4-7 NIV84

What do you hear in this passage? What is the washing of rebirth by the Holy Spirit?

From *The Remedy*:

But when our God and Savior appeared with the kindness and love of God,⁵ he healed us — he procured the Remedy. We could not do it ourselves, neither have we contributed anything to the cure. He did it because of his compassion. He heals us through the work of the Holy Spirit who cleanses our hearts and minds⁶ by taking what Christ achieved and generously reproducing it into us,⁷ so that — having been regenerated to be right in heart by the Remedy Christ achieved — we actually receive eternal life.

Consider this description of what the Holy Spirit does, from the book *The Desire of Ages*:

The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father **for the exaltation of His people**. The Spirit was to be given as a **regenerating agent**, and **without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail**. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead**, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. **It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature.** Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all



hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.
DA 671.2

Do you see why Satan attacks the idea of the Trinity and puts forth arguments that there is no Holy Spirit?

- Satan opposed the Father in heaven, trying to make it appear the Father was untrustworthy by attacking the position of Jesus. But He failed in His attack against the Father and was cast out of heaven.
- Satan deceived humankind and then tried to obstruct Jesus from coming as our Messiah, and when that didn't work and Jesus was born to Mary Satan worked to try and prevent Jesus from developing a perfect sinless humanity—but that failed.
- Now Satan works to oppose the third member of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit to get people to deny His existence and to prevent the Holy Spirit from applying the victory of Christ into the hearts of humans.

I believe this is one of the great purposes of Islam—its core teaching is to deny the Trinity and thus to misrepresent the character of God as authoritarian and legal, a rules-oriented, work-demanding god that uses his power to inflict punishment on the wicked.

Love is outward moving, other-centered and giving. This is how love functions. The minimum number for truly other-centered love is three. In a two-party relationship one can have self-centered worship and reinforcement of narcissism. But, with three, truly other-centered self-sacrificial love is required.

And we see this in how the Godhead functions. The Father gives His power and authority to Jesus who uses it to reveal love and give all the glory back to the Father and the Spirit works to glorify the work of the Son bringing greater glory to the Father.

The God that Jesus reveals is love. And true Christians are those who love like God loves, we love all people from all cultures and all races. But loving all people means we DON'T collude with their destruction. We speak the truth in love and we make it clear love doesn't change reality.

- Love for a smoker doesn't make smoking healthy—the laws of health are being violated and loving that person doesn't change the damaging results
- Love for a person who has multiple sexual partners doesn't make them mature, their characters develop, or them to avoid the destructive results—the law of love as well as health are being violated and loving them doesn't change the damaging results
- Love for people who worship false gods doesn't make their minds and hearts grow into godliness—the law of worship is being violated and loving them doesn't change the damaging results



So, first point is that the Levites are to cleanse themselves by surrendering to God for the washing of their hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit, which means the truth washing away lies and love washing away selfishness and we partake of the divine nature and character of Christ.

What is it to guard the gates? Gates represent entry points—Jesus is the gate into the sheep pen, the way of life. Guarding the gates represents guarding the truth about God as revealed throughout all history, in Scripture, in science and nature, and in experiences of life. We are to guard the truth, the gates to keep open the way into the city for all who want to enter via Christ.

What does sanctify the Sabbath represent? It is stated in other versions as keeping the Sabbath holy. What does this mean?

Who made the Sabbath holy? Can we change that? Can we do anything to make it more holy? Can we do anything to make it less holy? So does our conduct in relation to the Sabbath do anything to the Sabbath? Does it have any impact on us?

What is the purpose of the Sabbath? It was made for man—for what purpose? Is it related to our holiness, to God making us holy?

“You must **observe** my Sabbaths. This will be a **sign** between me and you for the generations to come, **so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy.**” Exodus 31:13 NIV84

And what does it mean to be holy?

Would holiness be purity or unity with God? And would such purity or unity with God mean we are living in harmony with all His laws?

And what kind of laws are God’s laws? Design laws and thus, what is the result of having God’s laws written on our heart and living in harmony with them? Healthiness, mentally, physically, relationally, spiritually.

Is this possible without trust in God? And is trust something we must exercise? Would the Sabbath be a gift from God not only for our rest, our time to decompress, rejuvenate from the stresses of the world, but a time to exercise trust in God—trusting Him with our lives, our work, or businesses etc. while we rest? Would it be a time to celebrate, to give thanks, to rejoice in the Lord?

Is the Sabbath also evidence of God’s character of love, how He is Creator who built all things to operate upon design law—He presents truth, in love and leaves us free? And if we are true Sabbath keepers do we live God’s principles only one day in seven or all week long?

So, those who are the priesthood of believers are to be cleansed in heart and mind by the Holy Spirit, guard the avenues or gates of truth leading people back to the knowledge of God as revealed by Jesus, and keep themselves holy by trusting God with their entire lives, resting in Him on Sabbath and living out the principles which the Sabbath embodies (truth, love and freedom) all week long.



SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Nehemiah 13 begins with concern...” This is an excellent point and needs to be emphasized—God is not a racist nor does he give preference to people based on race, color of skin, or genetics—it is all about character. It is all about reality—separating lies from truth, destructive elements from healing elements, disease from health. Therefore, any person from any genetic background who would embrace the truth about God and is willing to be converted in heart to live God’s principles is welcomed into God’s kingdom and was welcomed into ancient Israel.

But those who refused God and instead chose to keep their own systems and rules and methods and gods were not welcomed into Israel and are not welcomed into God’s kingdom—why not. Because God’s kingdom is built on design law and those who refuse it cannot live there.

The lesson describes corruption in leadership and how the High Priest allowed one of the enemies of Israel to have a room in the Temple as permanent residence.

What is the object lesson for us today?

What is the core difference between God’s government and the governments of the world? God’s law and what type of law is God’s law? Design law but the laws of human governments are imposed rules.

What might it look like to let the leaders of the world into the church? Might it look like accepting the view that God’s laws work like human laws and the church begins to present God as the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death?

The lesson just pointed out that the Israelites were to separate from idolaters—what makes one an idolater?

One of the founders of the SDA church wrote:

Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshipping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshipping the true God. {FLB 59.8}

Could Christianity be suffering because many of its leaders have accepted false attributes of God and are leading people to worship a concept of God that is no different than Baal?

And we are to be the Levites of God today, who are cleansed in heart and mind from the lies about God and the fear-driven self-centered motives, build the walls of protection by reestablishing the truth



about God's design laws, guard the gates of truth of God's character as revealed by Jesus, and promote the truth about the Sabbath as a gift from God to assist in His restoring us to holiness.

Read bottom pink section, "Why do God's people..." Why do so many allow themselves to be led into false belief systems?

- Could we have a problem with people not thinking for themselves?
- Could we have a problem with people being indoctrinated into systems of belief, but without knowing why they are to believe it?
- Could we have a problem with people trusting others to do their thinking for them?
- Could we have a problem with fear motivating beliefs?
- Could we have a problem with authoritarianism—believing people in positions of authority have the right to tell us what to believe?
- Could we have a problem with group-think, going along with the crowd?

What is the solution? Romans 14:5 "let every person be fully persuaded in their own mind." Heb 5:14 the mature are those who have developed by practice the ability to discern right from wrong.

MONDAY

The lesson points out that people stopped giving tithes and offerings to support the Temple. Why?

Read second paragraph, "Not only had the temple..." What is the reason cited here that the people stopped giving tithes and offerings?

Was it because the people didn't want to support God's cause?

Was it because those who received the money were misusing it and not applying it to God's cause?

Were the people wrong for not giving their money to those who would misuse it?

What about today? Should people blindly give their tithes and offerings or should they consider to whom they are giving it and how it is being used?

Read the third paragraph, "It is fascinating..." What is the object lesson application? Could it suggest that Christians might find themselves in churches in which leadership has joined with the teachings of the world, accepting the lie that God's law is like human law, and thereby teaching lies about God and obstructing God's plan to cleanse the true Temple, the Spirit temple from sinfulness?

And could it mean that from the membership people will need to arise and follow God and not wait for their church leaders to embrace the truth because many of them have rejected the truth?

TUESDAY

Read the third paragraph, "When God calls..." Is it wrong to return the tithe to the Lord? Absolutely not!



But could the reason we return the tithe to the Lord have a different impact upon us?

If we return tithe to the Lord because He has commanded it and if we don't He will punish us—what level of development is this and what impact does it have upon us?

Does God want us to function like mindless slaves, God commanded it we do it without thinking or out of fear of punishment?

Is the tithe a heavenly tax, no different than how human governments work?

No! God does not *need* our money. He is Creator, Jesus had Peter get money out of a fish's mouth.

Then, why does God claim a tenth of our increase? What is going on?

It is for our relationship with God, our trust in Him, an opportunity not to give thanks—that is a thank offering—it is an opportunity for each of us to exercise our integrity, loyalty, honesty, trustworthiness in returning to God what is God's and not keeping it for ourselves.

What happens within us when we are honest, loyal, faithful? Conversely, what happens within us when we lie, cheat, steal or defraud?

If you are in a business with someone who you agreed receives 10% of the profits, what happens within you when you don't give them their 10%?

Is giving them their 10% the same as giving them a gift?

Something different happens when giving tithe, which is returning to God that which is His than when we give offerings.

Thus, God has provided a means for our active participation not only in supporting the work of spreading the gospel, but simultaneously in cooperating with Him for healing our hearts and maturing our characters.

When we give thank offerings our sense of our dependence upon God, our gratitude, our appreciation, admiration and love for God all grow as we exercise our thanks in giving freely to Him

But when we return the tithe we exercise our loyalty, our integrity, our honesty and we grow more faithful in character and more honest in heart.

For what is the tithe to be used? For the work of God—some would say in spreading the gospel.

One of the founders of the SDA church wrote:



“There are ministers' wives--Sisters Starr, Haskell, Wilson, and Robinson--who have been devoted, earnest, whole-souled workers, giving Bible readings and praying with families, helping along by personal efforts just as successfully as their husbands. These women give their whole time, and are told that they receive nothing for their labors because their husbands receive wages. I tell them to go forward and all such decisions will be revised. The Word says, "The labourer is worthy of his hire." Luke 10:7. **When any such decision as this is made, I will, in the name of the Lord, protest. I will feel it my duty to create a fund from my tithe money to pay these women who are accomplishing just as essential work as the ministers are doing, and this tithe I will reserve for work in the same line as that of the ministers, hunting for souls, fishing for souls.**{DG 106.1}

Read last paragraph, “Moreover, we give tithe...” Are we to trust God? Absolutely!

Does God want us to trust without evidence? No, but what is the evidence about that establishes our trust? It is about God, His existence, His goodness, His trustworthiness. God has provided abundant evidence that He is trustworthy, so our trust in God is not without evidence, but upon it.

However, could there be specific times or circumstances where we don't fully understand a situation, yet we trust God in applying His methods and living out His purposes? Yes!

Does this mean God doesn't want us to understand and we should inquire for reasons? No! We should constantly be seeking to understand all of God's instructions and directions. God wants us to understand. He does not want us to live like unthinking slaves or children who have no comprehension of reality.

But while we are growing up into the full stature of children of God, there will be times we are to trust God without fully understanding why.

But, I believe there is enough truth revealed for us to understand at least some of the reasons why God established tithing so that we don't merely do this because of a rule or merely because God said so.

What about the idea that God is in control?

What do you say to a victim of a crime, or a person molested as a child, when someone tells them “God is in control”?

Of what is God in control?

The key to understanding the saying “God is in control,” as well as essentially all theological questions, is how one understands God's law. If one views God's law functioning like the laws that humans make up — imposed rules requiring the ruling authority to impose punishments — then people view God as making everything happen, which inevitably leads them to form wrong theology. A variety of different errors are formed, such as the teaching that when tragedies occur, it is God who



is bringing the pain — such as God controlling the molester who abuses people, or God directing the hurricanes, earthquakes, or God hardening the hearts of certain people.

The truth is realized when we accept that God is Creator and His laws are the protocols upon which reality is built to operate, such as the laws of physics, law of love, truth, worship, liberty, exertion, laws of health, the moral laws, and so many more. It is how reality works.

Thus, **God is in control of what God controls — and God controls Himself and all His laws.** He sustains reality; He keeps the universe running upon the protocols and laws He established. And one of those laws is the law of liberty, which grants real freedom to sentient beings. Why? Because love only exists in an atmosphere of freedom.

This is how God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 4:21; 7:3) yet Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Exodus 8:15, 32). How did God harden Pharaoh's heart? By presenting the truth and leaving Pharaoh free to accept or reject it. The accepting or rejecting causes the end result — healing or hardening. The act of choosing to accept or reject truth; to embrace love or embrace selfishness; to steal, lie, cheat, or be honest, truthful and loyal, changes the person who makes the choice. Without the truth presented and the freedom to reject it, Pharaoh's heart would not have become as hardened. Thus, God hardened Pharaoh's heart through the laws of truth and freedom; He presented truth and left the ruler free. God controlled His laws, but Pharaoh exercised his own will and controlled his own choice, and in choosing to reject the truth, he hardened his own heart. This is how reality works and how God is in control.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "It is not easy..." Do you agree or disagree?

First I agree it is often difficult to stand up for truth when one is in the minority. But what about the idea that "no one was to do any work" on the Sabbath?

What about what Jesus said in Matthew 12:5:

Or haven't you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent? NIV84

Is it true all work is forbidden on Sabbath?

Or is it work for self, work for gain, rather than merely work? For instance, work for benefit of others without advancing self is that okay on Sabbath?

How is the Sabbath understood as design law? First, it was made or constructed as a day of rest, not legislated as a day of rest, so it represents God's design laws, methods, principles.



Second, Sabbath rest is healthy for people, it is time for the mind to decompress, to unwind, to let go of the cares of the world. It is opportunity to exercise trust in God, which strengthens our trust in God. It is opportunity to change the focus from the cares and problems of the world to the larger realities, which keeps a person in balance, guards against:

- burnout
- discouragement
- deception
- self-centeredness and pride
- confusion
- doubt

but only if Sabbath is not practiced from a human law perspective, i.e. not done from threat of punishment. The Sabbath must be a delight, which means a day of freedom.

If it is kept as a mere obligation, a day of restriction, a day of fear of punishment, then it incites rebellion in the heart and destroys individuality. Such an approach is infecting the Sabbath with Satan's lie about God's law.

So, is it primarily about the activity on Sabbath or the reason for doing the activity?

What about hiring others on Sabbath?

EGW one of the founders of the SDA church, wrote:

Yesterday (Sabbath) morning, Willie spoke to the church in Ashfield. At 3 p.m. we hired a horse and carriage to take me to Newtown, four miles from Ashfield. We met in a small hall upstairs where a goodly number were assembled. I spoke to them on the prayer of Daniel, his contrition of soul, and his deep sorrow as he witnessed the desolation of Jerusalem. {18MR 14.2}

THURSDAY

The lesson points out that Nehemiah reminded them that their forefathers broke trust with God and it quotes "Did not our God bring all this evil upon us?"

What does this mean? Does God bring evil?

There is a debate amongst Christians as to whether God uses His power to bring the first death upon some, the sleep death, or whether all such accounts are merely the Bible writers attributing to God what Satan or evil people do.

This is a false argument because it is not an either or, it is both. This is where one must move away from claims, statements, proclamations to actual historical evidence.



- Sometimes in Scripture Satan acts to cause harm or first death and it is attributed to God: “The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!” Job 1:16 NIV84
- Sometimes evil people do the act and it is attributed to God: “Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance, and did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.” 1Chron 10:13,14 NIV84
- Sometimes God acted and it was rightly attributed to God: Platoons that came to arrest Elijah:

Elijah answered the captain, “If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!” Then fire fell from heaven and consumed the captain and his men.

¹¹ At this the king sent to Elijah another captain with his fifty men. The captain said to him, “Man of God, this is what the king says, ‘Come down at once!’ ”

¹² “If I am a man of God,” Elijah replied, “may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!” Then the fire of God fell from heaven and consumed him and his fifty men.

¹³ So the king sent a third captain with his fifty men. This third captain went up and fell on his knees before Elijah. “Man of God,” he begged, “please have respect for my life and the lives of these fifty men, your servants! ¹⁴ See, fire has fallen from heaven and consumed the first two captains and all their men. But now have respect for my life!”

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD said to Elijah, “Go down with him; do not be afraid of him.” So Elijah got up and went down with him to the king. (2Kings 1:10-15)

- And then other times it was God removing His protection and allowing nature or natural results of others to take their course, such as the scorpions and snakes in the desert, or when the Babylonians took them captive.

Which situation would apply to Nehemiah’s reference to their sins caused God to bring the evil upon them?

In the story of Ezra and Nehemiah, what is the overriding theme or background?

It is the plan of salvation—humanity is in sin, God promised the Messiah, Satan is working to obstruct the plan of God, God is working to keep open avenue for Messiah.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Questions: If you have questions please email them either at requests@comeandreason.com or topics@comeandreason.com. If you post on Facebook it is likely they will not be answered as I often miss questions posted on Facebook.

The New Paradigm about the Heavenly Sanctuary and Investigative Judgment Has been Changed: Thanks to your feedback I have rewritten portions of this document making it friendlier and less likely to cause offense. The new title is *The Heavenly Sanctuary and Investigative Judgment for the Modern World*. It has a new cover, new introduction, the call to action section has been removed and other edits to clarify potential misunderstandings have been made throughout. It is already up on our website and print versions will be available November 14. **Please throw away any of the first edition you may still have in your possession and use this version going forward.**

PODCAST: Come and Reason with Dr. Tim Jennings weekly Podcast is now broadcasting, please follow us.

The Remedy Psalms is complete and online and will soon be updated to the free app.

REASONETTES: Recently I began drawing cartoons and have started a new section on our website entitled *Reasonettes*. They are illustrations designed to make a point inviting you to think and reason about an idea or issue. Be sure to visit our website or Facebook page each Tuesday for a new cartoon. I hope you enjoy them.

January 17-19, 2020: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly. Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport). See events.comeandreason.com for more details and to sign up.

March 27,28, 2020: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at an AACC River Conference at Plano, TX. More info at <http://theriverconference.com/>

April 17,18, 2020: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Lakewood SDA church in Lakewood OH.



2019 Q4 Ezra and Nehemiah: Lesson 12

Dealing with Bad Decisions

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

Before we get into this week's lesson, I want to follow up from last week's lesson and address an issue in Thursday's lesson because recently I have received several emails concerned with my position on God's action in the OT to keep open avenue for the Messiah.

There is the view that God never uses His power to put people to sleep in the grave, i.e. first death. That all occasions in the Bible are always God withdrawing when we insist and the devil or evil people doing the harm. Let's examine this in light of Nehemiah's statement.

THURSDAY From lesson 11

The lesson points out that Nehemiah reminded them that their forefathers broke trust with God and states, "Did not our God bring all this evil upon us?"

Does God bring evil? Absolutely Not! God never brings evil.

So what can this statement mean?

- People attributing to God what God permits but doesn't actively prevent
- People misunderstanding a therapeutic action, like discipline of a parent, as evil when it is redemptive or protective

Let's examine some cases:

The point of biggest controversy amongst Christians is when the action result in the death of people.

The argument goes that God will never use His power to cause death—that death only and always comes from breaking God's law, from beings who are sinful—i.e. Satan and evil people.

And, the confusion comes because the Bible has a *human* and a *divine* definition for death.

The human definition for death is what all of us call death and what we have grieved when our loved ones have died. This, however, is not what God calls death. God, including Jesus when on earth, did not refer to this as death, but called this sleep.

In fact, Jesus said that those who believe in Him will never die—millions sleep in the grave but they don't die. This sleep death, what we called death, is also known as the first death, the death from which there is a resurrection.



What God calls death is the second death, the eternal death, the death from which there is no resurrection.

How many people in history have died the second death—the death from which there is no resurrection? None—if none have died, then how can we say God kills? We say it because we use the human definition for death and thus we misrepresent God as killing, when God does not kill. God is the source of life and death does not come out from Him.

There is an error on both sides of this question. On the one side, failing to understanding the difference between first and second death, people look at the OT and teach God kills and thus God is the inflictor of pain, suffering and death as punishment for sin on those who disobey.

Those who have come to know God's character of love have rightly rejected the idea that God is the source of death, but having not made the distinction between first death of sleep and second death, which is what God calls death, they fall into the opposite error teaching that God never in history used His power to put people into sleep mode, the first death.

This is where one must move away from claims, statements, proclamations to actual historical evidence. When it comes to the first death, sleep death, there are many causes. Natural causes—disease and old age with no specific person inflicting this, the body just wears out. There are accidents, falls, injuries, again without a specific infliction of death, just the result of our bodies being subject to damage and first-death.

But there are many examples in Scripture of the first death being brought not by natural causes but by other means. Let's examine those:

- Sometimes in Scripture Satan acts to cause harm or first death and it is attributed to God: "The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" Job 1:16 NIV84
- Sometimes evil people do the act and it is attributed to God: "Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance, and did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse." 1Chron 10:13,14 NIV84
- Sometimes God acted and it was rightly attributed to God: Platoons that came to arrest Elijah: Elijah answered the captain, "If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!" Then fire fell from heaven and consumed the captain and his men.

¹¹ At this the king sent to Elijah another captain with his fifty men. The captain said to him, "Man of God, this is what the king says, 'Come down at once!'"

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¹³ So the king sent a third captain with his fifty men. This third captain went up and fell on his knees before Elijah. "Man of God," he begged, "please have respect for my life



and the lives of these fifty men, your servants! ¹⁴ See, fire has fallen from heaven and consumed the first two captains and all their men. But now have respect for my life!”

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD said to Elijah, “Go down with him; do not be afraid of him.” So Elijah got up and went down with him to the king. (2Kings 1:10-15)

- And then other times it was God removing His protection and allowing nature or natural results of others to take their course, such as the scorpions and snakes in the desert, or when the Babylonians took them captive.

So, we find in Scripture that some of the things attributed to God are not done by God. But sometimes, God did act to put people to sleep in the first death.

It is not reasonable to believe that Satan—after years of trying to silence Elijah in order to have Baal worship totally eradicate the truth about God—would destroy the platoons sent by Ahab to arrest Elijah. It is also unreasonable to suggest that God would rely upon Satan to endorse Elijah as a man of God by sending fire from heaven when Elijah called upon it as proof that he spoke for God.

I also reject the view that God was punishing people for sin, as punishment for sin is eternal death; and since these were all sleep deaths they cannot be the punishment for sin.

Therefore, we must have another explanation—and that explanation is found in understanding the larger context: the great controversy, God’s design law, and what God was actually working to accomplish. In other words, how reality works. In this context, we discover that God has always been working to heal and to save.

Once Adam sinned, the human race could not be saved without Jesus coming. The Messiah was promised in Genesis chapter 3 when the serpent was told that Eve’s seed would crush his head. Thus, the Old Testament points directly to the larger battle between good and evil, with God working to bring the Messiah, while Satan would be working to obstruct it.

If Satan could have gotten every person on earth to harden their heart against God, there would have been no one through whom Jesus could be born in order to save the human race. God would not have Jesus born to a woman like Jezebel or force any woman against her will to be the mother of Jesus. Thus, God needed a righteous woman who would be willing to be the mother of Jesus. At the time of the flood, there was only one righteous man and his family left on the earth. All the others living on earth at that time had hardened their hearts. Wouldn’t love act to keep open an avenue for Messiah in order to save the species? Remember, not kill—rather, put people to sleep and wake them up later to finish out their lives. This is exactly what love did.

Some still don’t like this and argue:

Thus to rely on the argument that God was compelled to “put to sleep,” often through violence, millions of evil people at the flood or at other times in order to prevent Satan from snuffing out



possibility of the Messiah landing on earth, is to agree with Satan that love is not really enough to overcome evil so there must be times when force has to be used.

But there is one major piece of data missing from their assessment—the condition of humankind after Adam sinned. After Adam sinned, love *could not win* without Jesus. *Once Adam sinned, love could NOT overcome evil in human beings WITHOUT Jesus.* In fact, Jesus was the means for God to restore His character of love into the human species.

One of the founders of the SDA church wrote:

The Lord says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." The enmity does not exist as a natural fact. **As soon as Adam sinned, he was in harmony with the first great apostate, and at war with God;** and if God had not interfered in man's behalf, Satan and man would have formed a confederacy against heaven, and carried on united opposition against the God of hosts. **There is no natural enmity between evil angels and evil men; both are evil through transgression of the law of God,** and evil will always league against good. Fallen men and fallen angels enter into a desperate companionship. {ST, July 11, 1895 par. 5}

The entire focus of Scripture is the battle between Christ and Satan. In Old Testament times, this conflict was focused around Satan's attempt to prevent Jesus from being born as a human while God worked to keep that avenue open for the Messiah.

Which of the possibilities above would apply to Nehemiah's reference to their sins caused God to bring the evil upon them?

In the story of Ezra and Nehemiah, what is the overriding theme or background?

It is the plan of salvation—humanity is in sin, God promised the Messiah, Satan is working to obstruct the plan of God, God is working to keep open avenue for Messiah.

SABBATH Lesson 12

Dealing with bad decisions—before we get into the examples from the lesson, I thought it beneficial for us to do a basic outline of a healthy way to deal with bad decisions.

We have all made bad decisions—the difference between mature Godly people and immature people or worldly evil people, is not that the mature never make bad decisions and the immature or evil never make a good decision.

The difference is that the mature will take responsibility for their decisions, will evaluate their choices, will identify what are bad decisions, will learn from their decisions and update their decision-making so they reduce and stop making the same bad decisions over and over again.



The immature and evil people don't do this. When they make bad decisions they deny their responsibility; they avoid looking at their role; they make excuses; they move on to something new, but they don't learn so they repeat the same bad decisions over and over again.

The reasons for this is often an inability to tolerate emotional discomfort, embarrassment, hurt, rejection, or guilt. When we make a bad choice it can be emotional, financially, relationally, occupationally painful. Some people rather than immediately dealing with their choices instead run from the pain, the discomfort and deny, distort, blame, make excuses, or distract themselves from the truth with entertainment or mood-altering substances.

And the underlying root is fear—fear of rejection, punishment, loss of status, position, wealth, esteem—so the immature and evil rather than humbling themselves and being transformed, instead either don't learn or worse justify the bad decision-making as good decision-making repeat it.

But one can never avoid the truth we can only delay the day we deal with it.

The mature have learned this, have become lovers of the truth and have learned to stand their ground, and do not run from the reality, and instead face their choices and learn from them.

Further, the mature have accepted the truth about themselves that they are not infallible and they are subject to mistakes. They have NOT accepted a falsehood that perfection is about performance, but know it is about maturity. So, they have formed characters with a view of self that accepts they don't know everything, that even at their best they can make a decision that isn't the best, but they know they are able to learn, to assimilate new insights, to grow, to develop, to advance and thus their individuality is not built upon perfect performance but a willingness to grow and mature as soon as one is able.

This is a person who is a lover of truth, who realizes truth is unfolding and they love to grow and don't fear to discover new ways to do things or understand things, in fact they are excited about it.

What hinders people from doing this? Does our view of God have an impact?

So, an approach to healthy decision-making:

- Use reason with a clear conscience
- Always be prayerful, surrendering your life to God and asking the Spirit of truth to enlighten you, giving you wisdom and discernment in your decision-making. Ask God for evidences as to what course you should take. Be patient, study, reflect, and reason things out.
- Ask for input from wise and mature counselors—but do NOT surrender your decisions to them. You must filter that input through your own judgment—every person must be fully persuaded in their own mind.
 - This is one of the problems for many in bad decision-making—they fear making a mistake and thus they seek some other mind, some authority, pastor, doctor, parent, friend to tell them the answer to tell them what to do. This relieves them of the burden



of decision-making and allows them to blame the other party when it doesn't work out. But such people never mature and live in fear and doubt.

- Understand God's design laws—failure to understand the basic laws upon which reality works leads to bad decisions even with good motives. The doctors who bled and leached George Washington when he had pneumonia—they didn't understand basic laws of health and made bad decisions even though their motives were to heal and save.
- Ask, what is right (morally first, legally second), healthy, and reasonable
- Allow feelings to be information you evaluate, but don't make decisions based solely on feelings
- Feelings of discomfort about a decision should be given more weight than positive feelings about a decision. In other words, allow feelings of discomfort to cause you to pause, reflect, consider, evaluate so that you avoid an impulsive decision. But use your wisdom to temper feelings of eagerness.
- In the aftermath of a choice, be open to new information and reassessment and making new choices, even reversing course, if the new information supports that course of action
- When one realizes a bad choice has been made, own it, learn from it, examine where the decision-making process needs to be improved and bring to bear new methods.

Read first paragraph, "Ezra and Nehemiah..." We will get to the marriage question later in the lesson—the key point I want to focus on from this paragraph is the children. It is well known that the way to change a society is to get access to the children and begin to indoctrinate and teach them.

Throughout history this has proven to be true—not just parental teaching, but when we send out children to schools the teachers who teach our children will have a huge impact on them individually, but also over time on society.

Do we see any impacts on the USA from changes in the US educational system over time? Has the change from a God-centered educational system to an evolutionary/Godless educational system had an impact on society as a whole?

What about the teaching about sexuality, marriage, gender—is it having an impact?

What about the teaching about moral relativism—that everyone's "truth" is their "truth" and equally valid?

So, to all parents and grandparents I want to affirm your responsibility to educate your children in the Lord, teaching His methods, principles, truths and teaching them how to think and reason for themselves and how reality works.

Sadly, many Christian parents have fallen into the trap of indoctrination, teaching the "right" answers, i.e. doctrines, but not how to actually reason and think and many of these children grow up to fall away or become intolerant of others.



A recent study published September 2019 in *Pediatrics* found that if children were restricted to less than 2 hours of recreational screen time per day, slept 9-11 hours per night and had 1 hour of vigorous physical activity per day, had less impulsivity and reduced risk of ADHD. <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/Adequate-Sleep-Limited-Screen-Time-Can-Decrease-Impulsivity.aspx>

This makes perfect sense if one understands normal brain development. The law of exertion, if you want something to be stronger you must exercise it, but if you don't use it you lose it.

SUNDAY

The lesson points out that the loss of the ability to read Scripture threatened them with loss of their special identity as God's chosen people. In other words, if they lost the message of Scripture they wouldn't know what God had called them to fulfill; they wouldn't know the truth about God; they wouldn't understand what they were to teach others; and they would simply fall into the same lies as the rest of the world.

What about us today? Most of us cannot read Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek, so we read translations—what if the translators translated the Bible through legal lenses? What if the translators sincerely believed God's law functions like human law, could this result in misunderstandings being translated into the Scripture?

And this is exactly what has happened, the biases of the translators do come through. People who believe in eternal souls that remain conscious and active after death translate the story of the thief with a comma that puts the thief in heaven that day. Those who believe the soul sleeps, put the comma so the promise was made that day, but not the fulfillment.

If you have read *The Remedy* you have noted the difference it makes when one reads through the design law lens. I suggest to you, the greatest infection in Christianity is the lie that God's law functions like human law and sadly this idea has been translated into the common language Bibles.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Solomon was led deeper..." Why was it wrong to have many wives and pagan wives? Was it wrong because it broke God's specific command, or did God give this specific command because it was wrong? In other words, if God hadn't taken the initiative to give this specific command would it have been right to do? Was it wrong before God gave the specific command? Why or why not?

Has God given a specific command not to smoke cigarettes? Is it wrong to do it? Why is it wrong? What makes it wrong?

What kind of law is involved?



What is the problem when right and wrong is determined by commands?

Read second paragraph, “The command not to intermarry...” What is the lesson for us today? Are we to marry people who are complementary to us? Does this mean same beliefs about God? What about same denomination? Can people be of the same denomination but worship different gods?

Read last paragraph, “The Bible gives formulas...” What are formulas based upon? What are math formulas or chemistry formulas based upon? Are they not based upon reality, which are fundamental laws of how the universe runs?

So, would God’s “formulas” for our relationships also be based upon His design laws?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Together, the whole...” What do you think of sending away mothers and children? Some argue a God of love would never do this. That this was Nehemiah’s own plan, but not one he got from God because love would never do this.

Such thoughts are predicated on emotionalism rather than understanding reality and how love functions.

Love always heals, always saves, never destroys—but in order to know what action is necessary one has to understand reality, what is transpiring.

A person wrote to me objecting to the idea that God would have marriages dissolve like this. He argued it presents God as cruel and mean to have wives and children sent away.

Are doctors mean and cruel for amputating limbs from people? Does the condition of the limb matter? If the limb is gangrenous is amputating it cruel? What if the limb is healthy?

Can we decide merely upon the fact that a limb was amputated or must we know more?

God hates divorce because divorce only happens when love breaks down. But God gave the writ of divorcement because of the “hardness of their hearts.” In other words, love had been obstructed and when relationships become destructive either from hard hearted husbands who abuse their wives, or from idolatrous wives who corrupt their husbands, either way the marriages rather than being blessings are like gangrenous limbs and need to be severed in order to save the people in them.

Further, in the context of ancient Israel, they were the conduit for Messiah these marriages to pagan wives were part of Satan’s plan to destroy this branch of the human family and thus prevent Jesus from coming as our Savior—if that happens then 100% of all humans are lost. So, again God’s actions were redemptive to save and heal not destroy. The narrow view misses these larger realities and thus attempts to teach God would not do such things.



From the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*:

"By leading Israel to this daring insult and blasphemy to Jehovah, Satan had planned to cause their ruin. Since they had proved themselves to be so utterly degraded, so lost to all sense of the privileges and blessings that God had offered them, and to their own solemn and repeated pledges of loyalty, the Lord would, he believed, divorce them from Himself and devote them to destruction. **Thus would be secured the extinction of the seed of Abraham, that seed of promise that was to preserve the knowledge of the living God, and through whom He was to come—the true Seed, that was to conquer Satan. The great rebel had planned to destroy Israel, and thus thwart the purposes of God.** But again he was defeated. Sinful as they were, the people of Israel were not destroyed. While those who stubbornly ranged themselves on the side of Satan were cut off, the people, humbled and repentant, were mercifully pardoned. The history of this sin was to stand as a perpetual testimony to the guilt and punishment of idolatry, and the justice and long-suffering mercy of God" PP 335.

Read second paragraph, "The specific..." What if people were sewing onto their bodies limbs from animals? A person has eagles wings sewn onto their back, or another person has a tiger's paw sewn onto their chest—and after doing so they developed infections and immune reactions and were getting sick and dying.

If a doctor came along and amputated those appendages, would such a doctor be cruel, mean, hard-hearted, or unkind? Would it be in harmony with God's design, will and purposes to remove such appendages?

This is a metaphor to how Ezra and Nehemiah saw things—these women, because they were not converted, were not part of God's kingdom, not part of God's family, but were agents of Satan to infect and destroy not only the individual husband's they married, but the nation and the avenue for the Messiah.

So, I do believe a God of love would act to sever such attachments because to do so is to bring healing. But those who live upon rules, without understanding the actual reality of what is transpiring, would argue that to divorce would be sin and would promote a policy that would have destroyed the avenue for Messiah.

What are the implications for us today? Does this mean that marriages that are legal in terms of civil government don't necessarily constitute marriages as God understands them?

Jesus said what God has joined together let no one separate. Can two people get a legal marriage, but not have their hearts and minds joined together in unity by God? Are they actually married in God's eyes?

It appears Ezra didn't believe they were because these marriages were not unity of heart nor were they in harmony with God's prescription for Israel.



Do you think Christianity has been better served by requiring people to stay in loveless marriages in which the two people were never joined in heart and mind?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “From what we have...” Healthy relationships require healthy people. It doesn’t matter how healthy you are if you marry an unhealthy person the marriage will not be healthy, unless that person becomes healthy. Consider Jesus and Judas, their relationship—though not a marriage relationship—was not healthy, why?

Why did Paul tell Christians to stay with agreeable spouses who didn’t believe, but Ezra told them to divorce such spouses?

Could it have to do with Jesus having already come and fulfilled His mission as Messiah and there was no longer any need to keep open the avenue for Him to come as our Savior?

The last paragraph states, “God doesn’t abandon us even when we make choices contrary to His will, and if we ask Him for help, He will provide it.”

This is well said.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Questions: If you have questions please email them either at requests@comeandreason.com or topics@comeandreason.com. If you post on Facebook it is likely they will not be answered as I often miss questions posted on Facebook.

Audio version of the Remedy is Now available for Streaming: Download the free app SoundCloud and **you do NOT have to purchase** a subscription to SoundCloud. Just search for Remedy Bible or use this link https://soundcloud.com/the_remedy_nt/albums and you should find it and you can stream it at no cost. Just click “follow” on the album and you will go to it easily in the future.

The New Paradigm about the Heavenly Sanctuary and Investigative Judgment Has been Changed: Thanks to your feedback I have rewritten portions of this document making it friendlier and less likely to cause offense. The new title is *The Heavenly Sanctuary and Investigative Judgment for the Modern World*. It has a new cover, new introduction, the call to action section has been removed and other edits to clarify potential misunderstandings have been made throughout. It is already up on our website and print versions will be available November 14. **Please throw away any of the first edition you may still have in your possession and use this version going forward.**

PODCAST: Come and Reason with Dr. Tim Jennings weekly Podcast is now broadcasting, please follow us.

The Remedy Psalms is complete and online but the update to the app has been delayed. The developer has retired from this project and is no longer working to update the app and we now must find a new developer.

REASONETTES: Recently I began drawing cartoons and have started a new section on our website entitled *Reasonettes*. They are illustrations designed to make a point inviting you to think and reason about an idea or issue. Be sure to visit our website or Facebook page each Tuesday for a new cartoon. I hope you enjoy them.

January 17-19, 2020: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly. Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport). See events.comeandreason.com for more details and to sign up.

March 27,28, 2020: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at an AACC River Conference at Plano, TX. More info at <http://theriverconference.com/>

April 17,18, 2020: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Lakewood SDA church in Lakewood OH.

2019 Q4 Ezra and Nehemiah: Lesson 13

Leaders in Israel

by Russell Atkins

SABBATH

What qualities make a great “Leader”? Here’s a list [by no means comprehensive]. Did I miss any?

1. Honesty and Integrity.
2. Accountability.
3. Confidence.
4. Ability to Inspire Others.
5. Commitment and Passion.
6. Good Communication.
7. Decision Making Capabilities.
8. Delegation and Empowerment.
9. Creativity and Innovation.
10. Empathy.
11. Resilience.
12. Perseverance.
13. Transparency.
14. Vision and Purpose.

Have these qualities changed over time or are they timeless?

What applications can we make today for the current state in the SDA church?

From the Lesson: *“Central to the story of these leaders is the Word of God. The Word transformed their thinking and life and resulted in the whole program for revival and reformation. They were totally indebted to God’s Word and His instruction that they found in it. In the same way, no matter who we are, and whatever our role is, we must keep the Word of God central to how we live as Seventh-day Adventist Christians.”*

How much of “The Word of God” did these leaders have? Did they have the Torah [what we know as the first 5 books of the Bible], or did they have more “scripture”?

Why do we automatically consider “Scripture” as God’s ONLY Word?
His creation was his first WORD, “. . . so that men are without excuse.” Rom. 1: 20.

How was God’s Word communicated to them? Is it different today?

Were they expected to advance in greater “Light” or were they to marry themselves to 150 year old [or 500 year old] teachings and not budge from that position?



SUNDAY

The Influence of Leaders

Examples of leadership:

Rehoboam [1 Kings 12: 1-16]: He rejected the advice of his elders, and listened to advice from contemporaries. What could go wrong from listening to those with little to no life experience? In the US, certain groups would have us develop policy [contrary to our Constitution] because high school students want it that way.

<https://marchforourlives.com/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/feb/14/parkland-school-shooting-anniversary-gun-control-victories>

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/14/us/national-school-walkout-gun-violence-protests/index.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/13/us/parkland-shooting.html>

Time Magazine just named a 16 y/o girl as “Person of the Year” for her role in contributing to the ~~coming ice age, global warming, abrupt climate change~~, just plain-ol’ climate change.

<https://time.com/person-of-the-year-2019-greta-thunberg/>

What happens to a family/school/community/government/culture that abandons reason, devalues the wisdom of its elders and makes decisions based on the emotional whims of children? Rhetorical.

Peter [Acts 15: 7-11]: In this example Peter was the voice of reason and a peacekeeper when the Jews were angry at Paul and Barnabas for taking the Gospel to the gentiles. Not long after, however, he misled the group by his example of not eating with the gentiles and had to be called out by Paul.

Josiah [2 Kings 23:1-10]: Josiah led by example in an effort to stem the tide of depravity caused by King Manasseh. Scripture says of him, “**Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him.**” 2 Kings 23: 25. NKJV. It, however, was not enough – Judah was still taken in to captivity because they did not allow the Holy Spirit to heal them.

Deborah [Judges 4: 1-16]: Why was a woman called to judge Israel? Why was a woman called to shepherd the SDA church in its infancy? Read verse 8. This tells you everything you need to know. The men of Israel were mincing, capri-wearing, latte drinking, low-T, soy boys. God will not force anyone [man or woman] in to His service. He wants a service given from free choice. Scripture is silent, however, I will bet that several men were approached to judge Israel at that time, but none were willing. Two were asked to lead the SDA church, before EGW answered “here I am Lord, use me.”



This loss of masculinity in Israel eventually led to God diagnosing their problem in Isaiah Ch. 3 verse 12.

“As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, those who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths.”

God is speaking to Israel, more specifically, the **MEN** of Israel. He’s telling them to grow a pair. Women HATE, HATE, HATE weak men

Are there any practical contemporary applications?

Ahab [1 Kings 21: 1-16]: Speaking of low-T, soy boys . . . This clown let his wife murder a good man by proxy, so he could have a vineyard. And that was just the icing on the cake of his abuses.

MONDAY

Evil in the Sight of the Lord.

The three passages included in the lesson outline what happens when we “follow the sins of his father[s]”.

I was reminded of Exodus 20: 4-6.

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

Why do you think these admonitions are in the 2nd commandment? The one outlining idolatry and the grander Law of Worship?

We now understand the connection between choices and gene expression [epigenetics], so there’s BOTH a hereditary and cultural cause for the degeneration of the kings of Israel throughout the generations.

From the Lesson:

“It is a sobering thought to many of us who hold positions of leadership in any capacity that our leadership has the potential to bring people down or up spiritually. And, in all the cases here, the effect was devastatingly negative. [Yes it is. I stress about this every time I teach this class.]

More specifically, our character and dedication to Christ make a difference to those with whom we interact. Spiritual leaders influence others, either toward God if they themselves seek God, or toward evil if they do not. [Everyone influences others for or against God, whether we like it

or admit it.]

In contrast to what we have seen today, the fact that Ezra and Nehemiah had a strong relationship with God is undeniable. The amount of fasting and praying that is recorded in these books about Ezra and Nehemiah exceeds what the Bible reports for other great leaders.” [Are fasting and praying evidence of great leadership? Are they evidence of transformation of character? Of being on God’s side?]

****my comments are bold & bracketed****

TUESDAY

Courage and Empowerment.

Personally, I hate these two words – courage and empowerment – they have become “buzz words” for culturally Marxist policies and policy makers that are antithetical to Design Law. Men who want to use women’s rest rooms are described as “courageous” and women who want to engage in sex acts on film are described as “empowered”. We need to revisit the meanings of these words and take them back.

But the lesson chose them, so . . .

The lesson details the process whereby Nehemiah supervised the rebuilding of the last sections of the wall, and his leading by example, along with the builders arming themselves [figuratively and literally]. Given that the rebuilding of the wall was both literal and metaphorical [*see below*] are there any lessons to be gleaned from the “arming”?

The prophet here [ref. Isa 61:4] describes a people who, in a time of general departure from truth and righteousness, are seeking to restore the principles that are the foundation of the kingdom of God. They are repairers of a breach that has been made in God’s law—the wall that He has placed around His chosen ones for their protection, and obedience to whose precepts of justice, truth, and purity is to be their perpetual safeguard. PK 677.

Should Christians carry weapons? Should they arm themselves?

WEDNESDAY

Purpose and Passion.

Again, two words that I’m not fond of. Does it matter what our purpose is? What our passion is?

Do Islamist suicide bombers have purpose and passion? Did the Jews, who killed God Himself, have purpose and passion? Did the Crusaders, who burned Jews and Muslims at the stake, have purpose and passion?



I understand where the lesson is going with this and hope I'm not a distraction, however, we need to rise above the buzz words and discern deeper than pretty speech. Those who opposed Nehemiah were driven by purpose and passion as well. What matters more is the source of our purpose and passion.

From the Lesson: *"In all that they did, Ezra and Nehemiah were seeking to see God's will done in the lives of His people. Yes, the people had messed up; yes, they were punished for it."*

Were the tribes of Judah/Benjamin being punished? Disciplined? Did God take them into captivity Himself? Or did He remove a hedge of protection, and allow a heathen nation to take them captive?

THURSDAY

Humility and Perseverance.

Ezra turned down an offer from the Persian king for an armed escort to Jerusalem, and relied on God's hedge of protection. It seems to me that the lesson would have us focus on the prayer and fasting ahead of the trip as the source of God's protection.

From the Lesson: *"However, Ezra didn't act with presumption. He called the people together, and they fasted and prayed over the situation. They didn't engage in their journey until they had spent serious time with God. They came before God humbly, **requesting that His protection become a sign of His power**, and God answered."* [emphasis mine.]

What level[s] of moral development are displayed here? Did they ask for the protection because their faith was weak? Did God's protection demonstrate their faith was strong?

Was Nehemiah's faith weak for having the half of the people carry weapons and function as armed guards? The work could have been done in ½ the time if he had everyone working on the wall.

Was Ezra humble for not taking the king up on his offer? Was he humble for calling for a fast?

Was Nehemiah humble for working on the wall himself? Was he humble for refusing Shemaiah's invitation to sleep in the protected temple for safety?

Again from the Lesson: *"True leaders must be willing to humble themselves and be servants. Competent leaders do not require or need a "title" to gain honor."*

Well said.